

Updated Information for Students and Parents

20 October 2020

Dear Parents/ Carers,

As you know, we have a number of measures in place to keep the school safe. Governors have decided to review the measures in place every half term to ensure that the focus is clearly on providing the best education we can whilst balancing the need to ensure the safety of students and staff. Measures so far seem to have been effective and we have, at the time of writing, had no cases. The R rate remains very low in Somerset although we are told that there is a small increase in the number of hospital admissions. We need to reduce the risk of transmission and at the same time, ensure students get the best quality of education.

There are three changes after half term that Governors have made in consultation with staff.

- We will increase the use of specialist rooms in order that students have the best quality of teaching we can provide. Your child will be given his/her new room timetable. He/she has the same teachers but in specialist rooms. This is so that students have access to specialist subject resources and facilities.
- Everyone, staff and students, are required to wear face masks (not scarves or other face coverings) when moving around the school. The WHO now advise that “children aged 12 and over should wear a mask under the same conditions as adults, in particular when they cannot guarantee at least a 1-metre distance from others and there is widespread transmission in the area.” This is in keeping with the rules outside school and we have adopted this for the sake of simplicity and to reinforce the rules outside school. Therefore, from half term, everyone in the school is required to wear a mask as soon as they enter the building and whenever they are moving around inside and can only remove it when they are sitting down, either in class or in the dining areas. The government advises that masks are not necessary outside in the fresh air. There may be some exemptions for students who are unable to wear a mask.
- In the dining areas, students are required to wear masks until they sit down in their group of no more than 6 if face to face. In the main Hall, students are less likely to transmit the virus as they are mainly sitting alongside each other, according to government advice to schools. This is to limit the number of ‘close contacts’ so that if there is a positive case, as few students as possible are required to self-isolate.
- Whilst retaining the one-way system along the Science corridor and up and down stairs in the Tower, Jubilee and Sealy buildings, we have removed the one-way system along connecting corridors as this was adding to congestion and movement around the school.

If we have a number of positive cases, or the rate of transmission in Somerset increases, Governors will immediately review the measures in place and make any changes with immediate effect to reduce the risk to children and staff.

As a reminder, we will contact parents/carers by text and email if we need to send a group of students or a year group 'bubble' home during the school day because of a positive test.

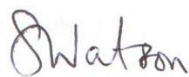
We are almost at the end of the first half term and it is becoming clear that many students have developed some anxiety or mental health issues during or since lock-down. Whilst being back in school is really good for their mental health and development, we are seeing the strain of lockdown in some students. Please do let the school know if your child is experiencing any difficulties or if you have concerns. We will be revisiting the decompression and recovery work that we did at the beginning of this term and ensuring that students understand where to go for help and how we will support them.

Key school staff are available as needed on return to school, so your child's tutor or Head of House should be contacted if there is an issue or something of which you need to inform us. Unfortunately, parents and carers will not be able to come in to school and meet with staff but we are still making appointments and can 'meet' online or by phone. If there is a safeguarding issue to report or discuss, please contact Mr Wordsworth (Deputy Headteacher) or Mrs Horsley (Welfare Officer). You can also use the safe@castle.somerset.sch.uk email to report a concern or problem.

Resources to help you support your child: <https://www.castleschool.co.uk/students/help-and-support.htm>.

May I also take this opportunity to thank parents and carers for your understanding and support in this very difficult time. It is absolutely clear that young people need school for their education but also their mental and emotional health and wellbeing. We will continue to do all we can to stay open for as many students as possible and welcome your support in implementing these additional measures to ensure that we do so.

Best wishes



Mrs Watson

Important information regarding COVID and how to stop the spread of it in our school

Close contact means:

- direct close contacts - face to face contact with an infected individual for any length of time, within 1 metre, including being coughed on, a face to face conversation, or unprotected physical contact (skin-to-skin)
- proximity contacts - extended close contact (within 1 to 2 metres for more than 15 minutes) with an infected individual
- travelling in a small vehicle, like a car, with an infected person.

If you plan to go abroad at half term, your child will not be allowed in school for 14 days if you have been to a quarantined country, or if the country becomes quarantined within three days of your return.

