3rd January 2022

Dear Parents and Carers

I hope you were all able to enjoy the festive period and I would like to wish you all the best for the year ahead.

Unfortunately, we continue to battle with the ongoing problem of the Covid pandemic and I, therefore, need to inform you of the revised mitigations to our Covid Risk Assessment which includes guidance published by the DfE this week.

**Covid-19 Testing:**

All students are required to carry out 1 supervised Lateral Flow Test (LFT) prior to returning to school. Arrangements have been made for these to be carried out at our two testing sites in Folkestone and Ashford. From then onwards all students are required to take 2 LFTs per week and to report the results to <https://www.gov.uk/report-covid19-result>

**Face coverings in education settings:**

From Sunday 2 January, the government recommends that face coverings are worn in classrooms where pupils in year 7 and above are educated. This is in addition to all communal areas and in school transport. Due to the small size of our classrooms and the close working between students and staff at Goldwyn, my expectation is that all staff and students will wear face coverings in order to protect each other.

**Daily testing for close contacts of COVID-19:**

People who are fully vaccinated, or children and young people aged between 5 and 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 their setting (school) as normal, unless they have a positive test result or develop symptoms at any time. If a member of your household has Covid-19, please inform us in order to discuss any additional mitigations.

**Covid Symptoms**:

Common symptoms, as listed on the NHS website are: a high temperature, loss or change of taste or smell, persistent or new cough. It has now been widely reported that Omicron variant symptoms can differ from this and mirror symptoms of the common cold, such as: sore throat, sneezing, a runny nose and headache. Please keep your child at home if they are experiencing any of these symptoms and seek a PCR test for them. If they develop these symptoms in school, we will contact you to ask you to come and collect them.

**Changes to the self-isolation period for individuals who test positive for COVID-19:**

The 10 - day self-isolation period for people who record a positive PCR test result for COVID-19 has been reduced to 7 days in most circumstances, unless you cannot test for any reason.

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 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.

Please provide school with proof of these 2 negative tests.

**Anyone who is unable to take LFD tests will need to complete the full 10- day period of self-isolation**

Having your help with all of the above will make a difference to the safety of everyone within the school community. In addition, we have implemented several changes to the school routines that help to reduce large gatherings indoors, such as dining in class groups/hubs and holding virtual assemblies. Off-site activities are risk-assessed, external visitors to the school will continue to be kept to a minimum of essential providers only and most meetings will be held virtually.

We are, along with all schools in the country, preparing for the possibility of staff shortages. As you know we have had to instigate class closures at various times over previous terms, when we have not had sufficient staff available to supervise classes.

This week the DfE updated its guidance about vulnerable students, to include a wider range of social and family circumstances. We feel that all our students are equally vulnerable and that class closures should only be a last resort. If our risk assessment concludes that we do not have sufficient staff to operate safely, we will continue to adopt the strategy of identifying classes that would be most impacted by staff absence on a given day. We cannot prioritise any individuals, but will make sure that no students are persistently effected. Home learning and pastoral support will be in place for students unable to attend school.

Thank you, once again, for your continued support.

Best wishes

Charlotte Lewis