



Cranborne Middle School



Headteacher: Mr R Stevens
Assistant Headteachers: Mrs R Cain, Mr S Gillott

Tuesday 4th January 2022

Dear Parent / Carers,

Happy New Year to you all! I do hope you have had a safe and restful holiday with not too many interruptions caused by Covid-19. I really do hope this year is a little kinder to us all than the last couple of years have been.

That said, I am afraid I must start this letter with another update on the way CMS and all other schools are expected to run from the beginning of this term.

The Department for Education (DfE) on Sunday 2nd January published further guidance about the beginning of term.

Face coverings

The most significant change in the DfE guidance is that from today, it is recommended that **face-coverings are worn in classrooms**. The advice builds on the existing guidance that recommends face coverings should be worn in communal areas. The advice on face coverings in classrooms will be in place until at least Wednesday 26 January, when Plan B regulations are currently scheduled to end and a further reassessment of measures will be undertaken.

Like all previous directives from the DfE, and along with our fellow Middle School neighbours, we will be treating our school as a secondary school.

We are therefore asking that all students and school staff, unless exempt from doing so, wear face-covering at all times whilst indoors (other than when they are eating or drinking in the canteen).

Students should also be reminded that it is compulsory for face-coverings to be worn when using school buses.

Whilst we will be enforcing this new rule for everyone's best interests, please be reassured that we will continue to ensure that all children are comfortable, supported and reminded, not reprimanded, if they have forgotten to wear their masks. We will also be making sure everyone has opportunities to have a good break from mask wearing throughout the day.

We will continue to have hand sanitiser regularly available around the school and will encourage regular hand washing as well as maintaining good air flow within the school. CO₂ monitors will continue to be used within the school to support with this process.

Symptoms

We continue to ask parents to keep any students at home who are displaying any symptoms of COVID-19 (including those associated with the new variant). We hope to limit those who have the virus being in school and therefore its transmission to other members of the school community.

According to the NHS and public health bodies, the main symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) are:

- 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.

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The top 5 symptoms in children and vaccinated adults are often indistinguishable from a simple cold and include a headache, runny nose, sneezing, sore throat and cough. A high temperature and the loss of taste or smell are now less prevalent. It has been reported that Omicron patients experience fatigue, body aches and mild headaches. We would welcome parents taking a cautious approach and keeping their child at home if they exhibit any of the above symptoms, to limit potential transmission of the virus in school.

Testing

All students are also strongly encouraged to test twice a week using an LFD test and to report all results to the NHS. If a LFD test outcome is positive, the student should immediately self-isolate, the school should be informed and arrangements should be made for a PCR test to be taken.

Even if someone has tested positive for COVID-19 within the last 90 days, they are strongly encouraged to take part in LFD testing on-site testing on Wednesday, or at home once they have completed their isolation period for their prior infection.

Since Wednesday 22 December 2021, the 10-day self-isolation period for people who record a positive PCR test result for COVID-19 has been reduced to 7 days in most circumstances. Individuals may now take LFD tests on day 6 and day 7 of their self-isolation period. Those who receive two negative test results are no longer required to complete 10 full days of self-isolation. The first test must be taken no earlier than day 6 of the self-isolation period and tests must be taken 24 hours apart. If both these test results are negative, and the individual does not have a high temperature, they may end their self-isolation after the second negative test result and return to school.

Anyone who is unable to take LFD tests will need to complete the full 10-day period of self-isolation. Further information is available in the [stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed COVID-19 infection](#). People who are fully vaccinated, or children and young people aged between 5 and 18 years and 6 months, identified as a close contact of someone with COVID-19, should take an LFD test every day for seven days and continue to attend school as normal, unless they have a positive test result or develop symptoms at any time.

Since September 2021, all track and tracing are now being coordinated by the NHS. Schools are no longer expected to undertake track and trace within their settings; however, we will continue to keep everyone abreast of any significant outbreaks. Continued twice weekly testing should help to identify anyone who is asymptomatic and potentially positive with Covid-19.

As has always been the plan, the school will continue to do everything possible to continue to offer face to face learning in a safe and supportive environment.

As per Mr Gillott's letter before the break, we will be testing children upon our return on Wednesday before we look to continue to run the school day and timetable as normal. The new timetable will be shared with children tomorrow.

We thank you for your continued support and patience and should you have any questions, do please get in touch.

Yours sincerely,

Mr R Stevens
Headteacher

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