

8th January 2021

Dear Families,

I hope that you are all safe and well in these continued challenging times. If your child is one of the 170 pupils back at school, we hope that they have enjoyed their first few days, and if your child is currently at home, we hope that they are well and that you are receiving the home learning support that works best for you. As always, please don't hesitate to contact your child's teacher if you would like any further support at this time.

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 and I am pleased to say that we have had **no** positive cases at Riverside School this week.

You will be aware that we have introduced even stricter control measures since the start of term and we will continue to review these measures regularly to ensure our school is as safe as it can possibly be for the whole school community. With this in mind, can I please reiterate previous guidance that if your child is displaying any COVID-19 symptoms at home, or anyone in your household is displaying any COVID-19 symptoms, then please do not send your child into school and follow the current NHS and government advice to self-isolate for ten days, or until they have received a negative test result. Thank you very much for adhering to these guidelines.

You may have also picked up in recent weeks that secondary schools and special schools with secondary-aged pupils have been asked to implement an asymptomatic testing programme for secondary-aged pupils on their return to school, for staff on a weekly basis, and for staff and pupils who have had close contact with a positive case on a daily basis, every day for seven days after coming into contact with a positive case. After much consideration, we feel that implementing a mass testing programme for our secondary-aged pupils is not something that they would enjoy, accept or intentionally consent to. We therefore do not want to put them through this invasive procedure. We want them to continue to enjoy coming into school, to trust us fully and to cherish the positive relationships they have with their class staff. We feel that the testing process could significantly compromise this and we will therefore be testing staff only at this stage, which in turn, will keep our whole school community (pupils, families and staff) as safe as possible, as any asymptomatic staff who are tested positive will self-isolate, without risking spreading the infection further. This will also mean that if we receive confirmation of a positive case in a class, the whole class will need to self-isolate at home, however numbers will be lower than on previous occasions due to our new control measures. If you would like to discuss the approach we have taken, then please contact the school.

I hope this clarifies the school's position and as we end the first of what has been a particularly busy week, I would like to continue to reiterate the school's commitment to each and every one of you and your precious children. These are indeed challenging times, but we will always retain our sense of hope and optimism and together, we will get through this.

With very best wishes,



Steve Solomons
Headteacher