

Absence/Self-isolation Guidance - please be aware!

Hardly surprisingly, we have had quite a few parents ask us about this, eager to make the right decision. Confusing the situation, there seems to be quite a few colds doing the rounds at the moment. It is important that we all get this right for the safety of all of our children, staff and families. Things would be so much simpler if the Government had prioritised an effective testing system!

Still, if children are just 'feeling under the weather' or might have a 'sniffle', we are encouraging parents to dose them up with Calpol and send them in (our usual procedure). Basically, especially given the schooling children have missed, they need to be in. However, if there's the slightest hint that they have any of the symptoms related to Covid-19 (listed below), then they need to stay off until they have been tested and proved negative (or self-isolated for 10 days). In addition, if any of the household are exhibiting symptoms, they need to self-isolate for 14 days (see below). As a reminder, these are the symptoms parents need to be aware of:

- A new, continuous cough, where you cough a lot for more than an hour, or have three or more coughing episodes in 24 hours
- Fever (where your temperature is above 37.8C) and tiredness
- Loss of smell or taste
- Breathing difficulties

However, things aren't always 'black and white', and less frequent symptoms have been identified. UK researchers think that vomiting, diarrhoea and abdominal cramps could be a sign of coronavirus infection in children. However, we will not count these as symptoms of coronavirus (as it happens so often with children) but we do strongly recommend that in these circumstances that you are more vigilant and seek further medical advice if you are worried (Coronavirus in one of our Coppice families way back in March, started with diarrhoea and vomiting, so it may happen).

If a child is exhibiting any of the above symptoms, parents MUST keep them at home and seek a test ASAP.

Just to reinforce the point:

- Children must self-isolate for 10 days (or more) if they have symptoms or are tested positive
- They self-isolate for 14 days if they have been told to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace or if they live with someone who has symptoms or tested positive.

(More information can be found at: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/self-isolation-and-treatment/how-long-to-self-isolate/>)

We appreciate that individuals (or even whole year groups/bubbles) could be off school repeatedly throughout the year, given the possibility of reinfection. Accordingly, even though we have had lots of positive feedback about our home-learning back in the summer, we are 'vamping it up' to make it even better, to ensure the best learning we can for our children in the event of them self-isolating. More to come!

Smoother morning drop-off - please help if you can to keep everyone safe

The area immediately beyond the school gates is often crowded first thing in the morning as children gather close together in readiness to come in. This is hampering attempts at 'social distancing'.

Please remember, you have a period of ten minutes to drop children off, there is no need to do this right at the start of their designated time. I appreciate that some parents with siblings to manage will want to drop early, and some parents might have pressure from their work to drop early, but, if you can, please try to think about not dropping children straightaway. When we first set this system up, the hope was that we would have a steady stream over the ten minutes, allowing for social distancing. Instead, we are seeing a first two minute rush, then it goes quiet!

By the way, thank you everybody for wearing masks.