



# Westcliff High School for Boys

Designated Outstandingly Successful on four occasions (Ofsted)  
Headmaster: Mr M A Skelly, M.A.

30 October 2020

Dear Parent,

I write to provide you with further details of our systems for managing the impact of COVID-19 on the School.

We have taken time during the half-term break to review and identify areas for improvement in our current arrangements and that includes our procedures for informing parents and pupils of contact tracing details. We have put some amended arrangements in place and these will be in operation from next week. Details of those arrangements are included below.

At a time when, regrettably, I am forced to write yet another letter on the topic of COVID-19, I have also taken this opportunity to update you on a number of other matters, including our planned Calendar of Autumn Events which I believe, thanks to the energy and commitment of our wonderful pupils and staff, will lift our spirits in these challenging times, as we head into the second half of this term.

## COVID-19 Communications

In the event that your son/daughter is identified as a close contact of a pupil who has tested positive for COVID-19, the School will take the following steps:

- Your son/daughter will be brought to the Main Hall for a briefing from Senior Staff;
- They will be told to contact you by telephone to inform you that they will need to go into self-isolation and to make arrangements to return home;
- Those pupils travelling on foot will be permitted to walk home as long as they have confirmed that they have made contact with their parent(s);
- Those not travelling on foot will not be permitted to use public transport and so must arrange transport with their parents. They will remain in the School Hall until their parents arrive to collect them;
- The School will send an email to parents (copied to their son/daughter) which provides the date for the end of their period of self-isolation;
- In the event that further positive cases of COVID-19 are identified in the relevant cohort of pupils, which alters the end date of a pupil's self-isolation, then the School will send parents (copied to their son/daughter) an update email with the new date.
- I draw your attention to the Appendix of this letter which provides NHS details on how to respond in the event that a family member is required to self-isolate. It also provides details on how pupils can continue to access their school work from home. I strongly recommend that this appendix is kept to hand in the event that your son/daughter is required to self-isolate;
- In the event that there are a number of positive cases in one Year Group, it may be necessary to require the entire Year Group to work from home. In these circumstances, the School will send an email to all parents with children in the relevant Year Group (copied to the pupils) informing them of the situation. Please note that, although all pupils in the Year Group will be working from home in these circumstances, only those pupils advised directly by email to self-isolate will be required to self-isolate;
- Parents are welcome to contact the relevant Pastoral Office if they have any queries regarding these details, or any future communications they receive regarding the School's response to COVID-19;
- In order to keep all parents informed of the impact of COVID-19 on the School's operations, we shall circulate an email each fortnight updating them on the situation. We hope that this approach will rationalise our arrangements and avoid the need to continue to send multiple letters (often containing the same/similar information) to parents while ensuring details of COVID-19 related developments are communicated.

## Update Regarding Sixth Form Arrangements

As you may be aware, a number of the School's Sixth Form students tested positive for COVID-19 just prior to the half-term break. It is important that we continue to review and revisit the School's arrangements to minimise the spread of COVID-19 and I would like to draw your attention to the following updated arrangements:

- Lessons will proceed as normal, however, where possible, classrooms will be designated for the exclusive use of either the Lower Sixth or the Upper Sixth. There are a handful of rooms where this has not been possible, i.e. the room can be used by Lower and Upper Sixth classes at different times, however, in line with existing practice, wipes and sanitizer will continue to be available to students on entering all classrooms;
- The study and social spaces in the Sixth Form Building will undergo some further reorganization. Upper Sixth students will have exclusive use of the Study Space (SF1) and the Servery area, whereas the Lower Sixth students will use the Library and the Sixth Form Forum. Students in the Library and SF1 will have access to computer and printing facilities;
- The Sixth Form Forum and Servery areas will be equipped with individual desks spaced appropriately, and students may use these during a study period;
- With the exception of students eating, or students seated at a desk during a study period or lesson, face coverings should be worn in all areas of the Sixth Form Building unless the student concerned is medically exempt from wearing a mask. Spare face masks are available from the Sixth Form Pastoral Office;
- It is hoped to provide lunch from the Servery for students who have pre-ordered a meal and these arrangements will be shared in due course. We would, therefore, encourage students to bring in a packed lunch for the first two days of the new half term, although they are also welcome to eat off site at lunchtime. Subject to these arrangements being made, all Sixth Form students may order food from the café, however Lower Sixth students should eat in the Sixth Form Forum rather than the Servery;
- Where weather is inclement at break or lunch times, students who have their next lesson in a classroom in the Sixth Form Building will be able to spend the lunch break in that room, thereby freeing space in the communal areas for those who need it. All Sixth Form students are still permitted to leave the site during the lunch break (12:50pm to 1:50pm) if they wish;
- Where a student has Periods 5 and 6 free on any day, they may sign out at the conclusion of Period 4 (12:50pm) and leave the site. Similarly, any student who has a lesson in Period 5, but no lesson in Period 6 may leave the School site (after signing out at the Sixth Form Pastoral Office) at 2:45pm.

