



HITCHIN BOYS' SCHOOL
An Academy Trust

18th June 2021

Dear Parent/Carer,

I wanted to write to update you on the status of Covid-19 at Hitchin Boys' School and the measures that we are now being advised to take by the Covid response team at Hertfordshire public health.

Since I last wrote to you, there has been a significant growth in the number of positive cases. From the initial case on Monday, we are now up to 15 confirmed cases and approximately half of year 7 and 10 are now self-isolating.

The majority of these cases are connected, and despite the controls in place at school to keep bubbles apart, students are also mixing outside school and a number of cases are siblings in the same household. While we have no official confirmation that we are experiencing the Delta variant, the increase in transmission does seem to suggest this and we also note that symptoms in young people are more similar to hay fever than the loss of taste/smell and fever that accompanied the previous strains.

We have battled all this week to identify and notify close contacts, but the advice from Public Health is to try to break chains of transmission by **asking year 7 and 10 to stay at home next week and return to school on Monday 28th June.** For those students who we have contacted or been contacted directly by NHS Track and Trace, they must continue to self-isolate for 10 days following the close contact with a positive case and we will have confirmed the release date on an individual basis. For those students who have not received a notification from us, they do not need to self-isolate but we would encourage regular use of lateral flow testing. Can I please ask that you promptly inform the school if your son has a positive LFD or PCR test so that we can contact trace and inform public health?

Students in these year groups should access work via Google Classroom and we will offer live lessons via Google Meet as often as possible. Students should continue to follow their timetables. **All other students in years 8 and 9 will continue to come to school as normal.** but we will be asking students to wear face coverings in classrooms again as an additional precaution (excluding those who are exempt, of course.) Year 12 are on study leave, but should come to school for their end of year exams as per their timetable. It would be preferable if students could have cameras on during their remote lessons so that we can maintain social connections within classes.

As per guidance from the Department for Education and Herts County Council, we are moving remaining events for the year to a virtual mode. Unfortunately, under this guidance, induction events for year 6 into 7 and year 11 into 12 will have to be online rather than in person. The year 10 careers fair for Friday 25th will be rescheduled. Our music concert and Founders Day will have to also be virtual. More information will be shared with you as we finalise the alternative plans.

Head Teacher: Mr F Moane

No one is sorrier than I with the news that the end of the year is destined to finish much like the start, with disruption to education due to the pandemic. We will work hard to try to minimise learning loss and provision of a year 6 summer school and increased tutoring in the autumn will help us to bounce back.

As Oscar Wilde wrote: “We are all in the gutter, but some of us are looking at the stars.”

I hope the stars come quickly.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Fergal Moane', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Fergal Moane
Head Teacher