

Lincoln Castle Academy



25th November 2020

Dear Parent/ Carer,

Following my letter to all parents on Friday 20th November, I write to provide a further update. This week we have been informed of several students testing positive for Covid-19. This continues to be a worrying time and I remain acutely aware of the trust you are placing in Lincoln Castle Academy staff to keep your children safe. In this letter, I hope to reassure you by detailing the steps we are taking to manage risk, including in response to positive cases.

All secondary schools are experiencing considerable disruption, with groups of students self-isolating and accessing education remotely. Others remain in lessons in the academy and a few have returned only to be asked to isolate again. This is far from ideal, but these are necessary precautionary steps that we must take to reduce risk. Figures published today show 73% secondary schools have experienced positive cases and associated disruption.

When we are notified of a confirmed case of Covid-19 we begin by establishing key information about the individual's movements and time in school. In most cases, students are already self-isolating when they receive a positive result. We use seating plans, information from staff and we communicate with the student themselves to establish friendship groups and information about the journey to and from school. We establish a 'close contact' list, a relatively straightforward process. Once identified, these students are removed from lessons; they assemble outside, under our canopy. We provide reassurance to these students and explain the steps we are taking. Administrative staff telephone parents/carers to inform them that their child will be sent home and must now self-isolate. A letter is then sent (via email), providing guidance, safety measures to reduce transmission and clearly stating the final day of self-isolation and the date the student must return to school. Once staff are informed, work is then provided for these students on our online platform. In all cases, staff commit to continuing the curriculum, regardless of whether students are in or out of school.

At the start of the academic year, we created year group 'zones', maintaining separation and minimising student movement. Other compromises included staggered starts and ends to the day, a limited canteen service and the postponement of after-school clubs and enrichment. Although unwelcome, these measures have helped to reduce spread between year groups and enabled a rapid response to confirmed cases.

We have now experienced isolated cases across most year groups, but we have asked most Year 11 students to learn from home until 7th December. If several confirmed cases are reported in quick succession, we liaise with our local Health Protection Team. If we cannot be certain the cases are unrelated (isolated), we will ask students from that year group to learn from home for up to 14 days. This is different to self-isolation and designed to reduce the potential for community transmission.

Students who have not been advised to self-isolate and remain well and symptom free should continue to attend school. Whilst recent communications have been exclusively focused on safety measures, I can assure you the atmosphere within lessons remains thoroughly uplifting, with students working hard, often showing a renewed appreciation for learning and the value of their education.

As always, I attach the 'Information Sheet' which includes the measures you should take to reduce the spread of COVID-19, especially if you have a household member who is at greater risk of developing severe illness from COVID-19. Please continue to emphasise the importance of the 'Hands-Face-Space' measures to your child. Whilst it is no longer practical to inform you of every positive test result, I will continue to provide regular updates. If you require further information, please contact us on 01522 529203 or email: enquiries@lincolncastleacademy.co.uk.

Thank you for your understanding and support as we work to overcome these challenges together.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Laming', written in a cursive style.

Mrs Laming
Headteacher

COVID-19 IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Symptoms of COVID 19

The most common symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) are recent onset of:

- new continuous cough and/or
- high temperature and/or
- a loss of, or change in, normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia)

For most people, coronavirus (COVID-19) will be a mild illness.

If your child does develop symptoms, you can seek advice from NHS 111 at:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/check-if-you-have-coronavirus-symptoms/> or by phoning 111.

How to stop COVID-19 spreading

There are things you can do to help reduce the risk of you and anyone you live with getting ill with COVID-19, including:

- wash your hands with soap and water often – do this for at least 20 seconds
- use hand sanitiser gel if soap and water are not available
- wash your hands as soon as you get home
- cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when you cough or sneeze
- put used tissues in the bin immediately and wash your hands afterwards

What to do if your child develops symptoms of COVID 19

If your child develops symptoms of COVID-19, they should remain at home for at least 10 days from the date when their symptoms appeared. Anyone with symptoms will be eligible for testing and this can be arranged via <https://www.nhs.uk/ask-for-a-coronavirus-test> or by calling 119 . If you have difficulty obtaining a test, please get in touch as we have a small supply in the academy.

All other household members who remain well must stay at home and not leave the house for 14 days. This includes anyone in your 'Support Bubble'. The 14-day period starts from the day when the first person in the house became ill.

Household members should not go to work, school/college or public areas and exercise should be taken within the home. If you require help with buying groceries, other shopping or picking up medication, or walking a dog, you should ask friends or family. Alternatively, you can order your shopping online and medication by phone or online.

Household members staying at home for 14 days will greatly reduce the overall amount of infection the household could pass on to others in the community. If you are able, you can move any vulnerable individuals (such as the elderly and those with underlying health conditions) out of your home, to stay with friends or family for the duration of the home isolation period.

Please see the link to the PHE 'Stay at Home' Guidance:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection>

Further Information

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

