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08 December 2020

Dear Parent/Guardians

### **Covid-19 Update**

We have unfortunately over the weekend had confirmation of four positive cases in three separate year groups. In addition, we have had a single positive case in Year 7 today. From the information that we have, there is no indication that these five cases are connected or transmission has taken place in school.

As an organisation that accommodates 1500 students and over 200 staff on a daily basis, we have been fortunate until now that our case rate has been relatively low and disruption minimal, particularly in comparison with other secondary schools in Newport. Unfortunately, all secondary schools in Newport have been affected by partial closure at some point or another during the last term. All schools are doing their best to mitigate transmission but inevitably, positive cases arise that then lead to disruption to school routines.

As we are operating year group "contact groups", then there only needs to be one case in a year group to trigger the self-isolation of an entire year group. For Key Stage 3, we do actually operate half year group "contact groups" for lessons; however, logistically, we are unable to separate a single year group during social times, e.g. in canteens, around the school, inside during wet breaks and lunches. We manage any prolonged contact between different year groups through our mitigating measures: a staggered start and end to the day, staggered breaks and lunches, zoned communal areas for social time, a one way system inside buildings, and the wearing of face coverings in communal areas. We cannot, of course, control the students' interactions before they arrive at school and when they leave. Despite our efforts to keep year groups apart in school, we are aware that students do interact across year groups when they are out of school.

## Last Week of Term

There has been speculation over an early closure during the last week of term as some local authorities have decided to move to online learning due to the high prevalence of Covid-19 cases in their community. We have received notification from Newport City Council which states that all of its schools are expected to remain open until the last day of term. A statement from NCC can be found [here](#).

Therefore, as it stands, our school will be open until **Friday 18th December** for the students who are **not self-isolating**, i.e. **Year 8, Year 11 and Year 9** (who are due back in school this Monday). Please be aware that if we have a positive case in your child's year group between now and the end of term, then they will still be expected to self-isolate for 14 days from the last time the positive case was in school.

Despite our efforts to mitigate transmission in school, no organisation can guarantee a Covid-19 free environment. Every positive case in our school community is unfortunate and worrying for all involved. We are desperately sad that some year groups cannot finish the term in school.

For all year groups asked to isolate at home, we will continue to provide distance learning until the end of term.

Yours faithfully



Mr. D. Curtis  
Headteacher/Pennaeth