

16th December 2021

Head Teacher: Donna Walker

Dear Parents/Carers,

Sunderland Public Health Update - Confirmation of arrangements for the beginning of January 2022

We know this Autumn Term has continued to be a very challenging time for schools and we appreciate everything you as parents/carers have done to help us reduce the risk of Covid-19, in our school.

The Schools Covid-19 Operational Guidance and Education Contingency Framework have been updated, following announcements about moving to Plan B and changes in the guidance for testing and isolation of close contacts of positive cases.

The advice below will be subject to change, if and when there are further changes to national policy. The following testing and isolation measures are in place at this time:

- All individuals who have symptoms of Covid-19, however mild, should remain at home, access a PCR test and follow Public Health Advice.
- Any person who tests positive using a LFD test should isolate and access a confirmatory PCR test as soon as possible.
- Individuals who are a close contact of someone with Covid-19 and are fully vaccinated or under the age of 18 years and 6 months are not required to self-isolate, regardless of whether or not they are linked to a suspected or confirmed Omicron case.
- All close contacts aged 5 and over who are exempt from self-isolation will be advised to participate in daily testing for contacts of Covid-19 (DTCC). They will be asked to take a LFD test every day for 7 days, or up until the end of the 10-day self-isolation period (whichever is sooner), and should self-isolate if any of their LFD tests give a positive result or if they develop symptoms. A confirmatory PCR test should then be taken.
- The advice of DTCC replaces the advice of a PCR test for close contacts who are exempt from self-isolation. However, it is advice only and there is no legal requirement for self-isolation if they choose not to test daily. This means staff and pupils who are close contacts and exempt from isolation should continue to attend school even if they do not take part in DTCC, as long as they do not develop symptoms or go on to test positive.
- Close contacts who are NOT fully vaccinated or exempt must isolate for 10 days from their last contact with the positive case.

The following national recommendations remain in place for schools:

- The use of face coverings in communal areas for all adults, including staff and visitors.
- The use of face coverings on home to school transport (face coverings are required on public transport)
- All school staff and eligible pupils are recommended to take up the offer of a vaccine, including a third or booster vaccine if eligible.



Head Teacher: Mrs D. Walker BSc (Hons)

- Staff and secondary school pupils should continue to test twice weekly at home (3-4 days apart) with LFD tests – this is voluntary but strongly encouraged.
- Secondary schools should offer one on site test to pupils upon return to school in January, followed by a further test at home 3-4 days later.
- Schools are strongly encouraged to ask parents and other visitors to take a LFD Test before they enter the school.
- Continue with measures to support good hand hygiene, good respiratory hygiene, ventilation of used spaces and appropriate cleaning regimes.

Local Context and Additional Advisory Measures for Spring Term

At the current time recorded cases of Covid-19 in Sunderland continue to be high and it is anticipated they will increase in the coming days, following the emergence of the Omicron Variant of Concern. The recorded cases of Covid-19 amongst school age children have reduced, but rates of infection remain much higher than across the general population in Sunderland.

In response to this situation, and to help ensure as many children and young people as possible remain in face-to-face education, the additional advisory measures previously recommended from 1st November 2021 continue to be in place for the remainder of this term.

The additional measures set out below are advised for at least the first 2 weeks of the Spring Term. They will be reviewed regularly as infection levels change and in response to any further changes in national guidance (the national measures implemented under Plan B will be reviewed on 5th January and will expire on 26th January, unless they are extended).

Christmas Break

Based on this guidance, school closes for the Christmas break at 12.30 pm on Friday 17th December 2021 and **reopens for Teaching on Wednesday 5th January 2022.**

Onsite Testing

This will take place in School on **Tuesday 4th January 2022** – individual appointments will be made for any child who is Secondary age (Y7 – Y11) to attend school for their assisted Lateral Flow Tests on this day. They will return home immediately after their LFD Test. Parents will be notified within 30mins of a positive result.

Primary Learners

To support the onsite testing, **primary learners will return to school on Wednesday 5th January 2022** – can we please ask our parents/carers to ensure that all children who have any symptoms should book a PCR test prior to them returning to school.

I want to thank you all for your support and understanding after what has been a very successful, but challenging term. I would like to wish you and your families a very Merry Christmas and look forward to seeing you all in the New Year. Please continue to stay safe and well.

Donna Walker



Headteacher