



PRESENTATION SECONDARY SCHOOL

Educating the Students of Wexford Since 1818
"Our Best Always"



How the School must communicate cases of Covid-19 to the school community

21st October 2020

Dear Parents / Guardians & Students,

As we approach October Mid-term, I want to take this opportunity to thank the entire school community for all their efforts so far this year. Together, we have all managed to re-open our school, keep it open, and keep it running smoothly. Huge strides have been made in terms of our blended learning plans, through our usage of Microsoft TEAMS & Office 365.

With the country moving to Level 5 restrictions, we are all aware that difficult times are ahead. I hope that our school community will not be significantly affected in the coming weeks and months. However, it is hard to envisage that we will not have at least some further confirmed cases of Covid-19 in our school community. With that in mind, I would like to detail how the guidelines from the DES work on the ground.

The guidelines state that *'The response to confirmed cases or outbreaks of Covid-19 in the community or in a school is the responsibility of and will be led and managed by Public Health HSE. All decisions as to appropriate actions following a confirmed case or outbreak will be made by their teams in the context of a full Public Health Risk Assessment procedure according to the principles set out in the document in the link above. **Any actions to be taken by the school will be communicated directly by Public Health HSE. School Leadership will be informed as and when such actions such as exclusion of children or staff; partial or full closure, are deemed necessary on public health grounds. If the school is not so informed, it has not been deemed necessary by Public Health.'***

This means that Senior Leadership Teams in schools cannot take any action until so informed by Public Health HSE. **Even if a parent has informed Senior Leaders that their child has tested positive, Senior Leaders cannot take any action until instructed to do so by Public Health HSE. This places Senior Leaders in schools in an extremely difficult position, particularly if there is a delay between being informed by a parent and being contacted by the HSE.**

With this in mind, please do not contact the school seeking information or confirmation regarding possible cases of Covid-19 that may be active in our school community. Senior Leadership will not discuss individual cases. If we are contacted by Public Health HSE in relation to a confirmed case, a public health risk assessment will be undertaken and the parents of children deemed to be close contacts of the confirmed case will be contacted and advised accordingly. An official letter from Public Health HSE will be issued, and we will share this letter with the entire school community in a timely manner, via our social media platforms & website and text-messaging platform.

Further information on Covid-19 is available at www.hpsc.ie and www.gov.ie

Wishing all our school community & the wider community a healthy and relaxing midterm break.

Yours sincerely,

Principal