



## THE HELENA ROMANES SCHOOL & SIXTH FORM CENTRE

2<sup>nd</sup> November 2020

Dear Parent/Carer,

I am writing to provide you with a brief update from HRS as we start the new half term and approach further lockdown restrictions.

### **How many cases have been reported at HRS?**

Last half term there were two cases affecting our school community - both cases were students. In each case, there was no onward transmission of the virus to other members of the school community.

We were very proud of our students who were asked to self-isolate as, in nearly all cases, they continued to work well and showed considerable resilience. A number of students also had to be asked to self-isolate for the early part of the half term break and we know that this will have been very disappointing for them. They have our thanks for making that sacrifice to keep others safe.

We would also like to say thank you to you, our HRS parents and carers, who have been incredibly supportive of the school - it really does make a difference to the staff team.

The community here in Great Dunmow and the surrounding villages has worked very hard to reduce the levels of Covid-19 and the number of positive cases was declining in the week before half term. If we all continue to work together to reduce our contacts outside of school, in line with the government's guidance, it will help schools to remain open and safer for all.

### **How are we working to keep the HRS community safe?**

As you know, we have measures in place to help control the spread of the virus in school. These include:

- The use of hand sanitiser every lesson, before and after eating, and on putting on/taking off masks.
- The staggering of break and lunch times so that each bubble can be in a designated zone.
- The maintenance of ventilation in rooms (even if that makes it colder than usual in classrooms).
- Additional cleaning, especially of high frequency touch points such as fire-doors.
- The wearing of masks in indoor spaces where students from different bubbles might pass each other.
- The use of seating plans so we can quickly and accurately identify those who might need to self-isolate for the protection of others.
- The avoidance of crowding at entry and exit points at the start and end of the day by having staggered timings.

However, the most important of all is the vigilance of our parents and carers at home who ensure students with symptoms do not come into school, but instead stay at home and are tested. Thank you for doing this so rigorously and for informing us of the test results.

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**Would it be safer to keep my child at home?**

The combined opening of education, leisure and hospitality sectors has contributed to the rise in Covid-19 cases nationally, as they increase the number of contacts for those individuals attending them. However, Covid-19 is deemed a low risk to the health of students of a secondary school age. We would urge all parents to ensure all students always attend school when not self-isolating or ill.

**Will learning be disrupted during this lockdown period?**

We will make every effort to ensure learning in school can continue for all students not needing to self-isolate. However, staffing levels are also affected by Covid-19 as staff may also need to self-isolate for periods of time. If staffing levels fall below a critical point, then we might need to send one or more year groups home to ensure all lessons in school have a teacher and that the school can operate safely. Should this be the case, we would look to minimise the impact on any particular year group and we would provide immediate remote learning for those affected. To reduce the risk of this being the case, we are working to increase our capacity to cover lessons.

Thank you again for your on-going support in these challenging times.

Yours sincerely,



Daniel Gee  
Headteacher