

# WOOTTON ACADEMY TRUST

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17 December 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

## **Track and Trace School Holiday Arrangements**

Wootton Academy Trust is required to continue its track and trace process during the first week of the Christmas holiday period, up to and including Christmas Eve, December 24th. This is to ensure any child, young person or staff who were in contact with a positive case of coronavirus (COVID-19) during the last week of term are notified and go into self-isolation. As you can appreciate, this is in the interest of the health and safety of our entire school and college communities and to protect everyone's wider family over the holiday period.

If your son/daughter tests positive for coronavirus, and developed their first symptoms (a cough, temperature and a loss/change of taste or sense of smell) up to and including Monday 21st December, you MUST contact the Trust so that we can carry out our own track and trace investigation.

Wootton Upper School and Kimberley College sites will be closed during the holiday period, therefore you will need to contact the Trust via email: [covid19@wootton.beds.sch.uk](mailto:covid19@wootton.beds.sch.uk)

**This reporting arrangement will be in place up to and including 24th December**, after which you should use the NHS Track and Trace process until the school and college returns for the Spring Term on Monday 4th January.

If your son/daughter's symptoms first develop after Monday 21st December, then you should only follow contact tracing instructions provided by NHS Test and Trace as your child would not have been contagious whilst they were in school or in college.

Should you have to report a case within this timeframe to the Trust, a member of staff will need to call you via telephone to confirm any contact your child had with others – pupils/students and staff whilst they were in their contagious period. The school and college will inform the parents/carers of any child or young person that needs to go into self-isolation via text and email.

Where a child or young person or staff member tests positive for coronavirus, having developed symptoms more than **48** hours since being in school or college, the school or college should not be contacted. Parents and carers should follow contact tracing instructions provided by NHS Test and Trace.

We would like all of our children, young people and their families, our staff and the wider community to have a holiday period unaffected by self-isolation, but unfortunately coronavirus does not take a break. We therefore ask everyone to be as vigilant as possible during the holiday and ensure they self-isolate if they exhibit coronavirus symptoms.

**COVID-19 cases in Bedfordshire have been rising rapidly recently, with the fastest rises in rates among the 11-18 age group.** As many as 1 in 3 people who have coronavirus have no symptoms and could be spreading it without realising it.

If you are in doubt about whether your child has symptoms, and needs to be tested, please contact 119 for their advice.

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## Rapid Testing from January

The Department for Education has announced that from January:

- Teachers and pupils will have access to rapid testing from January
- Staff and students who are in close contact with cases will be eligible for daily testing, eliminating the need for immediate self-isolation. Only if a daily test returns a positive result will the staff member need to isolate. If consent to daily testing is not provided it is a legal requirement to follow national guidelines and self-isolate at home for the full isolation period.
- Testing will roll out as rapidly as possible from January, starting with staff and moving quickly on to serial testing of students.
- It is the decision of the individual school or college when they would like to begin accessing this new dedicated testing capacity.

The government has produced more information: [detailed Q&A for parents](#).

## Other access to testing

In addition to rapid testing in schools and colleges, the government has made it possible for you to request a kit for every member of your household online at <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>

The test will be delivered to your home, you can administer the test yourself and return it following the instructions that come with the test.

Whilst tests are not compulsory, we strongly urge every child/young person, parent/carer and school and college staff to take part as the more people who are tested, the better able we are to contain the virus.

If we can break the chain of infections in this way, we can help to reduce the number of COVID-19 cases, limit the number of people who might fall very ill, and protect the NHS.

## What you can do

We all have a part to play in controlling the virus. With the school holidays and festive season approaching it is tempting to not stick to the rules.

However, it is more important than ever that we continue to:

- Social distance from anyone we don't live with
- Wash our hands regularly
- Wear a face covering
- Self-isolate if you have symptoms, test positive or are contacted by Test and Trace and asked to isolate

Mixing with other people increases the risk of spreading the virus.

Whilst for most young people they only experience mild symptoms of the virus they can pass it on to others who may have underlying conditions or be elderly who are much more likely to be very ill from the virus. This is why it is vitally important that young people limit their social contact with others. In school, bubbles are formed so that the virus can be better contained if someone tests positive.

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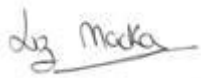
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If your child is no longer attending school/college, they can no longer mix with students who were in their school bubble. They must only have close contact with people they live with or who are in their support bubble.

As we approach the Christmas holiday, I urge you and your family to continue to help us keep the virus under control. We can only do this if everyone plays their part.

Vaccinations have begun and there is hope that 2021 will see us all return to some normality but for now, we have to keep up with the efforts to control the virus so that we can protect everyone in our community, particularly those who are most vulnerable.

Yours faithfully



Dr E Mackay  
Deputy Head of College



Mrs C McMorn  
Head of School