

25<sup>th</sup> February 2022

Dear Parent / Carer,

You will no doubt have been following the announcements made by the Government this week to end the majority of COVID-19 restrictions. This letter summarises the Government's main points that affect Special Schools, and any additional advice we are offering as a result.

There remains a requirement that secondary aged pupils or older in Special Schools should continue to test twice weekly. We would also recommend that children with symptoms undertake testing.

There is no longer a legal requirement to self-isolate after a positive test, or for those over 18 who are not vaccinated to isolate for 10 days.

However, children and young people with COVID-19 should not attend school while they are infectious. They should take an LFD test from 5 days after their symptoms started (or the day their test was taken if they did not have symptoms) followed by another one the next day. If both test results are negative, they should return to their school if they normally attend one, as long as they feel well enough to do so and do not have a temperature.

Those who test positive should avoid contact with anyone in an at-risk group. We all have a duty to protect vulnerable people in society, including those who attend or work in schools. The current advice from the Department for Education (DfE) outlines that Headteachers can refuse access to school if a pupil has a confirmed case of COVID-19 or any of the three COVID-19 symptoms –

- a high temperature – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature)
- a new, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual)
- a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste – this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal

Contacts of positive cases are no longer required to self-isolate or to take daily tests, but we will continue to notify parents of close contacts until the end of this term so parents can look out for evidence of symptoms and seek a PCR test if necessary. Lateral flow tests remain available until the 1<sup>st</sup> April.

From the 1st April, the Government will update the steps that anyone with COVID-19 should take to minimise contact with other people. We expect further guidance on how to deal with suspected COVID, but in the meantime, we recommend that individuals affected should isolate at home for at least five days.

The general measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 remain in place until April 1st. Individuals can still reduce the risk of catching and passing on COVID-19 by:

- Letting fresh air in if meeting indoors, or by meeting outside
- Wearing a face covering in crowded and enclosed spaces, especially where you come into contact with people you do not usually meet, when rates of transmission are high.

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- Trying to stay at home if you are unwell
- Taking a test if you have COVID-19 symptoms, and staying at home and avoiding contact with other people if you test positive
- Washing your hands and following advice to Catch it, Bin it, Kill it

Most importantly, all eligible adults and children should get vaccinated in accordance with national guidelines.

As the Prime Minister made clear, the pandemic is not over – we are just moving into a new phase of learning to live with it in our daily lives and taking the necessary precautions to prevent its spread.

Yours faithfully

Vicki Fackler  
Headteacher