



27 February 2022

Dear Parents, Carers and Students,

I hope you have been able to enjoy a restful break and enjoy some of the Spring sunshine over the last two days. The weather this weekend has certainly been in stark contrast to what we had to endure last week. The school managed to avoid any significant damage from all of the storms, I hope you all came through it unscathed too.

In response to the Covid related Government announcements last week regarding the easing of the Covid restrictions in England and the published 'Living with Covid' plan, I wanted to briefly provide an update for parents, carers and students on what the latest school guidance changes mean for our school community when we return tomorrow.

1. **Summary of 'Living with Covid' plan and updated guidance**
2. **Changes to Face Coverings**
3. **Covid Control Measures**

1. Summary 'Living with Covid' plan and updated guidance.

You will be aware that last week, the Prime Minister set out the next phase of the government's Covid-19 response, '[Living with Covid-19](#)'. The DfE emailed schools and colleges soon after with more details on what this means for education settings. The Key points are as follows:

Self-isolation

- From Thursday 24 February, the government removed the legal requirement to self-isolate following a positive test. **However, adults and children who test positive will continue to be advised to stay at home and avoid contact with other people for at least five full days, and then continue to follow the guidance until they have received two negative test results on consecutive days.**
- Routine contact tracing will end. Fully vaccinated close contacts and those aged under 18 will no longer be asked to test daily for seven days, and close contacts who are not fully vaccinated will no longer be required to self-isolate.

Face Coverings

- Face coverings are no longer advised for pupils, staff and visitors in classrooms or communal areas.
- Staff and pupils should follow [wider advice on face coverings](#) outside of school, including on transport to and from school.

Testing

- With immediate effect, the government has removed the guidance for staff and students in most education and childcare settings to undertake twice-weekly asymptomatic testing.
- Staff and students of secondary age and above in SEND settings, alternative provision settings, and SEND units within mainstream settings or equivalent in further education colleges are advised to continue twice-weekly testing.

- Any decision to implement additional testing measures, including on-site testing, must be agreed with, or recommended by, a Director of Public Health (DPH), our local authority, or our local Health Protection Team.
- Mainstream schools and colleges will be able to order tests if advised to do so in the event of an outbreak in the setting.
- All staff and students will continue to be able to access test kits from their local pharmacy or [online](#).
- **Anyone with Covid symptoms should take a PCR test, stay at home and follow government guidance if positive. People who have tested positive will continue to be advised to stay at home for five full days and then receive two negative test results on consecutive days before returning to their workplace or setting.**
- Staff and pupils who test positive should use any test kits they already have at home to undertake testing on days five and six, before returning to school or college if they test negative. If they have run out, they should order additional test kits online via gov.uk or you can supply them with a box of seven self-test kits if you have an appropriate route to do so, such as through a sibling or parent/guardian or in the post.
- New DfE guidance on asymptomatic testing in education settings from 21 February 22 is available [here](#).

Remote education

- The regulations requiring education settings to provide remote learning to pupils isolating for Covid-related reasons lapse on 24 March. It is understood, therefore, that schools and colleges are only legally required to continue to provide remote learning in these circumstances until that date.
- However, the updated guidance asks schools to “maintain your capacity to deliver high-quality remote education across this academic year, including for pupils who are abroad, and facing challenges to return due to any Covid-19 travel restrictions still in place, for the period they are abroad”.

Longer-term plans

- From Thursday 24 March, the government will remove the Covid-19 provisions within the Statutory Sick Pay and Employment and Support Allowance regulations.
- From Friday 1 April, the government will no longer provide free to order universal symptomatic and asymptomatic testing for the general public in England.
- The government will update guidance on the steps that people with Covid-19 should take to minimise contact with other people accordingly.

2. Changes to Face Coverings

In line with the new updated government guidance that face coverings are no longer recommended at all (unless we have a severe outbreak and Public Health advise us to reinstate them) and given that our school case rates had significantly reduced to about 1% of our school population before the holiday break, it is now appropriate to align with the national guidance and remove our compulsory requirement to wear face coverings in social areas.

As ever, students remain very welcome to wear a face covering (in or out of the classroom) if they wish to do so and, as per the general guidance, they are still recommended to be used in more crowded areas where you come into contact with people that you do not know. This has implications on public transport. Although I have yet to receive confirmation, it is therefore likely that face coverings will be continued to be required on dedicated school transport and, until we hear otherwise, therefore vital that students who use bus transport to/from school continue to carry a face covering should they need it.

As you well know, we had maintained the use of face coverings as part of our control measures for longer than many other schools and I am really grateful for your extended support on this issue. Our students have

been largely excellent in taking responsibility for having and wearing face coverings at our request; as ever they have risen to the expectation brilliantly in support of each other and our school community.

3. Covid Control Measures

Although case rates in the area are decreasing, the guidance on self isolation/testing have changed our school case rates are significantly low, the daily positive case numbers are still significant and we all need to continue looking after each other by playing our part in keeping transmission rates low. For the time being we are maintaining all of our key Covid control measures. As a reminder, they are:

- Ventilation of all classrooms and indoor spaces
- Enhanced cleaning
- Hand sanitiser use on entry to and exit from each room
- Separate year group zone social areas at break and lunch time
- Halted Year Group assemblies and any other 'large gatherings and mixing' inside where social distancing is difficult to maintain.
- Isolation and sending home of students who develop Covid symptoms whilst in school

Clearly, this remains a dynamic situation and, should case rates rise in a particular cohort or the school as a whole, we would liaise with the local Health Protection Team on the potential reintroduction of measures. Of course, we hope that this won't be necessary.

We will continue to keep you updated when anything else changes. Again, thank you for your cooperation and continued support of us and our brilliant young people.

Yours sincerely,



Rod Bell
Headteacher