

6th January, 2022

Dear Parents and Carers

I hope you and your families had a peaceful and blessed Christmas. As we return to school, there have been a number of announcements from the government that are relevant to schools. This might be causing anxiety to some parents, so the purpose of this letter is to highlight the most pressing of the announcements and reassure you as to the measures we are taking in school:

1. **Face coverings must be worn in lessons** – we were doing this before the holidays, so there is no change. We are still distributing a large number of masks to students, so please ensure your child has a good supply. We will be contacting parents should a child continue to come to school without a face covering.

2. **Changes to testing and self-isolation (SI)**

- a. **Testing** – you must SI as soon as you develop Covid symptoms or when you receive a positive test result. From 11 January, people without symptoms who receive a positive result from a home testing (LFD) kit will no longer have to take a lab based (PCR) test to confirm the results. You still need to get a PCR test if you develop symptoms.

- b. **Self-Isolation** – the rules have now changed and the diagram to the right explains the new process well. Day 0 is the day you develop symptoms or receive a positive test. You can start home testing on day 6. If you receive two negative results 24 hours apart then you can stop SI after the second test. So, if the tests are taken before school on the morning of day 6 and 7 and are both negative, your child can return to school on day 7.

How seven-day isolation rule works in the UK



- c. **Close contacts** – Anyone fully vaccinated or below 18 ½ years can take a daily LFD test for 7 days and continue to attend school as usual unless they test positive or develop Covid symptoms. Whilst it is no longer the school's responsibility to carry out contact tracing, where there are more than five cases in a group that may have mixed closely, we will write to parents of affected children advising them to test daily for 7 days.

3. **Measures to keep as many students in school as possible** – Our priority is to keep your children in school as school is the place where children are educated most productively. It is likely that we will face some challenges related to Covid over the next few weeks. Therefore, these are our plans for keeping students in school:

- a. If a large number of staff are absent, we will implement the following processes:
 - i. Use our bank of supply teachers and cover supervisors to cover absent staff
 - ii. Combine two or three classes in a large ventilated to space where students will be supervised by a member of the leadership team

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- iii. Move to a rolling remote learning rota where one year group stays at home for one day per week (with the exception of Year 11 and 13 who have public examinations this year). The draft rota will be as follows: Mon – Y9; Tue – Y12; Wed – Y7; Thu – Y10; Fri – Y8 (although we will review the rota if we have to use it for more than one cycle). We are very reluctant to implement this process, and will only use it as a last resort.
 - b. If a large and rapidly increasing number of students are absent from a particular year group, it may be that Public Health Dorset and BCP would consult with the school regarding sending that year group home for a period of time. Again, this is a process we would only use as a last resort.
4. **Covid vaccination for students aged 12-15** – The government have confirmed that students aged 12-15 will be eligible for a second dose of the Covid vaccination and that these will resume in school. The Dorset Covid Vaccination Team have contacted us proposing **24/25 January** to administer the second dose. The consent process will be online and they will write to you with more information around a week before the vaccinations are due to take place in school. As before, only those students for whom we have consent will receive a vaccination. The school is simply providing the space, any queries will need to be directed to the NHS.

How parents and carers can support the school...

It is not surprising that a number of students have tested positive on their return to school. The number of cases remains very high both locally and nationally. We need the full support of our community to keep our school running as effectively as possible. In short, we need you to do what the vast majority of you have done since the start of the pandemic – to follow the guidance. In particular:

- Ensure your child has a face covering (or you have contacted the school if they are exempt)
- Make sure your child takes two LFDs per week (or more if there is an outbreak in their year group)
- If your child has any Covid symptoms – *cough, loss/change to taste/smell, high temperature* – keep them at home and book a PCR test.

This letter only contains a summary of the guidance. Please click on the following link for more information <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/self-isolation-and-treatment/when-to-self-isolate-and-what-to-do/>

As always, if you require any further information, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Yours faithfully



Ben Doyle
Headteacher

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