Illness: If your child has any symptoms of COVID, you must not send them into school. If a child shows COVID symptoms in School, they will be immediately isolated, we will contact you urgently and you must come and collect them immediately. They will be isolated until you do so.

The DfE guidance says this:

Do not send your child to their nursery, childminder, school or college if:

- they are showing [coronavirus \(COVID-19\) symptoms](#)
- someone in their household is showing symptoms
- [Arrange a test](#) if you or your child develops symptoms. Inform your nursery, childminder, school or college of the results.
- **YOU MUST TELL THE SCHOOL IMMEDIATELY OF THE RESULT. If it is positive, you must follow [guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection](#)**, and engage with the NHS Test and Trace process.

If your son/daughter has been tested for Covid19 and receives a positive outcome, please:

- Call Mrs Broadway on 01823 274145, who will take all the relevant information.
- If this number is engaged, please ring Miss Gregory on 01823 273858.
- We will ask you a number of questions about close contacts in school so please ask your child to list all those students he or she has been in close contact with.
- If you receive the result outside of school hours, please email: covid@castle.somerset.sch.uk with your child's name and your contact details.

It is really important that you help us to implement these actions by following the advice set out here and wider public health advice and guidance.

Managing confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) amongst the school community

We will take swift action when we become aware that someone who has attended school has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19). This guidance is accurate at the time of writing but we are aware it may change. Please consult the DfE guidance for the most up to date guidance:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus->

[outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools#section-1-public-health-advice-to-minimise-coronavirus-covid-19-risks](#)

- We will immediately contact the local health protection team. This team will also contact the school directly if they become aware that someone who has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) attended the school – as identified by NHS Test and Trace.
- The health protection team will carry out a rapid risk assessment to confirm who has been in close contact with the person during the period that they were infectious, and ensure they are asked to self-isolate.
- The health protection team will work with the school in this situation to guide us through the actions we need to take. Based on the advice from the health protection team, the school will send home those students and staff who have been in close contact with the person who has tested positive, advising them to self-isolate for 14 days since they were last in close contact with that person when they were infectious.
- The health protection team will provide definitive advice on who must be sent home.
- A template letter will be provided to schools, on the advice of the health protection team, to send to parents and staff if needed. Schools must not share the names or details of people with coronavirus (COVID-19) unless essential to protect others.
- Household members of those contacts who are sent home do not need to self-isolate themselves unless the child, young person or staff member who is self-isolating subsequently develops symptoms. If someone in a class or group that has been asked to self-isolate develops symptoms themselves within their 14-day isolation period they should follow '[stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection](#)'. They should get a test, and:
 - if the test delivers a negative result, they must remain in isolation for the remainder of the 14-day isolation period. This is because they could still develop the coronavirus (COVID-19) within the remaining days.
 - if the test result is positive, they should inform their setting immediately, and should isolate for at least 10 days from the onset of their symptoms (which could mean the self-isolation ends before or after the original 14-day isolation period). Their household should self-isolate for at least 14 days from when the symptomatic person first had symptoms, following '[stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection](#)'
 - The school will not request evidence of negative test results or other medical evidence before admitting children or welcoming them back after a period of self-isolation.

Further guidance is available on [testing and tracing for coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#).

Contain any outbreak by following local health protection team advice

If schools have two or more confirmed cases within 14 days, or an overall rise in sickness absence where coronavirus (COVID-19) is suspected, they may have an outbreak, and must continue to work with their local health protection team who will be able to advise if additional action is required.

In some cases, health protection teams may recommend that a larger number of other pupils self-isolate at home as a precautionary measure – perhaps the whole site or year group. If schools are implementing controls from this list, addressing the risks they have identified and therefore reducing transmission risks, whole school closure based on cases within the school will not generally be necessary, and should not be considered except on the advice of health protection teams.

In consultation with the local Director of Public Health, where an outbreak in a school is confirmed, a mobile testing unit may be dispatched to test others who may have been in contact with the person who has tested positive. Testing will first focus on the person's class, followed by their year group, then the whole school if necessary, in line with routine public health outbreak control practice.