

UPPINGHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM



Uppingham Community Emergency Plan Community Liaison and Covid - 19 – September School Re-opening Report of a Meeting with Uppingham School and Uppingham Community College August 24th 2020 – 11.30am – Westholme

In Attendance

Uppingham School - Karl Wilding and Helen Bell

Uppingham Community College - Paul Rhodes

Community Emergency Plan Committee Representative - Cllr Ron Simpson BEM

Introduction

Following correspondence between the Uppingham Community Emergency Plan Coordinator team and both schools on the community impact of a full return to school in September, it was agreed that a small working meeting be held to exchange forward planning on pupil and community safety. It was agreed by all parties that the meeting outputs be shared with Uppingham Town Council, Rutland County Council and the local community through the Uppingham Neighbourhood Forum.

It was noted that there is to be a public meeting of the Uppingham Neighbourhood Forum on September 15th 2020 at which the return to school would be an agenda item. It was further noted that the next meeting of Uppingham Town Council is to be held on September 2nd 2020 at which the council's lead member on Emergency Planning would update the council on developments.

Please note that this meeting took place prior to the devastating fire at UCC which has of course delayed the planned opening date.

Covid-19 Responses and Forward Planning

Cllr Simpson outlined the origins and development of the town's Community Emergency Plan, its voluntary sector status, line report, activities and liaison role with statutory sector agencies. He was elected by the community as Principal Coordinator of the Emergency Plan Group under the leadership of Uppingham Neighbourhood Forum Chair Janet Thompson. His additional appointment as the town council's elected lead on Emergency Planning matters had helped ensure a positive and successful working relationship between the Emergency Committee, the council and other relevant statutory and commercial sector partners.

Cllr Simpson reported that the town council had also been proactive in collaboration with the county council on a range of issues related to the Covid-19 crisis. Actions included a Covid - 19 town centre working group, grant aid to businesses and additional support for the voluntary sector. It was rewarding that the town had been praised at both county and national level for its Covid-19 response and infrastructure. Emergency Plan Coordinators were very pleased that such collaboration was now to include the Education sector.

Acknowledging that internal policy was a matter for each school and college, it was agreed that a brief overview of the extensive planning being undertaken by the staff of each institution be shared with a view to identifying possible areas of collaboration and community information. For the purpose of this report they are expressed in bullet points.

Uppingham School

- School aims to be 'bio secure'. This is to be completed by carrying out a comprehensive testing programme. All pupils to be tested upon arrival – Friday September 4th. All key staff are also being tested (circa 400)

- Staggered and timed arrival of parents (avoiding traffic congestion in the Town) at 'pop up' NHS approved testing site to be established at Sports Centre
- Dr. Mistry (the School Doctor and practitioner at Uppingham Surgery) is the lead contact with the school and is liaising on all health related matters. Dr. Mistry provided a letter acknowledging and endorsing the measures the School had put in place to manage COVID-19 and infection control
- In addition to testing, families required to sign health declaration before pupils return to school
- Published 'Keep Uppingham Safe': an overarching strategy on keeping the Uppingham Community Safe. Keeping Uppingham Safe is underpinned by protocols and, at a granular level, specific plans for all areas of the School's operations. Protocols are continually reviewed in light of Government guidance and directives (which in turn are driven by infection rates)
- Pupils to be grouped in 'residency pods' (bubbles) so that in the event of any problem it will only be necessary to isolate the relevant pod. This also helps minimize any potential risk of spread of infection
- Any 'joint school' activities to be limited and risk assessed. Activities will follow guidance of governing bodies and associations
- Pupil contact with the town to be strictly limited at the outset – with very limited access for any pupil. Aim is to allow increased access over time but with strict controls over who can enter the main body of town (the 'shopping area') then only in small groups and at pre-determined times. This is an area which will be kept under continual review in light of government guidance, infection levels and liaison with the town
- Pupil movement protocols have been created
- Main pupil movement times to be published so that residents can avoid key times (busy times – such as lesson change-over, on the pavements in and around the School) if so minded
- Pupils will be required to observe social distancing measures when moving through the town
- Unique masks monogrammed with pupil's pod/house to be worn when in town enabling shops and residents to note any breach of allocated cluster.
- A new community reporting mechanism is to be established to enable residents to contact the School in relation to any school specific COVID-19 related concerns they might have
- All traditional town/pub leave for older students will not operate from the beginning of term. The date of commencement will be kept under review
- An information letter from the school to nearby residents is to be supported by a UNF newsletter to all households

Uppingham Community College

- College aims to open up as normally as possible given the circumstances
- All areas of the college have been risk assessed
- Students will still have to move around the college site but such movement will be minimised where possible
- Students to be organised into year group pods with designated zones for 'breaks'
- Parents to be encouraged to supply own meals but catering via pre order 'app' available when required and will be delivered into relevant zones
- Regular classroom cleaning programme established
- Each teacher has seating plan for each group they teach with social distancing to be observed. This will help enable track and trace in the event of any problem
- Personal curriculum pathways have been designed with a focus on the Covid - 19 experience and best practice e.g. How to move about the town
- There will be no school trips in the first term
- Visitors to the college will be strictly limited
- Arrival and departure times to be flexible e.g. 8am to 8.30am and 3.30pm onwards

- A one-way system will be in place within the school to minimise people passing in corridors
- The wearing of masks will be required when moving between classes and in all common areas as well as on school buses
- Lunch arrangements are being established in 5 separate locations in the school to keep year-groups apart
- School buses will have pre-defined seating arrangements to keep students from mixing outside their family/year-group

Agreed Actions

- 1) Joint ratification of this report before publication
- 2) Key points of contact to be determined and notified for ongoing monitoring
- 3) RS to report back to all social and economic community partners
- 4) Follow up liaison meeting with highways authority re narrow pavements, pupil movement and the London Road to be requested through RCC portfolio holder and Cabinet Member Cllr Lucy Stephenson
- 5) September UNF Newsletter to support dissemination of pertinent information to the community (content to be agreed with schools and the college)
- 6) Coordinator to proceed with a further meeting with the primary sector
- 7) Public meeting on September 15th to air any questions or concerns from the community

Summary

An impressive amount of forward planning has been undertaken throughout the summer during a period of ever changing government policy. Both school and college are clear that they intend to work closely with community to help keep Uppingham safe. Developments will be monitored and established protocols adapted as required. Community Emergency Plan Coordinators appreciate the level of transparency afforded to these discussions. As always Uppingham seeks to be an exemplar in its community governance. This meeting provided much reassurance that the education sector is an enthusiastic partner to that aim.

Cllr Ron Simpson BEM
 Lead Town Councillor - Emergency Planning
 Co-ordinator - Uppingham Neighbourhood Forum
 26.8.2020

Postscript

On August 25th UCC Headteacher Ben Solly forwarded two key documents to parents and the community which expanded on the above notes. The first was a letter to parents and carers inviting them to view a video detailing the planned re-opening arrangements for the college. The letter was accompanied by the document 'Uppingham Community College - 'September 2020 Re-opening''. Understandably these arrangements are now under ongoing review in the light of the fire. There will be updates to the published protocol as a result of the impact of the fire e.g. a new one-way system and the need to allow for new temporary classrooms.

Community Spirit

The author has been asked to pass on to the council and other report recipients the Chair of Governors and all at UCC thanks for the amazing number of messages of support that have been received from members of the community and the offer of help received from the Town Council.

29.8.2020

Uppingham Neighbourhood Forum - The Voice of Civil Society in Uppingham
 A Member of the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) the Rutland Consortium and One East Midlands (OEM)

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