

Tuesday, 4th January 2022

Dear Parents and Children,

Happy new Year! Welcome back to school for the new term. I hope you have had a good rest and have lots of happy memories from your winter break. I'm looking forward to talking to you about New Year's resolutions in assembly and why this custom is such a common one for us to revisit every year.

We have many plans for our Spring term, including our Valentine's Day buddy event, Mother's Day and a Science Fair at the end of term, which we hope we can invite you all to. Unfortunately, COVID has reared its head again over December so we just don't know how this might change our plans. For now, Sajid Javid remains firm in his stance that extra control measures will be an 'absolute last resort' and generally COVID control measures around England remain minimal.

While many of you will already know the changes to COVID-19 protocols in England, as a school we are naturally duty-bound to ensure we are protecting every member of our community and to share with you how we plan to do this. Apologies, therefore, for the long-winded and somewhat repetitive nature of the rest of this letter!

Testing:

Testing protocols remain largely the same. Workplace requirements ask staff to test using LFTs at least twice a week and most families should try to take this advice at home too. This allows communities to identify asymptomatic people, as has been the case for a while now.

Symptomatic people must still isolate until they have had a PCR test result, at which point they can end their isolation period if it is negative.

The major change to testing falls into the positive PCR test result exemptions (see below).

Positive Test Results:

People receiving a positive LFT MUST still get a confirmatory PCR test. If you receive a positive PCR, guidance still requires you to isolate for ten days.

However, since December 22nd 2021, new guidance was issued to say that the ten day isolation period can be reduced to seven days if a negative LFT result is produced on day six and day seven of this ten day period (although teachers and healthcare workers must also test on days seven, eight and nine as well) AND if there are no symptoms. This only applies to people falling into the exemption categories (vaccinated, under 18 and 6 months, medically exempt or undertaking medical trials). People who are not vaccinated must isolate for ten days on receipt of a positive PCR test result.

Close Contacts

People who are identified as a close contact AND have been vaccinated are now asked to test using LFTs for **seven consecutive days**. They do not have to isolate themselves during this time unless they also develop symptoms. People who are not vaccinated will need to isolate for ten days at home and only return after this time if they do not have symptoms.

At Meadowbrook, as with many other settings, we do not feel that this guidance reduces risk to our staff and families sufficiently enough and therefore maintain our position on asking any known or possible close contact to get a PCR test AND achieve a negative result before they return to our

setting. We have already had a number of families in this situation at Meadowbrook, and I greatly appreciate the general feeling among parents that 'playing it safe' is the best way to protect our community. Thank you to everyone that has already supported this control measure.

Meadowbrook Risk Assessment and COVID Handbook:

As current control measures are already in place at Meadowbrook, we are not going to reissue our complete COVID handbook or risk assessment. We are lucky enough to provide excellent natural ventilation, we have cleaning stations around the school and we employ the basic control measures set out by the government that require a common sense approach to distancing, contact and hand-washing.

Contingency Plans:

I would like to remind you of our contingency plans for remote learning should it prove necessary to implement them.

There are four scenarios that we have planned for. Each class teacher has made plans to cater for all of these possible scenarios.

- 1. A pupil isolating and working remotely from home, who is well enough to participate.**
Should any of our pupils need to work remotely, your class teacher will contact you and make a study plan that works for you and your family. You can expect hard-copy work packs as well as invitations to join classes digitally. Your child will need to have a working email address, preferably their school one, to access the lessons.
- 2. A teacher isolating and working from home, while well enough to teach remotely.**
If a teacher is isolating, they will remain responsible for planning and running the lessons through the day. Another member of staff will be in the classroom supervising pupils working through the set tasks and ensuring that the laptop is ready to run Zoom lessons! The support person will naturally supervise the class through transitions times and breaks. As much as possible, the support person will already be a Meadowbrook staff member, but we will employ supply staff if needed.
- 3. At teacher isolating who is too unwell to teach.**
For any staff members who are too unwell to teach remotely, they will be covered by another staff member. This scenario is most likely to require one of the teachers from the supply agency to provide cover. Pupils will follow the plans of the class teacher.
- 4. Whole school closure.**
In the event of a whole school closure, teachers will provide both hard-copy lessons and resources alongside digital lessons according to the timetable they have designed. A suitable 'pick-up' time to collect any necessary resources will be agreed with your class teacher.

We would also provide key worker provision in school for families that qualify. If you have already registered as a key worker with us, you will not need to do this again, but if you think this is a service you may be able to utilize, please make your intention clear to the school. You will be required to provide proof of your key worker status.

For now, then, we will continue to employ the control measures in the guidance and any other control measures we see fit in order to maintain the safety of our full community. We'll keep you updated on any changes.

Reminders:

Swimming starts next week. Please ensure your children come to school prepared with their costume, towel, swim hat and swim bag. Easy shoes, such as crocs or sliders, can be work to make the changing process quicker!

ASC only this week, with all other after school activity clubs restarting week commencing 10th January. Please remember that clubs finish at 4.40 and after school care finishes at 5pm.

Wishing you all a fun and eventful term ahead,

Sarah