



Pensby High School

Irby Road, Heswall, Wirral.
CH61 6XN

T 0151 342 0570

F 0151 342 0571

E schooloffice@psf.wirral.sch.uk

www.pensbyhighschool.org

Headteacher: Mr K Flanagan

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Dear Parents and Carers

I am writing to remind you about steps to take with regard to supporting the school in our attempt to minimise COVID-19 infections within the school community.

Students have as a rule been brilliant at cleaning hands and I thank you for your support around this. However, can I please remind you of the three main symptoms that we all need to look out for:

- High temperature – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature)
- New, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual)
- Loss or change to your sense of smell or taste – this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal

If your child has these symptoms or **ANYONE IN THE HOUSEHOLD HAS THESE SYMPTOMS**, then the household should self-isolate and seek a test. I realise it is difficult as we are asking students to attend if they do not have these three symptoms, but have the common cold for instance. It is hard to tell, but you know your children best, please look for the three symptoms. We are asking that students self-isolate for 14 days. I do realise that 10 days is mentioned on occasion, but we have to be absolute certain that applies to the first person's symptoms and for the sake of all and clarity, I am asking for 14 days please. If your child has a negative test and everyone is clear in the family, then the student can return, however, if anyone is symptomatic isolation needs to continue.

I have to be honest, I am entirely dependent on the support of everyone when it comes to restricting the number of COVID cases in school. We cannot keep everyone two metres apart, if we were to try, we would have no more than 40% of students in school. Face masks are not mandatory and I am not able to ride roughshod over DfE guidance, not in this case, not in any case and all schools are better for headteachers being limited in their actions by clear frameworks –headteachers need these frameworks to counter our inbuilt biases, we have lots of freedoms to run our schools as we see fit, but we need rules and frameworks to make sure we do this as fairly as possible. These rules are there to protect everyone and I follow them all, even the ones I don't like or agree with as this helps protect my community from my mistakes.

I will not be making face masks compulsory, that is an issue for the DfE and national guidance. I am though asking that students wear masks in the toilets and changing rooms as I cannot provide the same level of ventilation, and we are seeing compliance in the toilets and changing rooms, that is for the most part as a result of students buying into and understanding why masks need to be worn in these circumstances. However, we are seeing a growing number of complaints with regard to non-compliance on school buses and I would ask that you please reiterate the need, as I did on Friday, to wear a mask on the bus, it is compulsory. Students face being banned from buses if they do not wear them and we will follow up with sanctions internally if this is appropriate, and once the bus company enforces the rules.

Clearly there are some significant issues around the availability of testing and the speed with which results are returned, but please persevere. Track and trace is also suffering from an increase in demand and so we are being asked to track and trace within school and as you can imagine this is quite time consuming and challenging, as it is yet another pull on our resources and time. It is though much easier to do, the quicker we get results from tests. I know that the availability of tests and the length of time taken to get results are completely out of your hands, but please let us know as soon as you get the results.

Thank you again for all your support and patience. Please remember the symptoms and that if these are within the household, then we need to protect the school community.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'K Flanagan', written in a cursive style.

Mr K Flanagan
Headteacher