

13<sup>th</sup> November 2020

Dear Families,

I hope that you are all safe and well and as we enter the second week of a national lockdown, that you have enough support around you during these challenging times.

In my letter dated 2<sup>nd</sup> November, I reiterated the school's commitment to maintaining open and transparent communication with the whole school community should any of our pupils or staff receive a positive COVID-19 test result and, over the past few days, you will have received four letters updating you about the current situation at Riverside School. As stated on a number of occasions, our core values include *Integrity* and *Trust* and we feel strongly that you, our Riverside families, should be aware of any positive cases that arise within the school.

To date, two pupils and two members of staff who have been in school have tested positive for COVID-19 and these cases were shared with you in my letters dated 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> November. Three of these cases were in the same Secondary bubble at Riverside SPC and one case was in the Early Years bubble at Riverside SPC.

There have been four other cases (two pupils and two members of staff) from within the school community who have also recently tested positive, but none of them have been in school for a number of weeks for a range of reasons, meaning that they have had no contact with anyone at Riverside.

You will know that our protocols are to contact Public Health England when we are notified of a positive case in school and we have had a number of very useful discussions with our colleagues in Public Health and the London Coronavirus Response Cell (LCRC) regarding individual cases. They have advised and fully supported all the decisions we have had to make regarding which pupils and staff need to stay at home and self-isolate as a result of potential close contact with the person during the period that they were infectious. Close contact is defined by:

- Direct close contacts – face to face contact (within 1 metre) with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 for any length of time, including being coughed on, a face to face conversation, or unprotected physical contact (skin-to-skin);
- Proximity contacts – extended close contact (within 1-2 metres) with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 for more than 15 minutes.
- Travelling in a small vehicle with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19.

Contact can occur in class, in the playground or in the dinner hall and, as a result of our careful control measures, all contact would be contained within the class, or the bubble that the person is in. The only exception to this would include other children who share the same minibus or taxi with a child who had tested positive.

You will be aware of all the precautionary measures we have put in place to reduce the risk of the infection spreading and we keep our bubble sizes under review to ensure that we keep the numbers

of pupils and staff who come into contact with one another, small enough to reduce the likelihood of the infection spreading, yet of a size which enables us to maintain the efficient use of shared spaces; curriculum options and opportunities for your children to spend time with other children and adults. Whilst life is far from normal at the moment, we still want your child's school experience to feel as happy and "normal" as it can be, despite the current restrictions.

We currently have ten bubbles which cover our 302 pupils and to date, we have had to send two of our bubbles home for between 8 and 10 school days, dependent on when they last had contact with the person who had tested positive. Approximately 60 pupils have been affected (20% of our pupil population) and this is broadly in line with numbers in other schools nationally. Some have had more, some have had less but we will, of course, keep you fully informed of any new positive cases. However, rather than writing to you every time there is a new positive case, we will inform those families directly affected (ie if your child is in the same class / bubble or minibus as the positive case) on the day, and we will let the wider school community know of any positive cases every Friday. I hope that this will reduce your anxiety whenever a message from Riverside School pings through on your phone.

You will be aware that we introduced some additional precautionary measures after returning from the half term break, to keep our whole school community as safe as we can. These additional measures are in line with the World Health Organisation's advice and include:

- All staff and visitors moving around corridors and communal areas at Riverside SPC and Riverside Beckenham wear a face covering or visor;
- All staff taking children to and from families and / or minibuses at the beginning and end of the day, on all three sites, wear a face covering or visor;
- All parents / carers dropping children off / collecting children within the school grounds, on all three sites, wear a face covering or visor.

Now that we are into a second week of a national lockdown, our commitment remains to do everything we can to keep your child safe, whilst continuing to offer them the opportunities and experiences they love. Since half term, we have marked Remembrance Day, recreated Bonfire Night, dressed up and raised money for Children in Need. With five weeks to go before the end of term, we have a number of things planned which we hope will provide your child with the kinds of experiences and memories they will cherish. We fully acknowledge that life, for so many people, is really tough at the moment, and we will continue to do what we can to support you, and your child, through the uncertain times ahead. Our ARCHITECT values:

*Aspiration Resilience Creativity Humility Integrity Trust Enthusiasm Courage Teamwork*

will continue to shape everything we do and we will never lose our sense of positivity, hope and optimism as we navigate these challenging times together.

With kindest regards,



Steve Solomons  
Headteacher