



10th September 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

COVID-19 Update

Having been back at school for just one week we are already seeing a rise in the number of COVID cases – both of children in school and of family members who have tested positive. Given this information, and with the knowledge that we have a number of vulnerable staff and children in school, we would like to outline the measures we can all take to reduce further transmission and keep each other safe.

What we will do to keep school as safe as possible:

- We will continue to regularly review and follow the requirements of our risk assessment.
- Classrooms will continue to be well-ventilated, children and staff will wash or sanitize their hands regularly and everyone will continue to use good respiratory hygiene.
- Although there is no longer a requirement for schools to have 'bubbles', the children will continue to work and play in consistent groupings for the majority of the time and only mix where it is deemed to be particularly valuable for the children e.g. for the buddy system to take place.
- Our staff will continue to take regular lateral flow tests.
- If anyone develops symptoms of COVID-19 while at school they will be sent home and asked to book a PCR test.
- We will continue to authorise any absence linked to Coronavirus (e.g. choosing to keep your child at home if a family member has tested positive or whilst you are waiting for the results of a PCR test).
- We will provide remote learning for any child who is self-isolating (please let us know if your child is well enough to do this).
- If, as a school, we have lots of children who test positive, we will involve our local health protection team and they will advise if additional action is required, including implementation of an outbreak management plan.

As we said in our last letter, classes will no longer be asked to close when there is a positive case. NHS Test and Trace, rather than school, are now expected to carry out the identification of close contacts. However, we know that we are well placed to support with this role and therefore **we will help where we can in identifying close contacts quickly** so you can arrange for a PCR test. We will tell you if your child (in our view) would be considered a close contact – e.g. sits next to a child who has tested positive or is in the same friendship group. We would then ask you to arrange a PCR test and wait for the result before returning to school.

This action goes further than the national guidance but we want to protect our pupils, families and staff and try to avoid an outbreak. In younger classes it may be harder for us to name specific close contacts as the children spend a lot of their time moving around the classroom as they learn and play. Please be aware that we will not share the name of any child or family who has tested positive for COVID as this would breach the child and their family's right to privacy and GDPR legislation.

What parents and carers can do to help:

- Please tell us if anyone in your household has tested positive for coronavirus. This will enable us to talk to you about the next steps, including the need for a PCR test. We can also advise the parents of vulnerable children in the class and support our vulnerable staff.
- If your child is unwell, please keep them at home.
- Be vigilant for symptoms, including the new wider range of symptoms identified by the ZOE app*.
- If your child shows any symptom that may be COVID arrange for them to get a PCR test.
- Keep children at home if possible whilst you await the result of the PCR test.
- We would like to encourage all adults and teenagers in your household to use lateral flow tests regularly (recommended twice per week)
- We would also ask you to consider the option of keeping children at home if you have a family member/person in your household who has tested positive for COVID19.
- Continue to be careful to follow the advice on 'hands, face, space, fresh air' to protect your own health as well as those around you.

*COVID-19 symptoms - NHS official symptoms: **new or continuous cough, change or loss of taste or smell, high temperature**. Other symptoms identified by the ZOE COVID study: **Fatigue, headache, runny nose, fever, sore throat, sneezing, loss of appetite** and, in younger children: tummy pain (see <https://covid.joinzoe.com/post/new-top-5-covid-symptoms>)

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any further questions and thank you for your continued support and co-operation.

Sharon Barton
Head Teacher