

Dear Families of Stanway School

22 September 2021

I know there is a lot of worry at the moment. Stanway seems to have been hit by a reasonable rise in cases these first few weeks, and I would like to write to explain our situation and assure you of all of the measures we are currently putting in place.

Last year, Stanway saw very few cases in our school. To be seeing larger numbers now is surprising, but I can only put it down to the success we had last year. Perhaps the 'herd immunity' that people talk of was not seen in Stanway last year, and as a result, we have seen higher numbers this year.

I can assure you that the measures we put in place last week are having an effect already on the number of cases we are now seeing. Compared to last week, the daily number of cases is almost half what we saw last week. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for your support, especially the young people in the school, for wearing face coverings, washing hands and remaining calm through a difficult few weeks. It feels like we have turned a corner in the last few days.

I understand your frustrations with the new rules. It seems strange that students can attend school even if there is a positive case in their household. This is not a Stanway rule, but is a nationwide directive from the Government. Along with that, schools are no longer required to complete Track and Trace, with this now being completed by the NHS service. From what I am told, this is not satisfying many of you. As a result, I have worked with the Local Authority to ensure that I send letters to families where classes appear to have a few cases in them to encourage PCR tests to be booked in the community. I appreciate this might not seem like much, but it is as much as I can do under this new step.

The measures we have in school at present match what we had last year, except for the 5 different entrances and timetabling the students into fixed bubbles. The latter is something I will try to avoid for as long as possible as it restricts students' learning experience significantly. However, we currently have in place:

- Additional cleaners working throughout the day;
- Hand sanitiser in all entrances, exits and corridors;
- Antibacterial spray in every classroom and workspace for students to wipe down their work station at the start of every lesson;
- Well ventilated rooms with a ventilation plan;
- Split lunches;
- Face coverings in busy areas, such as corridors and queues;
- External visitors' events cancelled (including Open Week, Open Evening and Taster Day);
- Face coverings and hand sanitiser on designated school buses;
- Twice-weekly reminders for taking Lateral Flow tests at home;
- Year group assemblies revert to video assemblies.

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It was with regret that Taster Day and Open Week (including Open Evening) have had to be cancelled. Other local schools have continued with their planned events, but they are not experiencing the same number of cases we saw last week, and I feel that I have to prioritise the safe running of the school, it's student population and my staff as well. Inviting hundreds of families onto the school site to be guided by our students, listen in large numbers to my presentation and then to visit many rooms with our staff was not something I felt was wise, given our current situation.

I hope that we are turning a corner. We have seen improvements since last week and I hope the additional measures that we were swift to introduce have helped with this. The non pupil day next Friday gives us all a three-day weekend that might help to create a break and see cases reduce further still.

To help us collate information about symptoms, lateral flow tests and PCR tests, please remember that you should use the [google form here](#) and then for the confirmed result of the PCR, please email POSITIVECASE@STANWAY.SCHOOL

I know this has been a very difficult start to the year, but I have everything in place to do our best to ride this initial storm and keep students' learning experience as broad as possible, whilst keeping the students, staff and families as safe as possible.

I hope you all stay well. As always, thank you for your ongoing support throughout this difficult time.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mr Bland', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Mr Bland
Headteacher