



ST JOSEPH'S PREPARATORY SCHOOL
Part of the Edmund Rice Family

17th November 2021

Dear Parents,

Since I wrote to you on Monday, we have, despite our best efforts and the measures put in place, continued to have pupils test positive for COVID. In some cases these are pupils who have been asymptomatic and tested negative on multiple lateral flows, only to later test positive on a PCR test. We have sought and followed advice from both the DfE and also our Local Health Protection team and the welfare and progress of our pupils remains our number one priority.

I know there has been much discussion regarding these cases and indeed, that opinion varies greatly over what is an emotive and also very personal situation for us all. I would like to take this opportunity therefore to clarify the regulations and guidance that we are following and to outline the measures which we are following in school as part of our outbreak management plan.

The guidance states as part of its overview that *“There is now an imperative to reduce the disruption to children and young people’s education - particularly given that the direct clinical risks to children are extremely low,”*

Attendance

School attendance is mandatory for all pupils of compulsory school age and it is a priority to ensure that as many children as possible regularly attend school.

Whilst I understand that many parents may have concerns about their child coming into school given the number of cases the only exceptions to this are:

Anyone with COVID-19 [symptoms](#) or a positive test result should stay at home and self-isolate immediately. If you have symptoms of COVID-19, you should arrange to have a PCR test as soon as possible. This still applies even if you have received one or more doses of COVID-19 vaccine.

If you live in the same household as someone with COVID-19, you should stay at home and self-isolate.

You are not required to self-isolate if you live in the same household as someone with COVID-19 and any of the following apply:

- you are fully vaccinated
- you are below the age of 18 years 6 months
- you have taken part in or are currently part of an approved COVID-19 vaccine trial
- you are not able to get vaccinated for medical reasons

Measures

We continue to have ongoing measures in place regarding hygiene, cleaning, ventilation and following public health advice on testing, self-isolation and managing confirmed cases. These are based on the governments guidance that:

- *Decision-makers should endeavour to keep any measures in education and childcare to the minimum number of settings or groups possible, and for the shortest amount of time possible.*
- *Attendance restrictions should only ever be considered as a last resort - neither contacts or siblings of positive cases should be asked to isolate.*

As part of the 'step up' measures since the first positive cases we have:

- Made all whole school activities such as assembly and group worship virtual
- Ensured that children remain in their dual class key stage (EYFS, KS1, Lower and Upper KS2) at break and lunch times
- Switched to staff moving rooms rather than pupils, to reduce possible transmission in hallways
- Increased ventilation throughout school as far as possible, given thermal considerations
- Reintroduced face coverings for staff in communal areas
- Increased cleaning of classrooms during the day
- Ensured that different classes are kept socially distanced in mixed class clubs and in aftercare.
- Asked all parents to take children for a PCR where children are ill but do not have the 3 main COVID symptoms
- Schoolwork being made available on OneNote and Atom Prime

This will all be monitored on an ongoing basis and we will continue to adapt measures in line with advice from the Local Health Protection team.

I know that it is in our nature to try and make sense of the seemingly illogical way that COVID affects individuals and families and to try to plot how it might have progressed from case to case. I would ask however, that you keep our school community in your prayers, particularly those who are unwell. I would urge you all to err on the side of caution if your children are feeling unwell and would like to thank you all for your continued support.

Yours sincerely



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