

Friday 16th July 2021

Dear Parents / Carers of Year 9 and 10,

In the last 14 days, 24 children at St Thomas More have tested positive on a PCR test with most cases being in Year 9, closely followed by Year 10. Working with Public Health England (PHE), they agreed that there was an outbreak in both year groups and a significant number of children had to isolate. Transmission was occurring between pupils in school as well as through community transmission. With staff isolating, I had to shut both Year 9 and 10 bubbles earlier this week and reintroduce remote learning via MSTeams so that lessons could continue for all pupils.

Having reviewed the situation, Years 9 and 10 will remain at home on Monday 19th and Tuesday 20th July. For those pupils who are not required to isolate, school will reopen to both year groups on Wednesday 21st July as staffing levels are predicted to return to a level that makes this possible. Returning pupils are required to wear a face covering in the classroom and all indoor, communal areas.

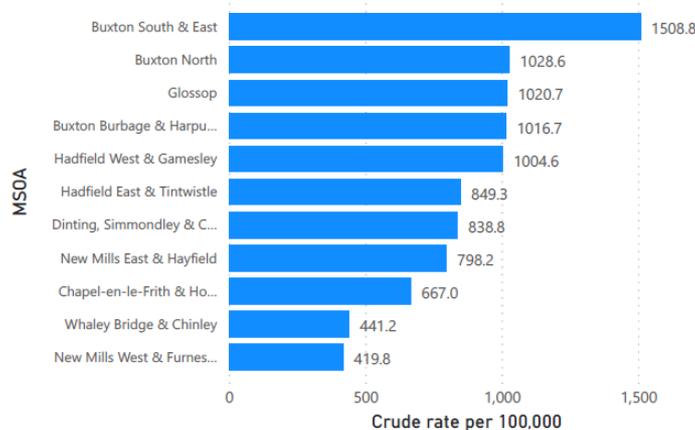
School will close for the summer holidays on Thursday 22nd July at 12:30pm. As usual, pupils will have an extended 'brunch' to accommodate those with free school meals.

Despite the Government's plans to remove all covid measures for England on Monday 19th July, arrangements will remain the same here in school until the beginning of the summer holidays. I will be writing to you next week to outline arrangements for our return in September.

As published by the Government, from Monday 19th July, Track and Trace will be conducted differently in schools, with further changes planned from 16th August. Attached to this letter is a letter from the Department of Education outlining how things will change. The biggest difference to note is that NHS Track and Trace will contact parents and carers directly to establish close contacts of their children, rather than the school.

The High Peak area is experiencing a significant rise in the number of covid cases, particularly in the Buxton area. The table below was published by Derbyshire County Council on 14th July.

14-day COVID-19 rate per 100,000 by MSOA



As you can see, the highest rates of infection cover much of the Buxton area, and so I ask that you remain vigilant over the coming weeks to help bring down the rates of transmission in our community. To give these numbers some context, the average rate for Greater Manchester is 645 per 100,000 (reported 15.07.21). If you or your child present any covid symptoms, please remain at home and follow guidance from the NHS on testing.

We will continue to do our bit in school to help keep people safe by following our STMSAFE measures.

Thank you for your support and understanding.

Stay safe!



Mr D Redfern
Headteacher



Letter from the Department of Education

Dear Parent / Carer

Re: Changes to contact tracing in education and childcare settings

As you know, the Prime Minister announced on 12 July that Step 4 of the roadmap would go ahead on 19 July.

One of the key changes that will take place from 19 July is that education and childcare settings will no longer be asked to conduct routine contact tracing. As with positive cases in any other setting, NHS Test and Trace will work with either the positive case – or in the case of children – the parents, carers or guardian of the positive case to identify close contacts.

NHS Test and Trace already manages the contact tracing process for the rest of society – including children who have recorded a positive PCR test – and has expertise in supporting people to identify close contacts.

This letter sets out in more detail below how that process will work and what you need to do if your child tests positive for COVID-19.

Self-isolating and taking a test

1. If your child has symptoms, they and other members of the household should self-isolate – and you should inform their education or childcare setting. You should immediately order a PCR test for them. If the PCR result is negative, they and other members of their household can stop self-isolating (unless instructed to self-isolate for other reasons). If the PCR result is positive, they, other members of their household and any close contacts identified by NHS Track and Trace must self-isolate until 10 days after the onset of symptoms.
2. If your child has a positive result from a lateral flow device (LFD) test, they and other members of the household should self-isolate – and you should inform their education or childcare setting. You should immediately order a confirmatory PCR test. If the confirmatory test is taken within two days and the result is negative, they and other members of their household can stop self-isolating (unless instructed to self-isolate for other reasons). If the confirmatory PCR test is positive (or is taken more than two days after the LFD), other members of their



household and any close contacts identified by NHS Track and Trace must self-isolate until 10 days after the LFD test.

3. PCR tests can be booked online through the [NHS Test & Trace website](#) or by calling 119.
4. PCR test results will be recorded with NHS Test and Trace automatically, but you should also communicate the result to the education or childcare setting during term time or summer provision.

Contact tracing

5. If your child gets a positive PCR test result, NHS Test and Trace will contact you, using the details you registered when ordering the PCR test. You and/or your child will be asked a series of specific questions designed to identify who your child has been in close contact with. Being in an education or childcare setting with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 will not necessarily mean a person is identified as a close contact.
6. You will be asked to provide the contact details, if you know them, of any of the individuals – or their parents or guardians – who have been identified as close contacts. NHS Test and Trace will then get in touch with these close contacts and provide appropriate instructions or advice (see below).

Self-isolation and/or testing of close contacts

7. At present, anyone identified as a close contact is legally required to self-isolate and must not attend their education or childcare setting (the only exception is if they are participating in a daily contact testing trial). Anyone identified as a non-household close contact by NHS Track and Trace must self-isolate until 10 days after the date of their most recent contact with that person. If they live in the same household, they must self-isolate until 10 days after the date of that person developing symptoms (see point 1 above) or, if that person was asymptomatic, the date of their test (see point 2 above). NHS Test and Trace will notify you of the day on which the self-isolation period ends.
8. Close contacts are also advised to take a PCR test. If the test result is negative, they must still complete the full self-isolation period, as the test will not detect all positive cases. If the result is positive, they will need to self-isolate for a further 10 days – and NHS Test and Trace will contact them to identify any close contacts.

9. **From 16 August**, if the close contact is under 18, they will not have to self-isolate (in line with the policy for fully vaccinated adults) but will be asked to take a PCR test immediately, other than for very young children identified as non-household contacts, and they will not need to self-isolate while awaiting the results of the test. If the PCR test is positive, they will be required to self-isolate for 10 days from the date of the test. NHS Test and Trace will then get in touch to identify close contacts (see points 5 and 6 above). Further guidance on these changes to self-isolation will be provided shortly.

We recognise how difficult the past 18 months have been and the sacrifices that all families, education and childcare settings have had to make. This has been an enormously challenging time for everyone and we would like to take the opportunity to thank you for everything you have done.

Letter provided by the Department for Education

