

The Coppice Primary School

Shawhurst Lane, Wythall,
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Headteacher:
Mr. W Hutt



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4th January 2022

Dear Parents and Carers.

Happy New Year everyone and I hope that most of you have managed to have a safe and relaxing Christmas with your families.

I am obviously aware that some of you will have been affected by Covid over the holiday and I just want to say how sorry I am if you were. I completely empathise as unfortunately my wife and I tested positive last week which brought an end to all of our holiday plans. Thankfully we are on the mend and I sincerely hope that the rest of you are too. However, my personal situation means that I won't be able to return to school until Thursday 6th January or Friday 7th January and I greatly look forward to seeing you all again then.

Once again, as a school, we understand that, with everything going on regarding the Omicron variant at the moment, and its high transmissibility, many of you will again be nervous about the return of your children to school, especially as it is clear that there will be no additional measures implemented by the Government to protect the children or staff in primary schools. As you all know, we strongly believe that schools should be open and that children need to be attending in person. However, again, we have been left to find our own way through this situation and to do what we feel is in the best interest of the whole of our school community in order to keep everyone safe. Therefore, please be assured that any decisions that we make will always be made with the very best of intentions.

Should staffing become an issue in any year group, we will, as always, endeavour to ensure that we cover classes as much as possible using a number of options. However, please be aware though that this may not be possible on every occasion and obviously we may have no option but to move a year group or year groups to remote learning for a specified period. This measure would, of course, be made in conjunction with our Local Outbreak Response Team. We very much hope that this is a situation that won't occur but we do know that we can count on your support and understanding in this eventuality. It certainly won't be a decision taken lightly.

Based on the information we have received, there will be some significant changes since the end of last term:

1. Even if someone has tested positive for COVID-19 within the last 90 days, they are strongly encouraged to take part in LFD testing at school or at home once they have completed their isolation period for their prior infection.
2. We have decided to make it compulsory for all parents and carers to wear a mask on the school site, unless they can provide proof of exemption. The School Leadership Team will, as usual, be on gates at the end of the day to enforce this. Obviously, we are doing this to keep the children, staff and parents/ carers safe and to prevent spread which is something I know that you will all understand and therefore cooperate fully with.
3. The 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 students do not have a high temperature, they may



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end their self-isolation after the second negative test result and return to school from day 8. However, for this to be the case, we will need the NHS notification proof of the two negative tests, which can be logged on the school's Covid email address (covid@coppice.worcs.sch.uk). We are requiring this in order to ensure that we do everything in our power to protect all members of our community and especially the most vulnerable.

Anyone who is unable to take LFD tests will need to complete the full 10 day period of self-isolation. Please see attached flowchart for a clear, visual breakdown of the above.

4. Daily testing for close contacts of COVID-19 positive people who are fully vaccinated, or children under 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.

5. For the foreseeable future, communication with parents will be by email or phone call only. Face-to-face contact at the beginning or end of the day will not take place. Parents and carers will also need to keep their distance from the doors at drop-off and collection times although you will be allowed to briefly lower your masks for recognition and safeguarding purposes. Any requests for face-to-face meetings must be via the school office. Once the urgency of the need for the meeting has been assessed, you will be contacted by the relevant people. Should a meeting need to take place, proof of a negative lateral flow test will be required.

6. The Government update has also emphasised the need for children to carry out a Lateral Flow test before attending school. Although this is not stipulated for primary age pupils we do strongly advise this too before pupils return on Wednesday.

Please be reassured that we will also be implementing a number of other in-school measures in order to protect your children and our staff as, without doubt, this is an 'all in it together' approach and we all need to play our part. These measures are detailed on the Covid page of our school website:

coppice.worcs.sch.uk/covid-19/

We completely understand that all of the above may seem like a backward step. However, unfortunately, the measures outlined above are without doubt needed at the current time. Their sole purpose is to keep EVERYONE safe and to try to ensure as much as possible that the children remain in school for their learning, which is where we want and believe they should be.

We greatly look forward to welcoming the children back on Wednesday morning and thank you again in advance for your understanding and cooperation with everything outlined in this letter. We all hope and pray that this 'storm' will pass very soon.

Kind regards,

Mr.Hutt (Headteacher) and The Coppice Leadership Team:

Mrs. Ashwell (Deputy Head), Mr. Laight (Assistant Head) and Mrs. Webster (School Business Manager).

