

Covid Parent Update 2022

Weds 19th January 2022

School Picture:

We are currently experiencing a peak period for cases, which includes higher staff and pupil absence rates.

Staff

At this time, 12 staff are absent, 10 are positive. We continue to manage this situation daily, with a combination of internal cover including using all senior leaders and external supply.

Children

Classes 5 and 15 are suffering larger absences than other classes currently and Nursery Class is closed due to lack of staff availability. Thank you to everyone for following the guidelines diligently when cases arise.

Contingency Plans

County reports that staff absence rates have doubled recently and it is an unfortunate fact that we remain on the cusp of enacting contingency plans. We are not yet in that position but we thought it best to prepare you for the possibility, while we navigate this peak period, which is being experienced by many local schools.

In terms of pupil cases, schools can only close on the direction of the county local health teams who monitor our numbers and keep in communication with us. However, schools may also discuss closure plans with the local authority, if staff numbers are too low.

Please also note that extra curricular clubs might be cancelled. This is case-by-case. You will hear from the leader of the club if they have to close it.

Remote learning

If we are forced to close any part of the school, remote learning will be made available shortly afterwards.

For those who are isolating individually, without the poorliness, we will do the best to provide remote learning but, as before, please note that teachers become stretched between the face-to-face class, the remote provision and now the additional general lack of staff.

Therefore, if children are well enough to work then work will be set or signposted. There may be a delay in starting this from Day 0.

If we have to close any classes, this will trigger a new assessment of the definition of vulnerable and key worker children, who will subsequently be offered provision at school. We will promptly get in touch with parents of any affected class.

Isolation rules currently:

Isolate for up to 10 days if positive. Day 0 is when the symptoms started or the test showed positive.

At Day 5 and 6 (if you have no symptoms) take LFD tests and return if they are both negative on Day 6.

Data shows that after Day 5 and 6 about $\frac{1}{3}$ cases remain positive.

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If still positive, continue LFD daily until Day 10.
Consult us if you get to Day 10 and still have positive LFDs.
Also bear in mind that the rules may change during the period.

At this time, the government has enforced normal school attendance regulations. This means that schools can only authorise absence for covid isolation or normal absence reasons. We cannot authorise absence if a parent wants to keep their child off as a preemptive measure. Please see Protective Measures below.

Protective Measures

Anticipating the post Christmas rise, the school continued to maintain all protective measures.

- Staggered timings to alleviate bottlenecks.
- Face masks in common areas for adults.
- Hand washing, sanitising and continuous messages about cleanliness, face touching etc.
- Cleaning team working through the day and before/after school.
- No mixing beyond year groups.
- Keeping occupied spaces well ventilated

We look forward to reassessing this as we go into spring and getting back to normal as soon as possible.

My thanks to the whole school team for pulling together to maintain the quality of provision and diligently covering the gaps formed by isolation periods. And my thanks to all of you, such a supportive community and group of parents.

Tuesday 4th January 2022

Happy New Year!

We are all set to return to school tomorrow with great anticipation for 2022. We also look forward to a year in which, we hope, Covid19 begins to become a memory.

The Omicron variant now makes up almost all the current Covid cases in Oxfordshire but research is showing that, although it spreads 2 to 3 times faster, it usually causes a weaker illness. National estimates are currently that 1 in 25 people are positive and currently a small number of staff are positive at our school.

This winter period will possibly be characterised at school by more absence than we've seen previously. As before, the staff continue to go to huge lengths to ensure disruption is as

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minimised as possible- even at times when they are ill themselves and undertaking remote learning from their homes back into school.

Our measures remain the same as those in place immediately before Christmas, including:

- No indoor mixing beyond year groups (such as assemblies)
- Face coverings for adults (unless exempt) in all common areas (and at any other times by personal preference)
- Pupils do not have to wear face coverings, except on transport
- Continued staggered timings and internal timetabling
- Continual cleaning throughout the day by the premises team, supported by all staff within their own work areas (i.e. spray and wipe down surfaces and equipment etc.)
- Hand hygiene (regular washing and gelling)
- Respiratory hygiene (catch it, kill it, bin it; sneeze into elbows etc.)

We will continue to manage staffing each day based on case-by-case circumstances.

As such, there isn't a 'priority list' of how we will deal with any absence but we will consider any one of the possibilities below:

- Supply cover where possible, and by known supply teachers where possible
- Cover by other staff at school- if necessary
- Remote learning led by the class teacher- children at school, class teacher at home
- DfE has suggested combining classes- this remains an option but is a much less desirable one- for obvious reasons

Schools have been told by the LA that they can consider closing or partially closing, in the event of lack of sufficient staff, but they cannot close for Covid spread reasons without the instruction from the HPT (Health Protection Team) in writing. We continue to talk to LA (Education Covid Cell team) and HPT when necessary for advice.

Any closure would automatically reactivate remote learning.

How to approach testing and positive cases:

If isolating due to a positive:

- Day 0 is the first day of symptoms or of the initial LFD positive test.
- LFD tests are to be taken on Day 6 and Day 7 (24hrs apart).
- If these are both negative, and you do not have a high temperature, isolation ends and you can return from Day 7.
- If still positive, LFD tests continue each day until Day 10.
- If still LFD positive at Day 10 but further PCR is negative then you can return.

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Schools will not ask for evidence of this so, as always, we trust in everyone's collaborative and collegiate efforts.

Daily testing for close contacts of COVID-19:

- People who are fully vaccinated, or children, identified as a close contact should take an LFD test every day for seven days.
- They should 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 and if they are a contact of a confirmed case, they are not required to self-isolate or to 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 following the guidance for households with possible or confirmed COVID-19 infection.

Please continue to keep the school informed about reasons for absence, in detail. Katie, Sam and Heather in the office will take your messages and further discuss any queries you have.

We will continue to send out 'Inform Letters' for those classes with contact from positive cases.

Now that this has been covered, let's get excited about the possibilities in learning for 2022!