

Wednesday 14th July 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

Re: Monday 19th July 2021 - Step 4 Covid Operational Guidance for Schools

Following the recent government announcement, outlining their commitment to moving the country to step 4 of the COVID Roadmap, I am writing to provide an update on our response to this.

The main changes to the new guidance centres around the removal of bubbles and the schools responsibility for contract tracing.

Bubbles

As per the guidance, for the remainder of this academic year we will continue to operate in bubbles as children and staff are very familiar with this way of working and we feel it is an appropriate safety measure to keep in place for the remainder of the term.

In September, bubbles will cease to operate in our school and the traditional school routines will return. We will write to all parents nearer to the date of school return to remind you all of key information.

Contract Tracing

From the 19th July, the government guidance states that close contacts will now be identified via the NHS Test and Trace programme. Schools are no longer responsible for undertaking contract tracing. As with positive cases in any other setting, NHS Test and Trace will work with the positive case to identify close contacts. Contacts from a school setting will only be traced by NHS Test and Trace where the positive case specifically identifies the individual as being a close contact. This is likely to be a small number of individuals who would be most at risk of contracting COVID-19 due to the nature of the close contact.

This will mean bubble closures will not necessarily happen in case of a confirmed COVID case and the following steps **must** be taken by all members of the community moving forward:

- If a child/staff member tests positive through a lateral flow test or a PCR test, they must self-isolate for 10 days from either onset of symptoms or date of test.
- If a lateral flow test is positive, then a PCR test should be booked; if the PCR test is negative and is taken within 2 days of the lateral flow test, the PCR test overrides the result of the lateral flow test.
- The child/family must contact NHS Test & Trace to inform of a positive case and to help identify individuals as close contacts.
- NHS Test & Trace will then contact any individuals identified as close contacts to inform them to self-isolate / advise to take a PCR test. This includes any children in school.

At every stage of the above we ask that parents remain in contact with the school so we are kept well informed and can work with Public Health Officials to monitor the level of cases in our school community.

Currently we are in the process of updating our school based risk assessments to ensure they are matched to the step 4 government guidance. You will be able to view our risk assessments on the school website from Monday 19th July.

The majority of our safety measures will remain in place until the end of the year as we want everyone to be healthy and well for the summer holidays. Towards the end of the summer break we will review our risk assessments again and we will write to parents ahead of the new school year to outline the key changes.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely

Abi Oldfield

Interim Principal