

24th February 2022

Updated Covid Guidance – Living with Covid

Dear Parents and Carers,

As you will be aware, this week the Government published their updated guidance around the changes they are making to the law for COVID. I've outlined the changes and expected changes for the coming weeks.

Masks and face coverings

Whilst these are no longer required, we'd recommend parents wear them in crowded spaces if you feel more comfortable. Staff will no longer be required to wear them in communal spaces unless they choose to do so. Visitors and parents will no longer be required to wear masks indoors unless they choose to do so.

Testing

Primary age children have only been recommended to test when there is a positive case in their class or if parents need/choose to. Until the 1st April, anyone with symptoms of covid is expected to go for a PCR test and we will continue to expect this for any children with symptoms of covid. For staff, the guidance changed on Monday afternoon, removing the recommendation for staff to routinely test. However, we will continue to make them available to staff to test if they have symptoms.

Isolation

From 24th February, the law changes and it is no longer a legal obligation to isolate. Instead, everyone should follow the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) advice.

The UKHSA advice remains to isolate for five full days if an individual is showing symptoms. They should then have two negative tests before ending isolation after day 5 (testing on day 5 and day 6). There is therefore no expected change in the advice, just to the law enforcing that advice.

For schools, this places COVID on the same level as the current policy in place for when children have other infectious or potentially infectious illnesses – such as Chicken Pox or vomiting/diarrhoea. These require children to be clear of symptoms for a fixed period of time before returning to school (for example, for vomiting/diarrhoea this is 48hours clear) and we will adopt this approach for covid. This is to ensure the continued safety of other pupils, staff and their families and we will review this approach at the end of the term.

At this point, and until the official UKHSA guidance is confirmed, I am unable to say what this policy will be definitively. However, we anticipate the period of time will be similar or the same as was required by law. School policy will be in line with UKHSA advice.

Please do continue to provide us with a copy of the email after reporting test results to confirm the absence reason.

As the guidance is made clearer, we will update our policy to match. Thank you for your understanding and patience.

Other illnesses?

We have very high expectations for attendance and target all children to achieve 97% attendance in school but we also recognise that children do not learn well if they are unwell in themselves. Please avoid spreading illness to others and keep your child at home if they are unwell. This website may be helpful: Is my child too ill for school? - NHS (www.nhs.uk)

What is not changing?

- We will continue to ventilate all spaces used by children and staff in school. Hygiene measures (hand washing and cleaning routines) will also remain in place. We will continue to monitor and report cases as required, and offer advice for families with positive cases.
- We will continue to use the one way system and routes around the school site for collections and drop off.
- Children will continue to come to school in their PE kit on PE days
- We will continue to have a soft start each morning between 8.45 – 8.55am. Please remember all adults must have left the site by 8.55am because this is when our lessons start.

I appreciate that the current changes may bring more questions than answers. Some families will be pleased to see the changes, while others will be extremely worried about what it means for them. As always, we will take a balanced and measured approach that aims to enable children to have all the opportunities we can provide, while keeping them as safe as we can.

I am incredibly proud of the way our school community, staff and parents, but particularly the children, have navigated the difficulties and challenges of the last two years and I'm confident that whatever comes next, we will continue to show our school's ASPIRE values in all we do to get through it all together. We look forward to welcoming parents and the community back into school over the coming months.

Thank you for your understanding and support. As ever, if you have any specific concerns, please do get in touch and I will do my best to support you with them.

Yours Sincerely,



Mrs Sumner,
Headteacher