

Armthorpe Academy



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Our Ref: CRO/DMC

3rd May 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

My apologies for disturbing your Bank Holiday weekend. Unfortunately, I have been informed over the weekend that members of our school community (one member of staff, two siblings and a Year 10 student) have tested positive for COVID-19. Our school community have followed our COVID expectations to the letter, but sadly it was inevitable our school family would be affected again at some point. Sadly, this is a reminder to us all that COVID is still 'alive' in our community; we must now work together to safeguard one another to prevent further spread.

Rather than simply isolating full year group bubbles, we now have systems in place to identify close contacts more accurately. If your child **has** been identified as a close contact, you will have already received separate correspondence from us regarding isolation periods. For your information and understanding, the following criteria is used to identify close contacts within school:

Identification Criteria
1) Your child is a family member who spends a significant period of time in the same household.
2) Your child has had a face-to-face conversation (even with a mask) within one metre with the infected person. For example, friends eating together at lunch.
3) Your child has had contact within one metre for a minute or longer without face-to-face contact. For example, sitting at the same desk as the infected person in class.
4) Your child has been within 2 metres of the infected person for 15 minutes or longer. For example, our seating plans have identified your child's desk is within a two metre radius of the infected child.
5) Your child has travelled in a small vehicle or had physical contact with the infected person. For example, they have sat in the same car commuting to school.

In all the cases above, the time period stretches from 2 days prior to the symptoms being developed until the last contact with the child. In cases where people are asymptomatic, the 48-hour period is taken from the time of the COVID test. Staff and children who meet the criteria above will now be isolating for 10 days. The other household members or friends of identified close contacts do not need to self-isolate unless the child or staff member they live with subsequently develops symptoms. Even if Lateral Flow Tests of close contacts give a negative reading, it is still necessary to isolate as symptoms can lie dormant for up to 10 days; in three of the four cases this weekend infected parties were asymptomatic.

We speak to students about peers they spend social time with, but we obviously cannot track students' movements beyond the school gates. If you have not received a close contact letter from us, we expect your child to be in school on Tuesday. If they have been identified as a close contact through track and trace beyond the school gates, then you must send us evidence of the notification to authorise their absence from school.



Headteacher: Mrs Claire Robbins

Inside everyone there is a rainbow waiting to shine.

Ambition **Pride** **Resilience** **Respect** **Responsibility**



We know that you may find this concerning but are continuing to monitor the situation and are working closely with Public Health advisors at the Local Council. As your child is not a close contact, they do not need to stay away from school unless they are showing any of the following symptoms of COVID-19:

- a high temperature – this means they feel hot to touch on their chest or back, and/or
- a new, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or three or more coughing episodes in 24 hours, and/or
- a loss of, or change in, their normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia), and/or
- tests positive when using a lateral flow test from school, despite having no symptoms.

If your child shows any of these symptoms, they should not attend school for at least 10 days after the onset of symptoms, and everyone else in your household should self-isolate for 10 days. Your child should also be tested for COVID-19 using the more accurate PCR test as soon as possible.

Whilst students are isolating, work will be set through our remote learning platform using Teams on Office 365. Students must follow their daily timetable. Work will be uploaded that is being completed in lessons, but as staff are teaching, they will not be 'live' to answer questions. It is imperative all work is attempted to avoid gaps in learning. I have already had emails from students telling me they do not want to be in school 'alone' without friends. Rest assured, they will not be alone. We have taken appropriate health and safety precautions to isolate close contacts, but the education of all our students remains paramount. We do not want unnecessary unauthorised absence from school that hinders face to face learning, so we thank parents in anticipation for working with us.

I appreciate that despite the fact we are now learning to live with the pandemic this is still both an unnerving and frightening time, therefore if you would like to speak to me, please contact Dawn McKinna via email, dawn.mckinna@armthorpeacademy.org.uk to arrange a mutually convenient time. It is essential you encourage your child to keep testing twice a week using the lateral flow tests provided by school; identifying asymptomatic members of our community early should prevent further spread. Please test and register on a Sunday and Wednesday evening each night as requested. Although it is difficult as teenagers are teenagers, we also need your help in the community beyond the school gates. Although our students are fantastic in school and adhere to compulsory wearing of face coverings very well, we know that once they leave the school site, they are congregating in the local community in large groups without face coverings or any social distancing maintained. Please speak to your child to remind them of the need to respect government guidance; COVID has no respect for anyone, but we must respect the devastation it causes.

This continues to be a challenging time for us all. We obviously all want our young people in school, but we must respect government guidance. Thank you for your anticipated understanding and for working with us. Take care and stay safe.

Kind regards



Claire Robbins
Headteacher

