



28<sup>th</sup> February 2022

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope that you are all well. May I begin by thanking you all for supporting the school especially during the last half term when we saw a rise in the rate of COVID cases.

As you will all be aware there have been national changes to the way that we approach COVID-19 in England under the Governments 'Living with COVID-19 strategy'. The Governments position is that sufficient advances have been taken in the fields of vaccination take-up and the production of antiviral and therapeutic medication to permit a shift in how we approach COVID-19 as a country. Consequently, the Government has announced the removal of a number of safety measures that were previously in place. This has a number of implications and challenges for schools and we are still strongly advised to take into account the local position and ensure that we do all we can to effectively keep staff, children and visitors to school as safe as possible from COVID-19, therefore we need to take on board the advice from the LA Public Health Team. In Wigan there has been a positive downward trend in cases in recent weeks, however Wigan still has the 6<sup>th</sup> highest rate in Greater Manchester and is higher than National.

### **Key guidance for children with COVID-19**

- If your child has any of the **3 main symptoms** or tests positive, the public health advice is to stay at home and avoid contact with other people. You should order a PCR test <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>

Most children and young people with COVID-19 experience a mild illness or do not have any symptoms at all. Children who have symptoms of COVID-19 are more likely to pass the virus onto others than those who do not.

#### **COVID SYMPTOMS:**

- a high temperature – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature)
- a new, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual)
- a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste – this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal



Through learning and loving we will follow Jesus.

- You may choose to take an LFD test from 5 days after their symptoms started (or the day your test was taken if you did not have symptoms) followed by another LFD test the next day. If both these test results are negative, and they do not have a high temperature, the risk that they are still infectious is much lower and they can safely return to school.
- The guidance states that children 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.

Schools are still advised to maintain the standard public health measures of hand and respiratory hygiene, ventilation, cleaning and following public health advice in relation to cases of COVID-19, and this will be important in reducing the number of cases in schools.

If we have another outbreak in school then we will have to reintroduce measures and take further actions to ensure everyone safety and avoid disruption to face to face education.

As always please do not hesitate to contact the office if you are unsure what to do or for further advice.

Please see attached the changes at a glance

Kind Regards

Mrs Newton

## **Changes at a Glance**

### **21 February 2022 the Government:**

- Removed the guidance for staff and students in most education and childcare settings to undertake twice weekly asymptomatic testing.

### **24 February 2022 the Government:**

- Removed the legal requirement to self-isolate following a positive test. Adults and children who test positive will continue to be advised to stay at home and avoid contact with other people for at least 5 full days and then continue to follow the guidance until they have received 2 negative test results on consecutive days.
- Is no longer asking fully vaccinated close contacts and those aged under 18 to test daily for 7 days, and has removed the legal requirement for close contacts who are not fully vaccinated to self-isolate.
- Ended self-isolation support payments, national funding for practical support and the medicine delivery service will no longer be available.
- Ended routine contact tracing. Contacts will no longer be required to self-isolate or advised to take daily tests.
- Ended the legal obligation for individuals to tell their employers when they are required to self-isolate

### **From 24 March 2022, the Government will:**

- Remove the COVID-19 provisions within the Statutory Sick Pay and Employment and Support Allowance regulations.

### **From 1 April, the Government will:**

- Remove the current guidance on voluntary COVID-19 status certification in domestic settings and no longer recommend that certain venues use the NHS COVID Pass.
- Update guidance setting out the ongoing steps that people with COVID-19 should take to minimise contact with other people. This will align with the changes to testing.
- No longer provide free universal symptomatic and asymptomatic testing for the general public in England.
- Consolidate guidance to the public and businesses, in line with public health advice.
- Remove the health and safety requirement for every employer to explicitly consider COVID-19 in their risk assessments.

- Replace the existing set of 'Working Safely' guidance with new public health guidance.