

Warn and inform letter

28 September 2021

Dear Parents / Carers,

I am writing to advise you that having spoken today to a Public Health Officer from Public Health Wakefield today, **Outwood Academy Hemsworth is now classed as being in a Covid-19 outbreak situation** as we have had almost 10% of students testing positive within the last 10 days and a number of linked positive cases. Following advice from Public Health Wakefield, we need to increase the safety measures in place and this letter details those measures; our risk assessment will also be updated on the Academy website accordingly. We know that you may find this concerning and we are continuing to monitor the situation. Please be reassured that for most people and especially for children and young people, coronavirus (COVID-19) will be a mild illness.

Public Health Wakefield have confirmed our current measures are robust in terms of handwashing and classroom ventilation; classroom seating arrangements, virtual assemblies and our one-way systems within school. However, we now need to implement further measures to limit the spread of the virus. From **Wednesday 29 September 2021**, the following additional measures will be in place and we ask for your support in reinforcing these messages at home:

1. Public Health Wakefield are **strongly advising Outwood Academy Hemsworth staff and students to wear masks in communal areas**, this includes all corridors and when moving around the dining room. Disposable masks will be made available to students when they arrive at the academy for the next few days, but from next week students should bring their own masks.
2. In addition, where a child is a **household** contact of someone positive (ie a parent or sibling is positive), **encourage parents/carers to keep the child at home for 4 days before PCR testing**. Household contacts are very much more likely to develop the infection than social or school contacts, so this measure would probably have a high impact in reducing levels of infection in school. The absence for the duration of the isolation will be marked as an X (Covid) code and the child would learn from home.
3. All staff, students and family members continue to take regular LFD tests at least twice every week. A PCR test should be taken immediately if one of the main symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) are evident which includes a high temperature, a new, continuous cough and a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste.
4. Following Public Health's advice, students will now also have **break and lunch in year group bubbles**. Before school starts, we will facilitate breakfast for each year group bubble on one day a week and this will be communicated to students tomorrow.

All students will watch a virtual assembly tomorrow morning in tutor time outlining the increased safety measures in the Academy. Of course, we rely on parents/carers to reinforce these messages at home and thank you in advance for your continued support. The aim of these measures is to avoid a further increase in cases within the school. We will continue to monitor the situation carefully and will take any further action should it be necessary.

Please support your child to do a lateral flow test at least twice a week, and let us know at once if the test is positive. This is a really important way of picking up cases quickly and preventing spread, it is especially important that all staff and students test regularly. Lateral flow tests are available to order online at <https://www.gov.uk/order-coronavirus-rapid-lateral-flow-tests> or for collection at the following locations within the community:

- **Lloyds Pharmacy Ltd - 10 Market Street**
- **Hemsworth Library LFT Collection Point**
- **Gorgemead Limited - The Grange Medical Centre**
- **Tesco Stores Limited - Tesco In-Store Pharmacy - Market Street**
- **Whitworth Chemists Limited - Kinsley Medical Centre**
- **Hughes Chemists (Northern) Ltd - Madeley Road**

It is understandable that this is a worrying time and we will continue to work closely with Public Health Wakefield, Trust Leaders and the local community to provide a comprehensive risk assessment. It is important that students come to school focussed on learning and follow the key messages of being 'safe, respectful and responsible' at all times. Students have made an excellent start to the academic year and with these enhanced measures we will minimise any disruption to their education. Attendance continues to be a high priority at Outwood Academy Hemsworth and, following the advice in this letter, students should make every effort to be in school.

Yours faithfully



Mr T Rutter
Principal

Further Information

To book a PCR test please visit this website or ring 119.

How to stop COVID-19 spreading

Rates of COVID-19 are still very high in Wakefield, but there are things you can do to help reduce the risk of you and anyone you live with getting seriously ill with COVID-19.

The most important thing is for anyone eligible [*currently anyone over 16*] to get both doses of vaccine as soon as possible. Having both doses of vaccine is very effective at preventing severe illness and admission to hospital. It also reduces the risk of being infected with COVID and passing it on by around half.

In addition:

- Keep using face coverings in crowded indoor spaces
- Limit the number of people you mix with who aren't in your household
- Meet outdoors or in well ventilated spaces when you can.
- Stay at home and get a PCR test if you have possible symptoms of COVID-19, especially cough, fever or loss of taste/smell
- wash your hands with soap and water often – do this for at least 20 seconds
- cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when you cough or sneeze

Further Information

Further information is available at <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>