

25<sup>th</sup> February 2022

Dear Families,

I hope that you all had a good half term.

We are fully back into the swing of things at Riverside School and I am delighted to report that for the third week running, there has been a significant decrease in positive COVID cases, compared with the number of cases we saw during January. Since my last letter on 10<sup>th</sup> February, we have had just two positive cases (both SPC staff during the half term break) and we very much hope that such low numbers will be the shape of things to come.

We said that we would review our current control measures in light of changing government guidance and you will be aware that on 21<sup>st</sup> February, the Prime Minister announced the removal of measures put in place during the pandemic. As a school, we have carefully considered the new guidance as it applies to our particular context and I can confirm that from next Monday 28<sup>th</sup> February:

- We will not be requiring staff, families or visitors to wear face coverings on school grounds, although any member of our school community is welcome to do so if they wish;
- We will remove current restrictions in a measured way and increase access to shared spaces on all three sites, as well as increase opportunities for all children to mix more freely with children in other classes (unless there are further outbreaks in individual classes);
- We will extend the range and breadth of trips out of school as appropriate.

There are always lessons to be learnt from every unexpected event and the pandemic is no exception. With this in mind, we are currently reviewing the changes that we had to make over the past couple of years (such as lunchtime arrangements and whole-phase assemblies) and where changes have been successful, we will continue with them in the coming weeks. We will then carry out a further review at Easter to shape our plans for the Summer Term.

I would also like to draw your attention to the following points which are taken directly from the latest guidance:

- If your child has any of the main COVID-19 symptoms (a new continuous cough; a high temperature; or a loss of, or change in, their normal sense of taste or smell), the public health advice remains unchanged and is still to stay at home and avoid contact with others. As a school, we will continue to follow this advice and will ask that if your child has any of these symptoms, they stay at home, order a test and remain at home until the test result is known. If the result is negative, they can return to school as long as they are well enough to do so.
- There is no longer a *legal* requirement to self-isolate following a positive test result, however, we are following public health advice that adults and children who test positive should stay at home for at least five full days. They can take an LFD test from 5 days after symptoms started, followed by another LFD test the next day and if both these test results are negative, your child can return to school, as long as they do not have a high temperature. If the test result is

positive, they should remain at home until they receive two negative test results on consecutive days.

- There is no longer a requirement for fully vaccinated close contacts and children under 18 to test daily for 7 days, however, if any classes experience further outbreaks, we may need to re-introduce further testing on public health advice.
- Routine contact tracing will end, however, in line with our commitment to keep you fully informed about COVID cases in school, we will continue to write to you every Friday with an update and if there is an outbreak in your child's class, we will contact you personally to let you know.

We are mindful that the situation is ever-changing and should there be a significant increase in positive cases in school, we may need to consider re-introducing additional control measures and of course, you will be kept fully informed of any changes.

You will be aware that we worked closely with colleagues from Oakfield Surgery to offer vaccinations at Riverside School for all pupils aged 12+ last term. Pupils aged 5-11 are now eligible to receive their first dose of the COVID vaccination and these will take place on all three sites in the coming weeks. If you would like to pre-register your consent, please [CLICK HERE](#) and once you have done this, the NHS Vaccination Team from Oakfield Surgery will contact you to discuss the details of the vaccination. In the meantime, if you have any questions, please call Oakfield Surgery on 020 8776 6514.

Throughout the pandemic, our commitment to you, and your children, as well as our staff and the wider school community, has been to keep our school as safe as possible whilst maintaining as close to "normal" a school experience as we have been able to do. Whilst we know that the coming weeks will remain uncertain, we also know that next week marks the start of Spring, so here's to new beginnings and much, much brighter skies ahead.

Have a lovely weekend and with very best wishes,



Steve Solomons  
Headteacher