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Celebrating Learning Together

Sunday 27th February 2022

Dear Parents and Carers,

RE: Updated COVID-19 Government Guidance ‘Living with Covid February 2022’

As you will know, updated guidance around Covid came into place on February 24th. Some will view this as a positive next step while others will feel anxious about the changes. I am writing to explain the changes and how the school will implement these changes.

We have carefully studied advice from:

The DfE:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1057106/220224_Schools_guidance.pdf

The Government: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-people-with-covid-19-and-their-contacts/covid-19-people-with-covid-19-and-their-contacts> and

Devon County Council (DCC) to put in place a Risk Assessment which can be viewed on our website: http://www.shebbear-pri.devon.sch.uk/wp-content/uploads/RA100-V-2.9.feb_22.docx.pdf

The key points from the Risk Assessment and how they will affect the school are summarised below:

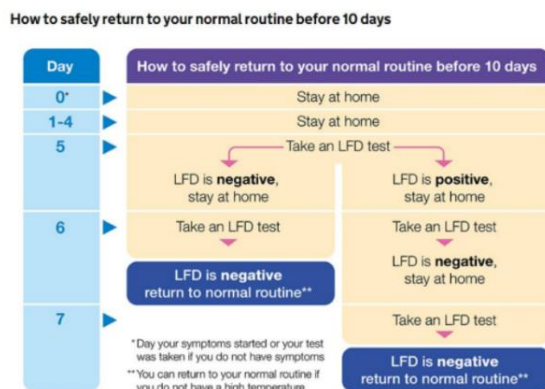
Self-Isolation if a Person Tests Positive for Covid-19

The Government document above states: *‘There is no longer a legal requirement for people with coronavirus (COVID-19) infection to self-isolate, however if you have any of the main symptoms of COVID-19 or a positive test result, the public health advice is to stay at home and avoid contact with other people.’*

This is reiterated by the Public Health advice which, in summary, says that if a person develops symptoms or has a positive test result we will ask people to stay at home to avoid passing the infection on to others.

Self-Isolation Period

If a person tests positive for COVID-19, please follow the flow chart below.



Source: COVID-19: people with COVID-19 and their contacts - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)



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Symptoms

DCC advise schools to communicate the following information to parents/carers and encourage them to follow the latest guidance around isolation if symptomatic:

*'Children who are unwell should **not** attend the setting and should remain at home until their acute symptoms resolve (+24 hours for a fever).*

- **IF** these symptoms develop into cough, temperature, changes to taste and smell, should isolate and test.
- **IF** test negative to COVID-19, still need to remain at home until at least 24 fever free hours and acute symptoms resolved.

Parents and settings should not try and 'second guess' diagnosis – if children have the key symptoms, isolate and test.

Examples of acute symptoms with which children should not attend school include fever, muscle aches, hacking cough.

The school's operational guidance outlines that in most cases parents and carers agree that a pupil with the key symptoms should not attend the school given the potential risk to others.

*If a parent or carer insists on a pupil attending school as a confirmed or suspected case of Covid-19, The school can take the decision to **refuse** the pupil if, in their reasonable judgement, it is necessary to protect other pupils and staff from possible infection with Covid-19.'*

Close Contacts

Close contacts are no longer required to self-isolate or advised to take daily tests and contact tracing has ended. Routine contact tracing (provided by NHS Test and Trace) has now ended, and close contacts will no longer be required to self-isolate or advised to take daily LFD tests. People with COVID-19 will be encouraged to inform their close contacts, Household and overnight contacts advised to take additional precautions for 10 days.

Testing

There is a return to PCR testing as the method of confirming a COVID positive case and should be taken if a pupil or staff member has symptoms.

Regular asymptomatic testing of staff in mainstream schools will not be expected to continue. This means that the school will not receive further testing kits. As we have limited supplies, we would generally not be able to give out testing kits to parents/carers or pupils.

Face Coverings

DfE and Government advice is that face coverings are no longer advised for pupils, staff and visitors in classrooms or communal areas.

However:

- they are strongly encouraged in crowded, enclosed spaces



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- close contacts of a positive case will be asked to wear a face covering
- visitors will be asked to wear a face covering
- If a staff member is supervising a child with COVID-19 symptoms, a face covering should be worn

In addition, pupils aged 11 and above are asked to continue to wear a face covering on school transport.

Disease Control

We will continue to ensure good hygiene for everyone by:

1. Continuing to encourage good hand hygiene, respiratory hygiene and the use of PPE when required.
2. Maintaining appropriate cleaning regimes - we will continue to follow the UKHSA published guidance on the cleaning of non-healthcare settings.
3. Keeping occupied spaces well ventilated - all staff know the importance of keeping classrooms/spaces well ventilated and this will remain in place and balanced with a comfortable room temperature.

Contingency Plan

In the event of an outbreak:

- Pupils and staff with COVID-19 will be asked to stay at home
- All staff will be asked to wear face coverings (unless exempt)
- Bubbles will be reintroduced
- All close contacts (staff and pupils) will be asked to do daily LFD tests
- External providers, After School Clubs and visitors will be cancelled
- Continued cleaning of classrooms, touch points and equipment
- Clear communication to parents and staff
- If staffing levels drop to a level where adequate supervision and safeguarding of children is in question, DCC will be contacted for advice re: returning to Remote Learning

Attendance

Good attendance is always a priority for the school. I do understand that absences for Covid will impact on overall attendance. We will continue to take Covid related absences into account when calculating overall absence rates for individual pupils.

Thank you for your patience in reading this very long letter and I hope you have found it clear and useful. If you have any questions, please do contact me via either school offices.

Yours sincerely,

Nick Alford
Headteacher



Website: www.shebbear-pri.devon.sch.uk