



11th October 2021

Dear Parents, Carers and Students

COVID-19 Cases

I am sure you have picked up in media reports that Covid 19 case rates in Wiltshire and the surrounding Local Authorities continue to rise, with the 12-16 age group disproportionately represented in those figures both locally and nationally.

Over the last two weeks we have been made aware of an increased number of confirmed cases of COVID-19 within our school. Students and staff who have tested positive are isolating. The relatively small number of children who have been identified as contacts of each confirmed case will have received guidance from NHS test and trace and will be advised to take a PCR test.

We know that you may find this concerning, but we are continuing to monitor the situation and are working closely with Wiltshire Council Public Health team on measures we can take within school to help stabilise and reduce infection rates. One of those measures is to write this letter to all parents, carers and students to inform you of the current situation, notify you of a change to our control measures (specifically relating to the wearing of face coverings) and re issue public health advice on how to support your child.

The school remains open, and in line with Public Health guidance, **your child should continue to attend as normal if they remain well and are not displaying Covid 19 symptoms.**

Temporary change to our Face Coverings Policy from Tuesday 12th October

In response to our increased infection rates and in line with the DfE's contingency framework which provides the guidance for managing local outbreaks of Coronavirus (COVID-19) within schools, we are temporarily reintroducing the requirement for face coverings to be worn as follows:

- **Students are now required to wear face coverings whilst inside in year group communal areas inside and in situations outside of the classroom where social distancing is not easily maintained** (for example, when moving around inside before school, between lessons and at the end of the day).
- **Students must continue to wear face coverings on home to school transport, or when using public transport to and from school.**
- **Face coverings should now be worn by staff and visitors in situations outside of classrooms where social distancing is not possible** (for example, when moving around in corridors and communal areas).
- Students and staff will not be required to wear face coverings in lessons at this stage, although they can continue to do so if they wish.
- Those students and staff who are exempt from wearing face coverings will continue to be exempt.

Masks can be removed when:

- Students are eating or drinking
- Students are outside before/after school or at break and/or lunch on the field/playground where social distancing can be maintained.
- Students are engaged in physical activity as part of PE lessons

Given that all students will be required to wear a face covering at some point during the school day, whether on school transport or when inside a building moving between lessons, they should now bring their own face covering to school every day. School will have spare disposable masks available but I again plea, on environmental and safety grounds, that you supply your child with a washable reusable fabric face covering instead of a disposable one.

It is hoped that temporarily reintroducing the use of face coverings, along with reinforcing all our other safety control measures, will have the desired effect of reducing transmission rates amongst our young people. This will come as welcome news to some and be a cause of increased anxiety for others; I know the issue continues to divide opinion.

We will continue to review this policy and will be keeping a careful eye on developments locally and nationally whilst considering introducing further additional control measures.

Twice Weekly LFD Testing

We strongly encourage household members that are aged 11 and over to continue with twice weekly LFD testing to help identify cases promptly in the hope that we can prevent any young person who might have Covid-19 but not displaying any symptoms attending school and potentially infecting their close contacts.

We also recommend that should your child be unwell with symptoms that do not appear on the official government symptoms list, it would be advisable for students to test daily over the few days where they are feeling less well.

We are expecting a further delivery of LFD test kits this week and will distribute these as soon as possible to all students. In addition, a reminder that, as well as the Lateral Flow Test kits issued by school, families can also order these direct from: <https://www.gov.uk/order-coronavirus-rapid-lateral-flow-tests>

Close Contacts

If you think your child is a close contact (and is aged over 5 years, unless a household contact) but has not been contacted directly by NHS Test and Trace please arrange to take your child for a PCR test, following the guidance within this link: [Close Contact Guidance link](#)

What to do if your child develops symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) or tests positive for COVID-19

If your child develops symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19), they should get a PCR test and remain at home at least until the result is known.

If negative, the child can end self-isolation; if positive, the child should isolate for 10 days after their symptoms appeared.

Symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) are a new, continuous cough, or a high temperature, or a loss of, or change in, their normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia). If the child has a positive test result but does not have [symptoms](#), they should stay at home and self-isolate for 10 days from the date the positive test was taken. This isolation period will be extended if they go on to develop symptoms by counting 10 full days from the day of their symptom onset.

Anyone with symptoms will be eligible for a PCR test and this can be arranged via [Get a free PCR test to check if you have coronavirus \(COVID-19\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) or by calling 119.

Should you be concerned about symptoms that do not appear on the official government symptoms list, it would be advisable for students to test daily over the few days where they are feeling less well.

