



Tuesday 4 January 2022

Dear Families,

Happy New Year! Welcome to 2022. We do hope you all had an enjoyable Christmas and were able to spend quality time with family and friends.

We understand that many of you may be concerned about the Omicron variant and the difficulties this could bring about when school re-opens for pupils' tomorrow. We all know that face-to-face education is the best way for pupils to learn and that we have to balance this against broader public health risks brought by Covid-19. We wanted to write to you to reassure you that enabling face-to-face education, whilst doing everything to help protect staff/pupils health, is our absolute priority.

As we look forward to welcoming pupils back to school tomorrow, we wanted to share with you some updated information that has been sent to schools from the Department for Education.

Information on the changes to the self-isolation period for individuals who test positive for Covid-19

Since Wednesday 22nd 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 received 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 FD testing at parental or guardian discretion.

If both of these tests 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 unable to take LFD tests will need to complete the entire 10-day period of self-isolation.

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Daily testing for close contacts of Covid-19

People who are fully vaccinated, or children 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 usual unless they have a positive test result or develop symptoms at any time.

Children under 5 are not being advised to participate 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 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 whilst waiting for the PCR result. If the test is positive, they should stay at home and follow the guidance for a confirmed Covid-19 infection.

The current requirements on remote education continue to remain in place

As pupils return to schools following the holiday period, the current requirements for remote education continue to remain in place.

The Department for Education recognizes that the high rates of Covid-19 may cause difficulties with the availability of staff. Our priority is to keep school open and for pupils to continue with face-to-face education.

Where workforce issues do arise, we will continue to do our best to use existing SLT, teaching and support staff more flexibly where required to ensure our school remains open.

What control measures will St Monica Primary School have to help prevent rising cases of infection?

We will continue to operate the control measures that were in place during the end of the Autumn Term.

These include:

- Virtual Whole School Assemblies
- Staff and visitors will continue to wear face coverings in the communal areas of the school
- Fogging of all areas at the end of the school day
- Any parents entering the school building will be kindly asked to wear a face covering

- Parents and staff in the school playground to wear a face covering whilst on the school site
- Increased handwashing and use of anti-bacterial gel

We will continue to monitor any cases and revise our lunchtime and year group 'bubble' procedures if necessary.

Finally

It has been reported that a third of people testing positive for the Omicron variant are asymptomatic. To limit the number of positive cases entering the school environment, we are asking all parents to consider giving their child(ren) an LFD test today. This way, any positive results can be followed up with a PCR test to confirm.

Our staff have been asked the same before returning to the workplace today and will continue with their LFD testing program.

To reiterate, this is voluntary and for you as parents to decide and not a pre-requisite of pupils returning to school.

Thank you for your continued support.

Lisa Marshall

Executive Headteacher

Richard Waghorn

Deputy Headteacher