



BARLEY LANE PRIMARY SCHOOL

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Headteacher: Mr M Henry

10th January 2022

Dear Parents and Carers

Covid Update

Let me start by wishing you all a belated Happy New Year! I decided to hold back on writing to you last week in light of changing government regulations and the developing Omicron situation. On behalf of our staff, thank you for your kind wishes, cards and gifts at the end of last term. The children returned to school on Wednesday with a real sense of purpose and enthusiasm! 88% of children attending across the week, on average, and today's attendance figure is 91%. As with many schools, our staff have been impacted by the current covid wave and temporary changes are being made on a daily basis based on the staffing situation.

I would like to provide some reminders and highlight some of our practices linked to Covid-19 which will continue into this term.

Symptoms, testing and self-isolation

Government advice is still focused on the main three symptoms:

- A high temperature
- A new continuous cough ie. coughing a lot, for more than an hour, or three more coughing episodes in 24 hours
- a loss or change to sense of smell or taste. This means that they cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal.

It is important that anyone displaying the main three symptoms self-isolates immediately and organises a PCR test. It is not appropriate to use lateral flow tests when individuals have symptoms likely to be COVID-19. We are aware of a wide variety of symptoms being associated with positive cases of COVID-19. Some children appear to be presenting with symptoms such as diarrhoea and vomiting and so it would be advisable to test them with a lateral flow test in these cases.

From tomorrow, 11th January, a temporary PCR suspension comes into place and people in England who test positive on lateral flows will no longer need a follow-up PCR to begin their isolation period.

Those who test positive for covid should now take lateral flow 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. This also applies to children under 5, with lateral flow testing at parental or guardian discretion. If both these test results are negative, and you do not have a high temperature, you may end your self-isolation after the second negative test result and return to your education setting from day 8.

Asymptomatic testing

Households are strongly encouraged to take part in twice weekly testing if they are not showing symptoms. This will help to reduce the risk of the virus unknowingly entering school. You can access

free lateral flow tests in a number of ways, including by collecting a home lateral flow kit from a test site, or by ordering online. We are aware that there are lateral flow test shortages locally at present, but hope that the situation will improve.

Close Contacts

Close contacts in schools are now identified by NHS Test and Trace and education settings are not expected to undertake contact tracing. As with positive cases in any other setting, NHS Test and Trace will work with the positive case and/or their parents to identify close contacts. Contacts from a school setting will only be traced by NHS Test and Trace where the positive case and/or their parent specifically identifies the individual as being a close contact. We understand that it is difficult for a parent to identify close contacts within a school setting. As a result, we will continue to inform you if someone in your child's class has a positive test result.

I wish you all the best for 2022 and the upcoming term.

Kind regards,



Mr M. Henry
Headteacher