



Sunday 2nd January, 2022

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope you have had a lovely Christmas and New Year break with your children – I know some of you have been affected by Covid over the holidays, and I really hope you are feeling better soon.

As you would expect, there has been further new guidance released today, due to the increased numbers of Omicron variant cases, and as such, I am writing to you with a further update ready for Tuesday's return to school.

Changes to the self-isolation period for individuals who test positive for COVID-19

Since Wednesday 22 December, the 10-day self-isolation period for people who record a positive PCR test result for COVID-19 has been reduced to 7 days in most circumstances, unless you cannot test for any reason.

Individuals should now take LFD tests on day 6 and day 7 of their self-isolation period. Those who receive two negative test results are no longer required to complete 10 full days of self-isolation. The first test must be taken no earlier than day 6 of the self-isolation period and tests must be taken 24 hours apart. This also applies to children under 5, with LFD testing at parental or guardian discretion. If both these test results are negative, and your child does not have a high temperature, they may end their self-isolation after the second negative test result and return to school from day 8.

Anyone who is unable to take LFD tests will need to complete the full 10-day period of self-isolation. Further information is available in the [stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed COVID-19 infection](#).

If this information means that your child is unable to return to school on Tuesday 4th January, please advise the school by calling the absence line or emailing the school office, as soon as possible.

Daily testing for close contacts of COVID-19

People who are fully vaccinated, or children and young people aged between 5 and 18 years and 6 months, identified as a close contact of someone with COVID-19, **should take an LFD test every day for seven days and continue to attend school as normal**, unless they have a positive test result or develop symptoms at any time. This means that, even if they are a close contact, they should continue to attend school, but should LFD test daily for seven days.

Children under 5 are not being advised to take part in daily testing of close contacts. If a child under 5 is a contact of a confirmed case, they are not required to self-isolate and should not start daily testing. If they live in the same household as someone with COVID-19 they should limit their contact with anyone who is at higher risk of severe illness if infected with COVID-19, and arrange to take a PCR test as soon as possible. They can continue to attend an education or childcare setting while waiting for the PCR result. If the test is positive, they should follow the [stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed COVID-19 infection](#).

JCVI advice on vaccination for at-risk 5 to 11 year olds

On Wednesday 22 December, the government accepted advice from the [Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation \(JCVI\)](#) that a primary course of vaccination should be offered to children aged 5 to 11 years old who are in a clinical risk group, or who are a household contact of someone (of any age) who is immunosuppressed. The NHS is working through updated guidance and will set out how this is going to be operationalised shortly.

Vaccines are our best weapon against this virus and our booster programme has accelerated rapidly, with almost 30 million doses of boosters or third doses administered, and more than half of adults jabbed, securing vital protection. Vaccination reduces the likelihood of infection, helps break chains of transmission and is safe and effective – so we encourage all those eligible to consider taking up the offer.

Updated guidance on the use of face coverings in education settings

From today, Sunday 2 January, it is recommended that face coverings are worn in classrooms where pupils in year 7 and above are educated. **Face coverings are not recommended for primary school pupils.** The advice is short term only, in line with previous guidance that recommends face coverings for all adults in communal areas of all settings, including primary schools. So adults in all our schools will be wearing their face coverings in all communal areas, except in classrooms when teaching. The advice for secondary schools on face coverings in classrooms will be in place until Wednesday 26 January, when Plan B regulations are currently scheduled to expire, at which point it will be reviewed. **Parents/carers are asked to wear face coverings at school drop off and collection (due to the crowds) and also if entering the school site. Thank you for your co-operation with this.**

School attendance and remote learning possibilities

The DfE has recognised that the high rates of COVID-19 may cause difficulties with the availability of staff. Our shared priority is to keep our schools open and children and young people continuing face-to-face education. Where workforce issues arise, we may need to use existing teaching, temporary and support staff more flexibly where required to ensure that we remain open, (including using non-teaching staff to cover, if required). As pupils do not need to be kept in consistent groups, we may need to consider combining classes. As always, we will do all we can to ensure we keep our schools and classes open, safe and being taught to the highest standards. However, like the rest of the country, we have seen high numbers of staff absence and positive cases over the holidays, and this may affect our ability to staff the school in exactly the same way. Thank you for your patience with this unavoidable situation. We will be constantly risk assessing to ensure the school can run safely, and will only move to remote learning if no other suitable options are available.

LFD testing on Tuesday 4th January

Although not statutory, you may recall that I asked if you would please be prepared to support your child (aged 5 and upwards) in taking an LFD test either Monday evening or Tuesday morning, before they return to school. This will provide us with the best start to the term, ensuring that any asymptomatic children who have Covid do not attend school. Obviously, if your child has symptoms, they should not attend, and must book a PCR test. I would really appreciate it if you are able to support with this voluntary LFD testing. Thank you.

Thank you for taking the time to read the new guidance. I will be updating the main Risk Assessment shortly and this will be available on the school websites during the week.

I hope you manage to enjoy your Bank Holiday Monday and we look forward to seeing your child back at school on Tuesday 4th January.

Best wishes

Kate Carter

Mrs Kate Carter

CEO/Executive Headteacher