Instructions for people who live in the same household as someone with COVID-19 (tested positive or symptomatic awaiting a test result) but do not display symptoms of Covid-19

From 16 August 2021, [you will not be required to self-isolate if you are a contact of someone who has tested positive for COVID-19](#) and any of the following apply:

- you are fully vaccinated
- you are below the age of 18 years 6 months
- you have taken part in or are currently part of an approved COVID-19 vaccine trial
- you are not able to get vaccinated for medical reasons

Fully vaccinated means that you have been vaccinated with an MHRA approved COVID-19 vaccine in the UK, and at least 14 days have passed since you received the recommended doses of that vaccine.

NHS Test and Trace will contact you to let you know that you have been identified as a contact and check whether you are legally required to self-isolate. If you are not legally required to self-isolate, you will be provided with advice on testing and given guidance on preventing the spread of COVID-19. Even if you do not have symptoms, [you will be advised to have a PCR test as soon as possible](#).

Any member of the household who is aged 18 years and 6 months or over and has only received one dose of COVID-19 vaccine or has not received any dose of the COVID-19 vaccination will still be required to self-isolate as a household contact of someone with COVID-19 symptoms awaiting testing and someone who has tested positive for COVID-19.

Please read the [stay at home guidance](#) which provides information on this.

Household members who are not exempt from isolation as close contacts should not go to work, school/college/childcare/education setting or public areas, and exercise should be taken within the home. If you require help with buying groceries, other shopping or picking up medication, or walking a dog, you should ask friends or family. Alternatively, you can order your shopping online and medication by phone or online. Household members staying at home for 10 days will greatly reduce the overall amount of infection the household could pass on to others in the community.

You could be fined if you do not self-isolate following a notification by NHS Test and Trace. You may be entitled to a one-off payment of £500 through the [NHS Test and Trace Support Payment scheme](#) if you are required to stay at home and self-isolate or you are the parent or guardian of a child who has been told to self-isolate.

Those who are [clinically extremely vulnerable](#) should be supported to minimise their contact with other people in the household during this period, regardless of whether others have symptoms or not.

Instructions for household contacts who are not required to self-isolate from 16 August

Even if you are vaccinated, you can still be infected with COVID-19 and pass it on to others. If you are identified as a contact of someone with COVID-19 but you are not required to self-isolate, you can help protect others by following the [guidance on how to stay safe and help prevent the spread](#).

Student/child close contacts should get a PCR test but are not required to self-isolate unless they are symptomatic and they should continue to attend school as normal. As well as getting a PCR test, you may also consider:

- limiting close contact with other people outside your household, especially in enclosed spaces (when not in school)
- wearing a face covering for those aged 11 and over in crowded places such as school/college/public transport
- limiting contact with anyone who is clinically extremely vulnerable
- taking part in [regular LFD testing if aged 11 years old and older](#)

You should follow this advice while the person in your household with COVID-19 is self-isolating.

If you are a health or social care worker or a student undertaking a work placement who has been identified as a household contact and are exempt from self-isolation, there is [additional guidance available](#) that you should follow to reduce the risk of spread of COVID-19 in these settings.

If you develop [symptoms](#) at any time, even if these are mild, self-isolate immediately, [arrange to have a COVID-19 PCR test](#) and follow the [guidance for people with COVID-19 symptoms](#).

For most people, coronavirus (COVID-19) will be a mild illness.

If your child does develop symptoms, you can seek advice from the nhs.uk website at <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/check-if-you-have-coronavirus-symptoms/>. If you are concerned about your child's symptoms, or they are worsening you can seek advice from NHS 111 at <https://111.nhs.uk/> or by phoning 111.

How to stop coronavirus (COVID-19) spreading

We are keen to ensure education can continue; and we wish to advocate the following things you can do to help reduce the risk of you and anyone you live with getting ill with coronavirus (COVID-19):

- **get vaccinated** – everyone aged 18 and over can [book COVID-19 vaccination appointments](#) now and 16-17 year olds are being offered 1 dose of the vaccination by 23 August
- **if you're symptomatic** -Isolate and get PCR test
- **if you think you are a close contact** -get a PCR test
- wash your hands with soap and water or use hand sanitiser regularly throughout the day
- cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when you cough or sneeze
- put used tissues in the bin immediately and wash your hands afterwards
- **consider your social contacts** – every contact carries a COVID risk, even with vaccinated people so:
 - consider whether to meet up at all
 - meet people outside and avoid crowded areas
 - open doors and windows to let in fresh air if meeting people inside

- wear a face covering if aged 11 and over when it's hard to stay away from other people – particularly indoors or in crowded places
- participate in twice weekly LFD testing following national guidelines (recommended for 11 years and over). We encourage you to log your results here: <https://www.gov.uk/log-test-site-covid19-results>

Further Information

Further information is available at

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "RBell". The letters are cursive and connected.

Rod Bell
Headteacher