We regret that the majority of our Wednesday afternoon activities, which depend upon Upper Sixth leadership of Lower Sixth groups, cannot take place. Some activities can be offered through a model of online collaboration, while others such as a limited sporting provision and Year Group specific activities, such as Young Enterprise, can continue. Students not involved in those activities are encouraged to leave the School site at 12:50pm each Wednesday and make their way home. Students who are unable to do so, for example, because they must wait for a contract bus, may use the study facilities in SF1 (Upper Sixth) or the Library (Lower Sixth) to work individually. We shall keep our Wednesday afternoon arrangements under review and, depending upon the local circumstances, endeavour to expand the provision in the Spring and Summer Terms.

### Monday 9 November 2020 - Remote Working

I would like to take this opportunity to remind parents that all pupils will be working from home on Monday 9 November. This arrangement has been put in place in order to facilitate the COVID-19 secure arrangements for the 11+ Test. All pupils are advised to login to *Microsoft Teams* in order to access their lessons for the day.

### The School's Autumn Calendar of Events

Regrettably, various necessary restrictions aimed at combatting COVID-19 have had a significant impact on the School's usual Autumn Calendar of Events. Thanks to the ingenuity and energy of our pupils and staff, a number of events, such as Sport, Drama, Music, House Activities, CCF and Clubs and Societies have continued at School, albeit with changes to their usual formats. Unfortunately, other events requiring

an audience, such as music concerts and Speech Day have had to be postponed. In response to the situation, the School intends to make greater use of streaming to enable these and other events to go ahead in the future. As we did in the Summer Term, the School will be collaborating with a talented team of individuals, under the direction of Mr Jeffreys, to produce and stream an Autumn Programme. We shall provide further details of those events in due course.

### **Centenary Speech Day**

Speech Day is the most important ceremonial occasion of the School Year. Speech Day provides an important opportunity for the School to recognize and celebrate the achievements of many of our students. It also strengthens the School community by encouraging students to support one another. Speech Day is usually held in the School Hall in November of each academic year, when over 900 students, staff, parents and friends come together to celebrate the success of our students. This year's Speech Day was particularly important as it would have also marked the Centenary of the School. Our invited guest speaker for the School's Centenary Speech Day is Alderman David Norman MBE, a highly distinguished Old Westcliffian and former Mayor of Southend-on-Sea. We have delayed Speech Day until the Spring Term 2021 (date to be arranged) in the hope that the current restrictions may have eased. In the event that the restrictions remain in place, we shall put alternative arrangements in place for Speech Day and stream it to the School community.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank parents for their continuing support for the School. I hope that you will be able view some or all of the events we have planned for the remainder of this term. I give my best wishes to you and your family.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "M A Skelley". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned to the left of the printed name below it.

Headmaster

# APPENDIX

**The School strongly recommends that this appendix is kept to hand in the event that you receive further communications from the School regarding COVID-19 in relation to your son/daughter.**

## Self-Isolation

In line with that national guidance, your son/daughter must stay at home and self-isolate for 14 days if the School advises that they have come into close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19. Other members of your household can continue normal activities provided your son/daughter does not develop symptoms within the 14-day self-isolation period. Your son/daughter should continue to work from home (see details below) unless we are in a period of School holidays. In the event that your son/daughter is experiencing any difficulties with these arrangements then please contact the relevant Pastoral Office at the School.

## How to Access the Curriculum whilst Remote Working

Your son/daughter should aim to follow his/her normal School timetable. If he/she is able to, he/she should open *Microsoft Teams* at the beginning of the School day where information on what is being covered in each lesson that day will be found by referencing the pages for each class. Where possible, staff will be broadcasting their lessons from School, so that your son/daughter can hear the teacher and can ask questions (either using a microphone, or by typing into the lesson 'Chat'). Assignments will be collected online using *Teams*, and where an assignment is an extended handwritten piece of work, it should be scanned using the *MS Office Lens* app on a mobile phone (the app is free, and links with *Teams* well) and sent to the teacher.

Where a student has a question about their learning, and he/she wishes to contact the teacher one-to-one outside of a lesson, he/she should use the *Microsoft Teams* 'Chat' function to send a personal message to the teacher.

## How to Access Pastoral Support whilst Remote Working

Many Form Tutors will also 'broadcast' their Form Periods each day on *Microsoft Teams* so that your daughter/son can still take part virtually in this gathering. Students are welcome to send *Microsoft Teams* Chat messages to their form tutor, or to a member of their Pastoral Office if they have a particular concern. In addition, parents are welcome to contact the relevant Pastoral Office by telephoning the School. Where they are considered to be beneficial, online meetings between students and pastoral staff can be arranged.

## What to do if your son/daughter develops symptoms of COVID-19

If your son/daughter develops symptoms of COVID-19, they must not come to School and should remain at home for at least **10 days** from the date on which 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.

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'.

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

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 or public areas and exercise should be taken within the home.

If you require help with buying groceries, other shopping, picking up medication or walking a dog, you should ask friends or family for support. Alternatively, you can order your shopping online and medication by phone or online.

By remaining at home for 14 days, household members will greatly reduce the overall amount of infection that their household could pass on to others in the community

If you are able, 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.

## Symptoms

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

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

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

If your son/daughter 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 son's/daughter's symptoms, or they are worsening you can seek advice from NHS 111 at <https://111.nhs.uk/> 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 becoming ill with COVID-19

*You must:*

- 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

## Further Information

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