



**Rationale:** To provide responses to the most frequently asked questions arising from the Covid-19 pandemic to assist with clarity, consistency and supporting families.

**Date:** November 2020 version 2 (factually accurate at the time of publication- 17.11.20)

### 1) Who decides the need for self-isolation?

- ✓ On receipt of a confirmed positive case we are instructed to call the Department for Education Covid helpline who direct us to identify and notify 'close proximity' contacts
- ✓ We may also be required to call the local Health Protection Team (HPT) who are part of Public Health England (PHE)
- ✓ 'Close proximity' is defined in law as *either within 1 metre for 1 minute or more or within 2 metres for 15 minutes or more with a confirmed positive case*
- ✓ 'Close proximity' contacts at The Clere are identified through adult testimony, pupil testimony, analysis of seating plans and transport alongside break and lunch time arrangements
- ✓ 'Close proximity' contact outside the school also requires self-isolation
- ✓ Standard (PHE approved) letters are issued to the positive case and all those identified as close proximity contacts and thus at higher risk of developing the disease. We also notify the whole school community
- ✓ Isolation for a positive result is 10 days from the date of the test (not the result) or the date of the onset of Covid symptoms
- ✓ Isolation of close proximity contacts is 14 days, same timeframe as the point above
- ✓ Further isolation applies if a self –isolating person develops symptoms of Covid 19 and/or receives a positive test result
- ✓ Isolation ends when the above time periods are served and if symptoms of a high temperature have receded. A cough or loss of taste/ smell may linger but this should not prevent release from self-isolation. If in doubt check with a medical professional.
- ✓ Receiving a negative test result during the 14 day self-isolation period does not automatically end the requirement to self-isolate so it must continue

### 2) How does the school find out about a positive case?

- ✓ We rely on accurate information from parents as medical matters are confidential
- ✓ Rumours and conjecture are time consuming and hinder our Covid responses
- ✓ We have to know when a test was taken or when Covid symptoms commenced to start our response processes
- ✓ Our early experiences at The Clere indicate several asymptomatic cases of Covid-19 which we appreciate increases community anxiety



**3) What actions are the school obliged to take when receiving information about a positive test?**

- ✓ See question 1 above
- ✓ We also notify the Local Authority and the Governing body of each positive case and subsequent actions
- ✓ At The Clere we also support families who are unclear or unsure if they have been in close proximity contact and wish to self-isolate for 14 days providing they are in the same 'bubble' group
- ✓ We follow our risk assessments in terms of deep cleaning and notification

**4) Can the school insist a student or family member get a test?**

- ✓ No- guidance from the Government and NHS remains clear and a test can only be booked if one has Covid symptoms or instructed to by a medical professional
- ✓ If an asymptomatic person gets tested we cannot comment on how this test was obtained unless by a medical professional's instruction

**5) How has The Clere managed to limit the number required to self-isolate?**

- ✓ The DfE, PHE and HPT team are clear in their guidance and instruct school based on their Covid secure risk assessments and analyse in detail the arrangements a school are implementing
- ✓ The instruction from Government is that whole groups of children should not need to self-isolate if Covid secure measures are in place
- ✓ At The Clere, for example, we have insisted on communal area face coverings from early September, when it only became national guidance last week
- ✓ At The Clere our teaching 'bubbles' take into account school transport and therefore are not necessarily whole year group 'bubbles' which means fewer potential 'close proximity' contacts
- ✓ At The Clere our risk assessments and Covid secure operations have been praised by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) who conducted random school inspections last month
- ✓ There will always be exceptions so school-to-school comparisons are not useful

**6) Do siblings also need to self-isolate?**

- ✓ Not unless the household in which they live has a confirmed positive case
- ✓ A contact (e.g. sibling) of a close proximity contact is in effect a 'contact of a contact' and does not need to self-isolate unless any of the other factors apply
- ✓ This also applies to any contact classified as clinically vulnerable or clinically extremely vulnerable

**7) How will my child keep up with their learning when self-isolating?**



- ✓ Schools are required to provide home learning and at The Clere we have recently published a guide to assist parents
- ✓ Laptop and other support is provided where applicable
- ✓ At The Clere we expect the students to take a lead in this and follow the clear guidance and direction given by adults in school
- ✓ Any adults who are required to self-isolate (and remain well) are expected to maintain their teaching by distanced learning methods
- ✓ Direct email contact (using the official school email account) with adults is also encouraged if questions arise

**8) Do student 'bubbles' change?**

- ✓ Rarely and only following a change to our published risk assessments
- ✓ The changes to year 10 and 11 bubbles at half term came as a result of parental and student concerns about academic subject progress and being examination ready. We appreciate this is a fine balancing act and a tough decision to make

**9) Can parents choose to 'self-isolate' their children if they are concerned?**

- ✓ The guidance is not clear and it will vary across schools. Internal trace procedures cannot be full proof so we believe a degree of latitude is required to keep everyone feeling safe
- ✓ At The Clere we are supporting all those who feel at risk even if our internal 'close proximity' tracing procedures (see question 1) have not identified a student at increased contact risk providing they are in the same 'bubble'

**10) How long will these arrangements go on for?**

- ✓ Unsure, keep an eye on Gov.uk and NHS websites for the latest guidance
- ✓ England remains committed to holding public examinations in the summer of 2021