

2<sup>nd</sup> November 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

Due to the increased numbers of COVID-19 cases across Dorset and in the community, we have decided to enhance the measures we use to protect children and staff from COVID-19 during the coming weeks.

### **Why are we enhancing measures?**

In the South West and across Dorset there is agreement that more measures need to be at the disposal of schools and other settings following the increased COVID-19 case load in half term one, which saw many schools dealing with outbreaks and a rise in cases in school age children. As a result, **Public Health Dorset and Dorset Council have advised that new measures should be introduced to control the spread of COVID-19 in schools.**

- Case rates in those aged 11-16 year olds are a particular concern.
- Whilst the immediate health risks of COVID-19 infection to children and young people are low, the present high case numbers still harm children and young people because they are missing out on face to face education.

As a result, we are implementing measures that will include the following from **Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2021.**

### **Please ensure that your child is prepared.**

#### **Face masks:**

- We are asking all students (unless medically exempt) to wear face masks inside communal areas, such as corridors, assemblies and in the dining hall (unless eating).
- Exempt students can continue to wear their old wrist band or collect a new one from Mr Abbot if needed.
- Whilst not mandatory, your support in encouraging students to attend school with a face mask, is appreciated. Please get in touch with us if you have concerns regarding the wearing of masks in school.
- Face masks should also be worn on all school transport.
- Staff may choose to wear a face mask when in classrooms; students are also welcome to do so.

#### **Testing:**

- If your child is identified as a close contact through NHS Test and Trace, they will be asked to test with a Lateral Flow Device for 5 continuous days (or up to 7 days if the 5<sup>th</sup> day falls on a weekend).
- Close contacts identified through NHS Test and Trace are still asked to undertake a PCR test.
- We will issue additional test kits to students where there are high numbers of positive cases identified.

#### **Social Distancing:**

We will also be reinforcing some **social distancing** measures. This will mean that:

- Meetings that take place in school will be socially distanced. Visitors will be required to wear face masks in communal school areas.
- As the weather turns colder, please remember that Academy jumpers are a required part of the school uniform. Children should be outside where possible.
- All students will be proactively encouraged to use hand sanitiser throughout the day.

The school remains open and providing your child remains well, they can continue to attend school as normal. We will keep you informed should anything change.

#### **How can parents/carers help to support less infection in school?**

- Encouraging **higher participation in twice weekly testing with a Lateral Flow Test kit**. According to Public Health England, this can make a huge difference and has in some cases identified 25-30 asymptomatic cases per school per week.
- Support the school by observing isolation and getting PCR tests when asked.
- Observe close contact advice and do not send children to schools with symptoms of the virus.

Please ensure that your child is Lateral Flow Tested at least twice a week. Your child can get additional tests from the school, or you can order them as a household online here: (<https://www.gov.uk/order-coronavirus-rapid-lateral-flow-tests>)

[Read further guidance for close contacts here.](#)

If you develop symptoms of COVID-19 at any time, please isolate and book a test, even if you have already taken a test. The main symptoms of COVID-19 are:

- A new, continuous cough, and/or
- A temperature, and/or
- A loss of, or change to, sense of taste and/or smell.
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Further guidance on COVID-19 and what you need to do can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>.

Thank you in anticipation of your ongoing support.

Yours sincerely



Michael Hoffmann  
Principal