



4th April 2022

Dear Parents, Carers and Students

In response to the Covid related Government announcements last week regarding the further easing of the Covid restrictions in England and the 'Living with Covid' plan coming into force, I wanted to briefly provide an update for parents, carers and students on what the latest school guidance changes mean for our school community and also inform you that we are continuing to use the old guidance for the remainder of this Term 4.

1. New Covid guidelines 'Living with Covid'

Last week, the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, Sajid Javid, set out the [next steps for living with Covid-19](#) in England from Friday 1 April.

This was followed up by a DfE email to schools on Friday 1st April, setting out what this means for education settings, and was soon followed by some updated [guidance from UKHSA on managing cases of infectious diseases in schools and childcare settings](#), which now includes advice on managing Covid cases under the 'Respiratory infections' section of Chapter 3).

The Key points of the changes are as follows:

- *Regular asymptomatic testing is no longer recommended in any education or childcare setting, including in SEND, alternative provision and children's social care settings. Therefore, settings will no longer be able to order test kits.*
- *Adults with the symptoms of a respiratory infection, and who have a high temperature or feel unwell, should try to stay at home and avoid contact with other people until they feel well enough to resume normal activities and they no longer have a high temperature.*
- *Children and young people who are unwell and have a high temperature should stay at home and avoid contact with other people. They can go back to school, college or childcare when they no longer have a high temperature, and they are well enough to attend.*
- *Adults with a positive Covid-19 test result should try to stay at home and avoid contact with other people for five days. For children and young people aged 18 and under, the advice is three days.*
- *Most of the specific Covid-19 guidance for education and childcare settings was withdrawn from GOV.UK on Friday. The operational guidance on the [testing in education settings document sharing platform](#) has also been removed.*
- *UKHSA will issue further communications about how to manage any excess stock of test kits. Settings are being asked not to hand out any test kits to staff, pupils, or students unless advised by your local health protection team, local authority or director of public health.*

I am concerned about the removal of free access to tests to almost all staff and pupils, at a time when Covid cases and associated disruption in schools and colleges are very high. I have also not yet seen the evidence for the advice that children who test positive should only avoid contact with other people for three days, as opposed to five days for adults.

As a result of my concerns and my desire to continue to take actions that reduce the risks for my staff and our students we will be ignoring the latest guidance change for now and we will be continuing with the now obsolete guidance for the remaining five days of this term.

Therefore, I am asking parents to continue to follow the self-isolation arrangements we had in place last week whereby:

Adults and children who test positive or have the symptoms of Covid/a respiratory infection 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 (if stocks of LFD tests kits remain available in the household). In the absence of available LFD tests kits, they can return to their setting after 5 days if they feel well enough to resume normal activities and they no longer have a high temperature.

That said, I know this approach cannot go on forever, but we are certainly going to maintain it in the short term and hope the forthcoming two-week Easter holiday will act as a necessary fire break in reducing case rates. I will review further before we return after the holiday period on the 25th April.

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,

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

Rod Bell
Headteacher
The Corsham School