



Covid-19 Updates 2021/22 - Letter 1

16th September 2021

Dear Parents/Carers,

I am hoping there will not be as many Covid Update letters during this academic year as there were during last year. Our students have settled in really well and we have been delighted to see them engaging in all the extra-curricular opportunities and enrichment activities since returning to normal school life.

Please keep reporting cases into Mrs Jennings through our attendance line. Whilst updated government rules that have been in place since August mean the responsibility for track and trace has now moved from schools to Public Health England (PHE), if we detect an increase in the number of cases, then we liaise with the Local Outbreak Response Team (LORT) for Worcestershire. However, schools are no longer notifying parents of close contacts and children must attend school unless they have symptoms of Covid or a positive lateral flow test until confirmed by a PCR test. If they test positive at that point, your child will be notified of their isolation requirements by PHE's Test & Trace; if they test negative, they can return to school.

We are in a position where, through the monitoring of our attendance data, we can see when positive cases are being confirmed and identify any emerging patterns. This will enable us to seek guidance from the LORT and introduce precautions locally to mitigate any spread. In the last 24 hours, we have become aware that a small number of students have tested positive. Therefore, we have contacted the LORT for guidance as, although we have seen a very small number of cases across all year groups, this small number is slightly higher among Year 11 students. Following discussion with the LORT, as an additional precaution we are not going to hold a year group assembly for Year 11 in the theatre for the next two weeks. Instead, assemblies will be conducted via video to tutor groups. We have been advised that the rest of the school can function as normal.

Whilst there are many conflicting views about the best way to manage Covid, as we have always done, we will continue to follow the guidance from the government and PHE. The LORT is more than satisfied with the arrangements that we have in school, but following discussion with them, I would like to remind all parents of the following:

- Please remember to ask your children to undertake lateral flow testing twice per week.
- If your child develops any symptoms of Covid (high temperature, continuous cough, loss or change to sense of taste and smell) please keep them at home and arrange for a free PCR test.
- Please ask your children to wash their hands regularly and use the hand sanitiser available to them in school.
- Face coverings are optional for students and staff in school, should they wish to wear them. It is recommended that they wear face coverings when using bus transport.
- Government guidance states that:

"Individuals are not required to self-isolate if they live in the same household as someone with COVID-19, or are a close contact of someone with COVID-19, and any of the following apply:

- *they are fully vaccinated*
- *they are below the age of 18 years and 6 months*
- *they have taken part in or are currently part of an approved COVID-19 vaccine trial*
- *they are not able to get vaccinated for medical reasons*

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Instead, they will be contacted by NHS Test and Trace, informed they have been in close contact with a positive case and advised to take a [PCR test](#). We would encourage all individuals to take a PCR test if advised to do so.”

Finally, I need to make you aware that we have reluctantly made the decision to postpone the musical ‘We Will Rock You’ until 2023. There is a real risk that preparations and, indeed, the performances themselves, may be disrupted by the re-imposition of Covid restrictions and/or members of the cast having to self-isolate. We have the licence and we have the booking, and we look forward to putting on the show then. There will be concerts and possibly a school play planned for this academic year in which students will have the opportunity to participate, and we will share details of these with you in due course.

As we move through this academic year, it may be that similar minor adjustments may be required for other year groups. I will continue to keep you updated if significant changes are required.

Best wishes,

Yours sincerely



Dr A Evans
Headteacher