

Dear Staff, Parents and Carers,

29 September 2021

Today marks the two week review date for the measures we put in place from Thursday 16th September.

The measures included:

- Cancelling the Year Group assemblies
- Restricting large numbers of external visitors to the site (this included our open Evening arrangements)
- Additional hand sanitiser for students using school designated buses, and
- Face coverings worn in corridors and queues only.

My concern was that initially the number of confirmed cases at Stanway was higher than expected. Since introducing these measures so swiftly, I can now inform you that cases are dropping significantly.

We are now currently seeing a reduction in new cases being confirmed and the students who were isolating from earlier in September are now returning in greater numbers than those beginning isolation.

I am extremely pleased to see this reduction and will do everything possible to ensure it continues while at the same time, maintaining the broad curriculum that we offer all students. In any further decisions, the safety of staff and students remains the priority.

Therefore, after talking with Essex Track & Trace and with the Local Authority and have agreed that the measures we have in place do not need to be added to. No further measures need to be put in place. That said, I already have a list of further measures that can be introduced if there is a change in the situation.

I think it is wise to continue with the current arrangements. We only have 3 weeks until the October half term, and with the weather beginning to change, this is the time of year where illnesses can spread. I believe the action taken has caused the reduction and I feel it is too early to lift these measures at this time, especially as we head into the colder months. These measures will be reviewed again in the week leading up to the half term break so that everyone is clear about how students will return on 1st November.

Some Parents and Carers have asked about the codes used to record attendance. The guidelines from the DfE state that the X code (previously used for anything Covid-related) can only be used in the time between the first symptom and the date of the confirmation from the PCR. The following days of isolation are then marked with the code for 'Illness' and therefore do not show the X code for Covid absence. These are national regulations, it is not a Stanway decision, and I apologise if this has caused undue worry at this time.

I appreciate the level of support shown by staff and students in carrying out these measures, and I thank you in advance for any ongoing support you show.

Many thanks,
Jonathan Bland

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