



9 December 2020

Dear Parent and Carers

I hope my letter finds you and your family well.

As the term nears to an end I wanted to thank you for your support this term in ensuring that together we are doing all we can to keep schools open for our young people.

Please find an accompanying letter from Rob Haring, CEO of WEST about yesterday's Department of Education (DfE) announcement with regard to the last day of term.

Just to confirm arrangements to comply with this request by the DfE for Plymstock School.

End of term arrangements

- The last day in school will be Thursday 17 December and will finish at normal times for each year group.
- Friday 18 December will be a non-teaching day/INSET day, which will allow much needed time for school staff training, linked to remote learning resources.
- School will re-open as per the published school calendar on Tuesday 5 January.
- Students for each year group should arrive as per their published staggered start times for registration and lessons.

Contact tracing for Public Health England

This term has included an important new role for schools in contact tracing, to help in the national effort to limit the spread of the virus. We will continue to lead this work over weekends and holidays as part of the school's role to support public health through the remaining part of this pandemic.

We recognise the challenges of this responsibility at the end of term.

- Public Health England has agreed a 6 day window after the final day of teaching, in which schools are asked to fulfil this important role to keep our community as safe as possible by assisting with contact tracing where necessary.
- This will allow enough time for positive coronavirus (COVID-19) cases to be identified and confirmed by a test and for relevant contacts in the education setting to be traced.
- We will provide this service until 23 December, when schools have been asked to cease this role until Tuesday 5 January; when we will re-open our COVID text number for parents and carers to report positive cases.
- PHE have advised that the need to support the tracing process will reduce dramatically over the course of the 6 days as the majority of cases should be identified earlier in the week by Monday 22 December.

We very much hope that we will not need to contact families and all can enjoy their seasonal time within the new guidance. I have included details on page 3 of this letter as to how we will operate this service from Friday 18 December.

The DfE recognise this communication has arrived with schools late in the term and we have been asked to share this information with parents as soon as possible.

The DfE have also clarified that schools will not now need to use rotas if we see an increase again in coronavirus cases; the planned educational tiers announced in August have been removed. ***"We have taken a national decision to prioritise education during the current period of national restrictions in order to avoid any further reduction in face-to-face education for children and young people beyond what is necessitated when they are required to self-isolate."*** Schools have been asked to continue with the system of close contact tracing to ensure we remain open for the majority of our students.

I think we all appreciate that the situation in the New Year could once again change quickly and I will endeavour to keep you updated as quickly and comprehensively as I can. If we are affected adversely by staff absence, we may have to consider sending a year group home to continue to keep the school open for the majority of students. Currently, this is not a situation we expect to face but one we wish to make you aware of as a possibility and one for which we will plan to minimise disruption for as short a period as possible.

Our students' behaviour, conduct, attendance and attitude have been fantastic this term and they are to be commended; it is clear they are trying their very best and we are really proud of them. It continues to be a wonderful achievement and is something we shouldn't overlook in these difficult times; it represents the work of our whole school community, parents and carers, students and staff. Schools are vital for long-term health and wellbeing, as well as helping students to achieve qualifications and allowing them to develop as a whole person.

Whilst we are not complacent about this indiscriminate virus and how easily it can be transmitted, given the backdrop of the emerging national picture, we will continue to work hard to maintain the success we have achieved – for our young people and their futures.

I hope you all have a safe and peaceful Christmas.

Yours sincerely



Mr R Pearsall
HEADTEACHER



Plymstock School

Contact tracing for Public Health England

Friday 18 December to Wednesday 23 December

From Friday 18 December, if a pupil or staff member tests positive for coronavirus (COVID-19), having developed symptoms within 48 hours of being in school, the school is asked to assist in identifying close contacts and advising self-isolation, as the individual may have been infectious whilst in school.

Information and relevant arrangements regarding positive cases in the holidays:

- In all cases Parents and carers should follow contact tracing instructions provided by NHS Test and Trace.
- If you need to report a positive COVID-19 result, please TEXT our COVID-19 text number urgently on 07975005633 giving your name, your child's name and a number we can call you back on.
- Schools are not asked to be on-call at all times but staff will contact you by reply on the same day.
- Staff responsible for contact tracing will then:
 - Contact the family of the positive case and identify the close contacts
 - Report the positive case to the DfE/PHE National Helpline and complete the risk assessment with regard to number of close contacts
 - Contact the close contacts and advise them of the PHE requirement to self-isolate
 - We would normal always contact parents/carers during term time by telephone, however from Friday 18 December this is most likely to be a short MyEd message and an attached copy of the letter from PHE for close contacts.
- Schools have been instructed not to provide close contact tracing beyond Wednesday 23 December.
- School staff are not asked to remain on-call from 24 December until Monday 4 January.
- If your son/daughter is required to self-isolate due to contact with a positive case after the 23 December, you do not need to inform the school about their absence until the first day of the new term. Tuesday 5 January 2021
- Where a pupil or staff member tests positive for coronavirus (COVID-19), having developed symptoms more than 48 hours since being in school, the school should not be contacted.



The Department for Education coronavirus (COVID-19) helpline and PHE advice service are available to support with any queries you have about positive cases in your family.

If your child does develop symptoms, you can seek advice from the nhs.uk website at <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/check-if-you-have-coronavirus-symptoms/>. If you are concerned about your child's symptoms, or they are worsening you can seek advice from NHS 111 at <https://111.nhs.uk/> or by phoning 111.

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.

Further Information

Further information is available at <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

