



HAILSHAM COMMUNITY COLLEGE ACADEMY TRUST

'Be the very best you can be'

11 November 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

I am writing to let you know that we have been made aware today that we have further confirmed cases of Covid-19 at the College. Once again we have been in contact with Public Health England and the Department for Education who have advised us on the appropriate course of action. In addition to this, I was made aware early this morning of a growing number of staff who were absent and this unfortunately created a significant staff shortage today, hence my very reluctant decision to close the secondary college site.

Based on the details that have been provided about the further confirmed cases, we have ensured that the children who have or may have been in close contact with the individuals who have tested positive for Covid-19 have been identified and their parents/carers have received a separate letter informing them that their child must stay at home and self isolate for 14 days.

Public Health England will be in touch with anyone who has had close contact with the confirmed case outside the college to let them know what the next steps are.

The [NHS website](#) gives details about how to check for the main coronavirus symptoms.

As a reminder: if you, your child or anyone you live with develops **any** of the following symptoms:

- A new, continuous cough and/or
- A high temperature and/or
- A loss or change to their sense of smell or taste (anosmia)

then you must follow [Government guidance to stay at home](#).

Should your child become sick or need to self-isolate, please report this to us by following normal absence procedures.

You can use [NHS 111 online](#) if you or your child feels ill and you want to know what to do next. If you have any other questions or concerns, please get in touch with the school by telephone or by emailing hcc@hccat.net

Clearly the situation with regard to the additional confirmed cases is of great concern to us all but I can assure you that we will continue to follow all the Public Health and Department for Education advice we are given so that we are able to put in all the necessary control measures. However, the issue of staff shortage is a very significant one in terms of the day-to-day running of the college, as the number of staff involved does not allow us to operate as normal at this moment in time. This, combined with the current increase in positive coronavirus cases leaves me with no alternative but to make the decision for most students to work from home over the next week.

Students in all year groups (including Sixth Form) other than Year 11 will therefore, be asked to access their work on Firefly at home up to and including Thursday 19 November (Friday 20 November is a scheduled Inset day, when the college is closed to all students). **Year 11 students who have not been asked to self isolate or are not ill should attend as normal, in full college uniform so that they can be supported in their preparation towards their examinations next summer.**

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If your child feels unwell and has a test which is positive, please can you ensure you still inform the college regardless of whether or not they are attending. We will need to know the date from when they first experienced symptoms, as well as the date that the result was received.

It is my intention that all students will return to onsite learning on Monday 23 November but I am sure you will appreciate that this is a fluid and rapidly changing situation and therefore, I will be in contact with you again next week to update you on the details of this.

As a college we have been prepared for such an eventuality for some time and we are fully committed to providing high quality remote learning for our students whilst they are working from home. Teachers will be setting work on Firefly and students and parents will be able to contact teachers via Firefly with any queries they may have. If you have any problems accessing the online work, please contact us and we will ensure paper copies are made available.

We know from our experience of lockdown earlier in the year that home environments vary enormously and some family circumstances will be such that it may not be easy, even impossible at times for students to gain access to a computer and, of course we will be sympathetic to these challenges. All we ask is that students aim to do the best they can in their individual home setting and that you as a parent, monitor this where possible. We accept that there will be circumstances when work may not be completed and that is fine. We also understand that some work set may be confusing and require further clarification. In both these situations I would always ask that students email the specific subject teacher who provided the work to make them aware of the issue so they can provide support.

Free School Meals

We are able to provide a packed lunch for any child who is entitled to Free School Meals. To enable the kitchen to plan and prepare efficiently, please let us know by 10.00am if your child requires this service. The lunches will be available for collection between 12.00 – 12.30pm each day.

Key Workers / Vulnerable Learners

In these exceptional circumstances we are able to remain open for children of key workers (please follow this link for full details of the [key worker criteria](#)) and students in vulnerable groups. We appreciate the sensitivity around the vulnerable groups and therefore our staff will contact the families of the children we feel may need to continue coming into school. Children who do not fall into these categories should remain at home with appropriate care.

In order that we can make the necessary planning could you please let us know if you believe you fit the criteria of a key worker and if you need this provision. We need to know both the name of your child and which key worker grouping you fit into. Please contact us at 01323 841468 or email hcc@hccat.net.

Children of key workers/vulnerable children should arrive in full college uniform and go to their usual bubble area in the morning:

- Year 7 – Canteen
- Year 8 – S16/17
- Year 9 – Drama
- Year 10 – LRC

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From here they will be directed to their classroom.

Year 11 key worker and vulnerable children should attend their normal mentor group with the rest of their year group.

As a parent myself I fully appreciate the level of concern and anxiety about the current situation but it is clear when looking at the national picture that this virus is still growing and moving through communities at different rates.

I would like to reiterate once again that all we can do is our very best to work together as a community to protect everyone whilst continuing to provide an education for our learners. We will continue to keep you updated with any further information as appropriate.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Matthews', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Phil Matthews
Executive Principal