

Dear Parents,

At the start of a new half-term I am writing to provide an update on COVID 19 and how recent changes to government guidance affects school.

During the half-term break the Prime Minister set out the next phase of the government's COVID-19 response to the pandemic in '[Living with COVID-19](#)'. The key changes for schools are:

- The Government has removed the guidance for staff and students in most education and childcare settings to undertake twice-weekly asymptomatic testing. **We will therefore not be asking pupils and staff to report results to school twice weekly from the start of this half-term.**
- From Thursday 24 February, the Government removed the legal requirement to self-isolate following a positive test. However, the [UKHSA guidance for people with COVID and their contacts](#) gives the following guidance which the school will be following:

If you have any of the main symptoms of Covid-19 (a recent onset of a new continuous cough; a high temperature; or a loss of, or change in, your normal sense of taste or smell) you should order a PCR test. You are advised to stay at home and avoid contact with other people while you wait for the test result.

If you test positive, you should continue to stay at home and avoid contact with other people. This includes not attending work.

If you can, you should let people who you have been in close contact with know about your positive test result.

Children and young people with Covid-19 should not attend their education setting while they are infectious. They should take an LFD test from five 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 these test results are negative, they should return to their educational setting, as long as they feel well enough to do so and do not have a temperature. They should follow the guidance for their educational setting.

- The government is also no longer asking fully vaccinated close contacts and those aged under 18 to test daily for 7 days.

We regard these as sensible measures in order to ensure that we keep the school community safe, and prevent the virus being transmitted in school. We are asking staff and parents to follow this advice and let us know in the usual way if pupils are positive and staying at home as a result. We will continue to provide remote education for pupils who are following this guidance and isolating.

We are pleased that this continues to signal a move towards greater normality for pupils, staff and parents and we will be updating our risk assessment accordingly. In the meantime

we will be continuing with our enhanced hygiene measures in school: hand sanitiser stations, increased cleaning during the school day and ventilation (which we are monitoring through CO2 monitors).

In terms of vaccination for children who received their first dose in school before Christmas, parents have already been informed that the Oldham School Nursing team will be offering the second dose of the vaccine for COVID 19 to these pupils on **Friday 18th March**.

Parents may have read in the press about the offer of the vaccine being extended to 5 to 11 year olds. There was a section on this on a recent DfE update which school received which I have pasted below:

The NHS will prepare to extend this non-urgent offer to all children during April so parents can, if they want, take up the offer to increase protection against potential future waves of COVID-19, as we learn to live with this virus.

The [updated JCVI advice for vaccinating 5 to 11 year olds](#), which was published on Friday 18 February by the NHS, confirms that community pharmacy-led local vaccination services and vaccination centres should be the primary delivery models for this cohort.

Yours sincerely,

CJD Mairs
Principal