



Important information for start of new term

3rd January 2022

Dear Windmill Family

I am writing to you today to share important information regarding ways in which we can work together to keep our school Covid free, our staff and children safe from infection and, as far as possible, able to access full time face to face learning over the coming months.

I would also like to thank you for the support that you have given us last term by monitoring your child's health closely, not sending them into school if they seem unwell and by returning to facial coverings and safer distancing. I am confident that if we all continue to be vigilant and consistent in managing risk, we will get through the remaining winter months successfully.

Reducing the spread of the virus: school actions

- All staff will continue to take twice weekly (minimum) lateral flow tests
- Any close contacts of a positive case will take a daily lateral flow test
- All staff will continue to wear face coverings in communal areas
- Reduction of interaction between pupils across year groups and phases
- PE outdoors where possible and retained key stage / year group play areas
- Continued ventilation and sanitation of classrooms and communal areas
- Introduction of CO2 monitors to monitor air quality in classrooms

Reducing the spread of the virus: support from parents and carers

The revised guidance from the Department for Education (DfE) encourages all members of the school community to:

- **Take daily lateral flow tests testing in the event of being a close contact of a positive case of COVID-19:** *people who are fully vaccinated, or children and young people aged between 5 and 18 years and 6 months, identified as a close contact of someone with COVID-19, should take an LFD test every day for seven days and continue to attend their setting as normal, unless they have a positive test result or develop symptoms at any time.*
- **Children under 5 are not being advised to take part in daily testing of close contacts.** *If a child under 5 is a contact of a confirmed case, they are not required to self-isolate and should not start daily testing. If they live in the same household as someone with COVID-19 they should limit their contact with anyone who is at higher risk of severe illness if infected with COVID-19, and arrange to take a PCR test as soon as possible. They can continue to attend an education or childcare setting while waiting for the PCR result. If the test is positive, they should follow the stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed COVID-19 infection.*
- **Information on the changes to the self-isolation period for individuals who test positive for COVID-19:** *Since Wednesday 22 December, the 10 day self-isolation period for people who record a positive PCR test result for COVID-19 has been reduced to 7 days in most circumstances, unless you cannot test for any reason.*



Individuals may now take LFD tests on day 6 and day 7 of their self-isolation period. Those who receive two negative test results are no longer required to complete 10 full days of self-isolation. The first test must be taken no earlier than day 6 of the self-isolation period and tests must be taken 24 hours apart. This also applies to children under 5, with LFD testing at parental or guardian discretion. If both these test results are negative, and you do not have a high temperature, you may end your self-isolation after the second negative test result and return to your education setting from day 8. Anyone who is unable to take LFD tests will need to complete the full 10 day period of self-isolation. Further information is available from the DfE – see link: [Link here](#)

In addition to being mindful of this updated national guidance, as a school we would be grateful for parents and carers to continue to:

- **Monitor your child's health closely:** some of our children who contracted Covid last term had few or varied symptoms, from a sore throat, headache to cold like symptoms; please do not send your child to school if they have any symptoms that could be linked to the pandemic.
- **Wear a facial covering as soon as you enter the school site:** if you carry an exemption, please bring this with you.
- **Drop your children off quickly** and avoid engaging with staff at the door beyond a brief comment or request: if you wish to discuss your child or have a concern to raise, please contact the class teacher by email or telephone. Similarly, please avoid grouping outside classes and leave school site quickly at the end of the day.
- **Let us know if your child is a close contact of a confirmed case and the outcome of daily testing as above.**
- **Report suspected / confirmed cases of Covid 19 to the school office as quickly as you can:** This enables us to keep a live data base of infection and will help us to inform our provision / actions to reduce further transmission.

The Government continues to emphasise its commitment to keeping schools open and continuing face to face learning for all children. At school we need to keep staff infection free and ensure that, should illness rates rise, we have sufficient numbers of staff to keep school safely open. In order to manage this, there may be times when we have to re-group pupils or ask different members of staff to teach a group. As you can imagine, this often quite a fast changing scenario, so please bear with us if, at times, there are some changes to your child's classes during the term.

If your child is absent from school for an extended period due to the pandemic, or in the event of a class / school closure, we will continue to provide a blended package of learning for all including a suite of learning resources and activities (available on Teams and in hard copy where required) alongside daily live lessons and pastoral activities to provide feedback to the pupils and keep them connected with their teachers and peers. Please be advised that any closure would always be a last resort and requires the authorisation of both the Trust and the DfE.

I look forward to welcoming you all back to Windmill on Tuesday morning!

Suzanne Edwards
Principal