

11<sup>th</sup> February 2021

Dear Families,

I hope that you and your loved ones are all well. As we come to the end of what has been another "different" sort of half term, I hope that you have been able to manage and balance the many competing demands and that we, as a school, have supported you. As always, please do not hesitate to get in touch if there is anything we can do support you further.

As promised in previous letters, we will continue to update you on a weekly basis should any of our pupils or staff receive a positive COVID-19 test result across the school. We will of course inform you immediately if your child is directly affected. I can confirm that, since last Friday, we have had **no one** testing positive at Riverside School, on any site. I am also pleased to say that **all** the tests administered through our weekly asymptomatic testing programme for staff across our three sites came back negative. Since the start of the Spring Term, we have now administered almost 700 tests for staff, of which just 3 have been positive. You will be aware from previous letters that, for a number of reasons, we did not extend the "back to school" testing programme to pupils and we offered families the opportunity to contact us if they wanted to discuss this further. In line with Public Health England guidance, we have never adopted a blanket policy and, if families of secondary-aged pupils returning after half term would like to discuss this further, we are always here to listen.

You will be aware that we have been able to secure COVID vaccinations for our staff to provide an extra layer of protection to your children and the whole school community and we have increased the number of staff vaccinated again this week. We now have over 200 children in school and this will be increasing again after half term, when we anticipate approximately 80% of our children being in attendance. If your child is remaining at home for the time being, please continue to let your class teacher know what support will make the biggest difference to you and your child after half term.

This week also threw up an unexpected flurry of snow and whilst the children enjoyed doing all the things that children do when it snows, we unfortunately had to take the decision to close the school on Tuesday. Please be assured that this decision was not taken lightly and was based on, not only the conditions early in the morning, but the forecast for the rest of the day. We had staff on all three sites clearing snow and gritting very early on Tuesday morning but as we know, the snow kept falling through the morning, meaning that opening the school would have been too risky, both in terms of children coming in and concerns about getting home. We hope that this didn't inconvenience you too much and we were determined to be back open as soon as possible. As previously mentioned, we regularly talk about fun, friendships, love and laughter at Riverside School and we wanted to share a few photos with you [HERE](#). We believe that these are the things that schools should be all about, and we hope that despite the uncertainties and challenges, your child continues to experience nothing but happiness, fulfilment and joy at Riverside School.

I hope you all have a good week and we look forward to a continuing sense of hope and optimism for the second half of the Spring Term.

With very best wishes,

Steve Solomons  
Headteacher