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9<sup>th</sup> March 2022

Dear parents and carers,

### **COVID Update**

As you know the Government announcement on COVID rule changes demonstrates that there is increasing confidence that the country is moving from a pandemic to living and dealing with COVID-19. Guidance for schools was updated, which I have used to update our latest risk assessment, contingency plans and school protocols.

As the scientists acknowledge, the virus hasn't gone away, and I want to reassure you that your child's safety has been at the forefront of our decision making throughout this situation and will continue to be our primary consideration going forwards, along with our duty of care to them, the staff and the wider community.

The school's guidance and other local authority documents, that inform our update, show a shift from the word must (legally binding) to should (strongly advised). Using that guidance, a number of operational changes in school will take place:

#### **Attendance - staff and pupils**

Attendance is mandatory for all and it is a priority. Critically Extremely Vulnerable (CEV) and vulnerable staff and children will attend school.

#### **No need for limited mixing or bubbles**

Although we have been out of bubbles for a few weeks now, children will continue to be able to be grouped flexibly and mix more freely.

#### **Classrooms and resources**

Children will share school resources, but must still have their own water bottle, which is brought in daily. Children will also continue to wear PE kit to school on PE days.

#### **School Start and Finish times**

The school day will continue to start at 8:55am, the gates will be open at 8:45am.

Please supervise your children when waiting outside the gates and in the playground while waiting for siblings, to ensure they are safe. The gates will be closed promptly at 9am so please make sure you arrive at school before this time.

We are seeing an increasing number of families arriving late, which results in lost learning and disruption to the school





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office.

The day will continue to end at 3:15pm for all pupils.

You do not need to continue wearing face coverings around the school grounds, unless you choose to do so for personal reasons.

### **Safe Hygiene**

Children will continue to sanitise their hands regularly throughout the day. Tissues and lidded bins are in each classroom so that children can 'catch it, bin it, kill it'. Please continue to encourage this at home.

### **Staff**

Staff have been twice weekly testing since January 2021 as directed by the DfE but, moving forward, this has now stopped as the DfE will no longer be sending LFD test kits into primary schools. They will test should they feel unwell, as a proactive measure where LFD tests continue to be readily available privately. Staff will not need to wear masks or visors in classrooms or corridors, but may choose to at other times, as a personal choice.

### **If your child is unwell**

Please do not send your child to school if they have a temperature or are unwell at all. This is for the safety of everybody. If your child becomes ill whilst at school, you will be asked to collect them immediately.

Please ensure that contact details are up to date with the office of another person who can collect your child.

If your child displays symptoms of COVID-19 they will be isolated until you arrive. You should then arrange for them to be tested, using a PCR or LFD. School should be informed of the result as soon as possible. With a positive result the Public Health advice is to stay at home and avoid contact with other people, following the latest NHS guidance and Government self-isolation advice. Currently, if your child is unwell with other symptoms you can LFD test them and should this be positive you do not need to go for a PCR but may choose to.

The Government are keen that everybody continues to respond positively with the track and trace system. Schools are not legally bound to do this, but I will keep you informed of cases if they start to increase beyond a small number across the school. If an LFD test is negative, we would ask that your child does not return until they are 'well'. I will monitor guidance, as we know that this will no doubt change in the coming weeks.





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## Know the symptoms of Covid-19

The main symptoms of COVID-19 are a recent onset of any of the following: a new continuous cough, a high temperature, a loss of, or change in, your normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia). Other symptoms linked with COVID-19 include shortness of breath, fatigue, loss of appetite, muscle ache, sore throat, headache, stuffy or runny nose, diarrhoea, nausea and vomiting. Any of these symptoms may also have another cause.

## Isolation

The guidance indicates that whilst the law has changed, the directives for public safety remain. We will follow this guidance, so isolation continues to be up to 10 days, unless you have 2 negative tests on day 5 and 6, 24 hours apart. Isolation will finish after day 5 at the earliest if you test first thing in the morning on day 5 and 6, see attached chart. Guidance states:

*'Children and young people with COVID-19 should not attend their education setting while they are infectious. They should take an LFD test from 5 days after their symptoms started (or the day their test was taken if they did not have symptoms) followed by another one the next day. If both these test results are negative, they should return to their educational setting if they normally attend one, as long as they feel well enough to do so and do not have a temperature'.*

Please continue to liaise with the school office about your child's return date after testing positive, given our school protocols. We will review this as and when the guidance is further updated.

## Close contact changes

The new guidance has brought an end routine contact tracing. Close contacts will no longer be required to self-isolate or advised to take daily LFD tests for 7 days. Staff, children and young people should attend their education settings as usual. Guidance states:

*'Children and young people who usually attend an education or childcare setting and who live with someone who has COVID-19 should continue to attend the setting as normal'.*

## Possible further disruption to schooling

It is almost guaranteed now that schools will remain open, but there is the very real chance that there may be further disruption to 'schooling' for individual children who need to isolate or are unwell. Please remember that remote learning will only be provided if your child tests positive for Covid-19 and is well enough to access work. If this is the case, work will be set up to the Google classroom platform and accessed through the usual route.

Any moves to remote learning for full classes will be communicated if this is directed by Public Health.

If cases rise across the school additional measures may need to be reintroduced to reduce transmission including face



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coverings during drop off and pick up, reduced mixing of classes, suspension of assemblies and after school clubs for example. If these measures are needed I will inform you as soon as possible.

Thank you for your continuous support.

Kind Regards

Sarah Clayton

Headteacher



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