



September 13th 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

It has been great to reconnect with our students this week. We have all enjoyed seeing our young people benefit from time with their peers and their teachers, learning together and getting back into much-needed routines.

Birmingham Lockdown

On Friday, we were alerted to **new local lockdown restrictions** to be implemented in Birmingham as a result of the rapid increase in cases of COVID-19. It is essential that we respond together as a school community and play our part in keeping all members of our school and wider local community safe. Please see the second page of this letter below for information on what the new restrictions will mean for us at Colmers, in particular:

- **2.35p.m. finish for years 7 & 9 to allow for a staggered exit**
- **Face coverings required in all communal areas**

Confirmed Case at Colmers

I am sorry to report to you that today, I have been advised that a member of our staff team has contracted the virus. We are confident that the virus was not contracted within the school. This is a pertinent reminder that the level of risk across Birmingham has increased recently. We are now taking all precautions to reduce the risk of the virus spreading within our community, while sending our best wishes to the member of staff and her family for a speedy recovery.

I have taken advice from Public Health England and I am contacting a small number of students and families who need to self-isolate as a precautionary measure based on the advice we have been given. Please be reassured that there is absolutely no need to keep your child at home to self-isolate unless you receive direct contact from me. Those asked to self-isolate as a precautionary measure are the very small number of students who have been in close proximity to the confirmed case. National guidance is clear that we do not need to extend the self-isolation advice beyond these students.

There is no doubt that this early set-back is upsetting for all of us as a community but we can take reassurance from the measures that are in place and the hard work that has gone into reducing the risk of virus transmission within the school. Full details of our approach can be found in your Parent/Carer Handbook, which can be found on our website from this link: <http://www.colmers.bham.sch.uk/wp-content/uploads/Colmers-Handbook-for-Parents-and-Carers-2020-21.pdf>

Communication Channels

Communication with parents and carers will be key to us keeping you well informed. If you have not yet signed up to **ParentMail and Class Charts**, please contact main reception as a matter of priority so we are always able to contact you with important information.

Birmingham Lockdown Restrictions

Although the new legislation for Birmingham does not begin until Tuesday September 15th, we are putting in place the required new measures from **Monday September 14th** as follows:

Staggered Finish: 2.35p.m. finish for Year 7 and Year 9

In order to allow students to socially distance more effectively on the way out of school, from Monday September 14th we will be releasing students in **Year 7 and Year 9 at 2.35p.m.**, ten minutes early. Years 8, 10 and 11 will be released at 2.45p.m. as per the current times of the school day.

All students are expected to make their way home directly from school without congregating or mixing.

If you collect your child from school, please arrange a meeting point that is at a distance from the school exit, ideally Morrisons Car Park of equivalent.

I am aware that a number of students tend to visit Morrisons supermarket and/or McDonalds on their way to and from school. Students should adhere to strict social distancing rules in all of these venues and should follow guidance regarding face coverings at all times.

Face Coverings – Required in Communal Areas

Government Guidance has now been issued to Birmingham Schools as part of the local lockdown, requiring all students to wear a face covering (mask or visor) in communal spaces from Wednesday September 16th.

While the new legislation for Birmingham does not come into play until Tuesday September 15th, we wish to be proactive in reducing the risks in school. From Monday September 14th:

- All staff and students at Colmers are expected to wear a face covering (mask or visor) in:
 - Corridors.
 - Lining up for the canteen.
 - Outdoor social zones.
 - Leaving the school site.
- Face coverings are not required while eating.
- When staff and students remove face coverings for lessons, this should be done before they sanitise their hands and stored safely, in a plastic pouch/container in their blazer or bag.
- When face coverings are worn they need to be worn appropriately, covering the nose and mouth.
- We strongly recommend, and have provided, washable face masks in order to reduce the risks and challenges associated with the disposal of single-use face coverings.

As with current guidance, face coverings are not required in lessons. If you do wish your child to wear a face covering during their lessons, please contact me directly and this will be authorised subject to your child following the required hygiene measures and meeting our behaviour expectations in lessons.

We have provided all students with two washable face coverings and therefore do not expect there to be any issue for any student with regard to having a face covering for use in school.

If your child is unable to wear a face mask for health reasons, please email their Head of Year to advise and we will support accordingly.

Movement around School

Inevitably, school corridors can become crowded places. We have reduced the risk of virus transmission in school by limiting the number of room changes during the school day. From Monday September 14th we will be reinforcing with students the expectation that they move around the building in single file, keeping left, in order to reduce close contact on corridors. In addition, we will be implementing increased controls queuing for the canteen and asking students to make a note of those they sit with if eating dinner in our school canteen. This will support us with tracing close contacts in the event a member of our community contracts the virus: in turn, this means we may be able to limit the number of staff and students who have to self-isolate as a precautionary measure, as has been possible today.

Your Support

I ask you to support us by reminding your child that every single member of our community has a responsibility for their own and other's safety and should follow our existing and new measures. I would also be grateful if you could remind them of their responsibility to wear a face covering when travelling on public transport and when using local shops so that the much-needed return of our children to school does not put members of our wider community at increased risk.

The 'local lockdown' is undoubtedly a challenge for everyone affected by it, as is the news that we have a member of our school community who has contracted the virus. We are determined to keep up the strong teamwork and collective responsibility across our community to see our way through this next phase of safety measures and I thank you in advance for your support.

Yours sincerely,



Emma Leaman
Headteacher