



CHENEY SCHOOL

Think for yourself, act for others

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Rob Pavey, Headteacher

7 December 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

Covid positive numbers in school

As many of you will be aware, there have been a significant number of positive Covid test results in the last week. The facts are below, followed by some thoughts and some outline plans.

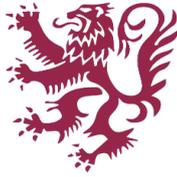
- Year 8: 5 positive cases, all from the same tutor group.
- Year 10: 1 positive case (sibling of Year 8 case).
- Year 11: 2 positive cases (one also a sibling of Year 8 case).
- Year 12: 1 positive case.
- Year 13: 1 positive case.
- Staff: 1 positive case.

I have discussed the case with Public Health England and the local health protection team, as well as informing the local authority. Given the number of cases in Year 8, half of the year have been asked to self-isolate. For each of the other cases, an average of 25 students have been identified as close contacts and asked to self-isolate. We therefore have almost 250 students at home at present, plus a number of members of staff.

We have been looking carefully at whether the different cases are connected to see how we can break the transmission. The Year 8 cases are clearly connected through the same tutor group, and a drama class at the beginning of last week; this was then passed to two siblings in other years at home.

Clearly, we have been looking at whether the return to specialist rooms has had an effect. Given the pattern of cases (8 out of 11 connected to one class) and the likely incubation period, both we and the local health protection team believe this would have happened in the same way under the geographical division of the school. It may be that more information will come to light, and we may need to review the change back to specialist rooms, but I currently believe that the new measures actually enhance both hygiene and our ability to teach online.

Staff shortages are about to become a serious problem, and the agencies we use for cover have no additional staff available. It is possible that we will therefore need to have a partial school closure, because we will not have enough staff to provide a cover teacher in each class, even if the class is being taught remotely by the normal teacher. If we have to do this, **we will ask Year 8, Year 9 and Year 10** to work from home, in that order.



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The other possibility we are considering is closing the school a week early, and having a **remote learning week**, where all lessons will be via Google Classroom. We are considering this partly because we do not want to wreck anyone's Christmas plans by asking them to self-isolate in the final week of term, as well as a way to deal with staff shortages. I would like to gauge parental reaction to this to help us plan. Here is a very brief survey:

<https://forms.gle/wG4T1UL53De9qVJV6>

As always, many thanks for your ongoing support. We will try and give as much warning as possible, but it is often not possible to give as much as we would like. For parents whose children have been asked to self-isolate today, we are going to try and ring before the end of the day, but there are a large number on the list. I will send a confirmatory email to all those concerned as soon as I can, but this is not likely to be before 6 or 7pm today.

Kind regards

Rob Pavey
Headteacher