



from Tom Lawson MA (Oxon), Headmaster

30 November 2020

Year 10 and 12 switch to remote learning and stricter measures in school

Dear Parents,

As you will realise from the number of letters I have sent recently, there is a rising trend in pupils testing positive, with six more confirmed cases over the weekend. Please accept my sincerest apologies for the short notice of this letter but, for the protection of the College and wider community, we now have to take decisive whole-school measures to curb the spread of the virus.

Our principle aims while containing the virus are the continuity of your child's education over the next two weeks and the protection of all our pupils, and in particular those who rely on staying clear of Covid to travel abroad. With the tough measures below, I am confident we can manage the end of this term as effectively and safely as possible in the circumstances ready for a full and secure restart in January with all pupils returning to school.

Given the large number of pupils in enforced self-isolation in Years 10 and 12, their overall academic progress is best served by asking all to stay out of school for the remainder of this term so the teachers can revert to full remote learning protocols, tailoring their resources and lessons to the needs of remote learners.

Year 10 and Year 12 day pupils, and boarders who are able to go home, should do so this evening (Monday 30 November), or tomorrow (Tuesday 1 December) if that is more practical.

There will, of course, be continued provision for those boarders who need to remain in the house. Parents who are key workers should speak with their HSMs for special arrangements for them to come into school if necessary.

With those year-groups working from home, the numbers allow us, at the present moment in time, to operate the school safely with Year 9, 11, and 13 attending lessons. We are mindful of the particular need for exam groups to have continued classroom contact if at all possible, while of course providing remote joining-in to lessons for those who unfortunately are self-isolating due to close contact with a positive case.

Aided by the reduced numbers in school for the last two weeks, we will undertake a number of stricter Covid-security measures to further minimise the spread. A summary of these measures is below and the details will be worked out and communicated to the pupils and staff this week.

Pupils travelling overseas

My previous letter highlighted the fact that the school closes down on 16 December and we are very concerned to ensure all pupils planning to travel in the run up to that date remain Covid free. For those planning to travel at Christmas, we will arrange for testing in the coming days to identify any potential problems ahead of the testing/self-

certification they will need prior to flying. For their own protection from disruption, overseas parents are encouraged where possible to get their children home early, or if not possible, either to guardians to isolate or to voluntarily self-isolate in house.

The good news for pupils travelling is that we now know the period of isolation on return in January will only be five days using the test and release system. More details should be published soon by the UK Government. Owing to very limited space in houses, where possible, returning pupils should isolate with their guardian for those five days and then get a test which we are very happy to support them through.

Overseas parents should continue to speak with house staff to make sure all their arrangements are in place.

Summary of new measures from **0800 Tuesday 1 December:**

– Year 10/12 closure

(with a period of transition through until Wednesday where practically necessary)

- All Year 10 and Year 12 pupils who can will remain at / go home for the remainder of this term and switch to remote learning. Key workers' children or boarders who cannot get home will work in house.
- All Year 9, 11, and 13 (except those already isolating as close contacts) will continue to attend lessons in person and remain in school for now, unless the numbers in isolation become too large.
- Powell and Nugent Year 9, 11 and 13 who are not close contacts with any cases will return to circulation if parents wish them to return.

– new Covid-secure rules

- Assemblies, chapels, and other congregational events are cancelled or online alternatives provided.
- Pupils and staff wear masks in all communal areas, including in houses and, when walking around the campus or to games. Masks are recommended in classrooms and will be required in some tighter classrooms and settings; this will be risk assessed in the coming days.
- Dining hall will have increased spacing.
- Pupils should keep two metres apart and single file in queues, corridors, and wherever possible.
- No contact sport, no cross-year group activities, and no indoor activities except where social distancing and hygiene can be rigorously maintained.

– Covid-secure behaviour

- Pupils to be kept from bunching and breaking social distancing by staff and prefects where possible.
- Pupils constantly reminded about the one-way or keep-left systems, and of course to wear masks according to the new rules.

Self-isolation, year groups working from home and further restrictions are, I know, extremely troubling and inconvenient for many parents and pupils. Our pupils have done better than most during the lockdown to have a full experience of school life and with these measures we hope to continue as much of the core education as we can for the next two weeks while curbing the spread of Covid among our pupils. I appreciate your forbearance and support.

Yours sincerely,



Tom Lawson
Headmaster