



Friday 18<sup>th</sup> September 2020

Dear parent/guardian,

I would like to take this opportunity to clarify the situation with regards to attendance at school during the current coronavirus pandemic. If your son/daughter has any of the symptoms below they should not attend school and your entire household/support bubble should [self-isolate](#). You should also access testing for your son/daughter by calling 119 or using the [NHS testing website](#). The student will not be able to return to school until they have had a negative test or have isolated at home for 10 days from the first day of experiencing symptoms:

The main symptoms of coronavirus, taken from the [NHS website](#), are:

- **a high temperature** – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature)
- **a new, continuous cough** – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual)
- **a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste** – this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal

Please be specific with symptoms when leaving absence messages and do not be offended if the office staff ask for details and instruct you to access a test for your son/daughter. If your son/daughter is able to access a test and the result is negative they can return to school as soon as they feel well enough. Please inform the school office if you are awaiting a test.

Also, if a member of your household/support bubble is displaying any of the above symptoms your son/daughter should not attend school for 14 days or until the family member has a negative test result. You should inform the school if your son/daughter will be absent from school due to self-isolation.

We are aware of the current difficulties in accessing testing and that any extended period of absence from school can be extremely frustrating but I can assure you that we are following government guidelines and our own [risk assessment](#) to ensure that we are doing all we can to keep our school community safe. We have recently received the following advice from Kent County Council:

*We are also aware of cases where children or staff present with one of the above symptoms for a short period of time, such as 1 day, and then wish to return to school without testing or self-isolation when they no longer have these symptoms; often after having discussed their symptoms with a health professional such as a GP who concludes they are likely to have an illness other than Covid.*

*We have sought advice on this matter and it remains that anybody presenting with one of the three symptoms must isolate for 10 days and only return prior to that if they have received a negative test result and feel well. It is important that schools consistently follow the procedures set out in their policies and risk assessments and that those policies are based on current guidance, which has not changed on this matter. A telephone consultation with a health professional that reports Covid is unlikely is not a reason for the school to deviate from the policy where an individual has had one of the three Covid symptoms.*

Since the start of term, the vast majority of parents have been willing to follow these guidelines and I would like to thank you for your continued support. However, I am sorry to say that we have experienced some negativity and verbal abuse towards members of staff from a small number of

parents. Whilst I understand the frustration with the current situation the governors and I cannot tolerate abusive behaviour towards our staff. If you have any concerns about why your son/daughter is being asked to isolate at home please contact a member of the senior leadership team.

I would also like to reassure you that if it is necessary for your son/daughter to self-isolate work will be available to access remotely through google classrooms.

I hope this has clarified the situation with regards to attendance but if you have any concerns please feel to contact the school.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Jones', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Martin Jones  
Head of School