

Update on Omicron and Covid-Safe Measures at School for the new term

Dear Parents and Carers

We look forward to welcoming your children back for term start this Friday 7 January as planned. You will probably have heard and read the statistics and predictions for the spread of the Omicron variant in Wales this January because of its high transmission rates. In light of this it is vital that we adhere to the measures we had in place last term. There is very little more we can do to protect each other and the School from this virus but we can all be more conscious of what the measures are and implement them to protect each other.

Our priority is keeping the School open and to do this we need to lessen the opportunities for Covid transmission within our building. At the rate the virus is spreading and with the isolation requirements around positive cases, though these have been lowered, we are looking at the possibility of a very disrupted term with staff and children required to be off for a week at a time, at best, if they contract Omicron. This will impact all of us.

Measures to keep the virus away from the School door:

It is now recommended that all staff and **pupils from Class 6/7 up take lateral flow tests 3 times a week on Monday, Wednesday and Friday** to catch asymptomatic cases and prevent unknown spread. We have plenty of these in School and if you need to pick some up you will be able to on Wednesday and Thursday this week between 9.00am and 4.00pm. You can also pick these up from your local pharmacy.

If your child tests positive on a lateral flow test they must self-isolate immediately and arrange for a PCR test as soon as possible.

If you are a fully vaccinated adult, or aged between 5 and 17, you do not need to self-isolate if identified as a close contact but you are strongly advised to:

- take a LFT every day for 7 days or until 10 days since your last contact with the person who tested positive for COVID-19 if this is earlier
- take this daily test before you leave the house for the first time that day

The full information about current self-isolation in Wales can be found here gov.wales/self-isolation

If you are experiencing any of the covid symptoms, which remain officially as – fever, persistent cough, loss of sense of smell and taste – self isolate and arrange for a PCR test as soon as possible. However, Omicron is presenting with the same symptoms as a bad cold – headaches, sore (or scratchy) throat, runny nose - so if you start experiencing these the advice is to take a lateral flow test immediately and act on the results appropriately.

Measures to lessen the risk of transmission in School

There are the measures in place in School:

- **Ventilation Ventilation Ventilation**

All windows will be opened wide at the start of the school day, in classrooms and corridors, to allow an influx of fresh air to start us off. Windows may be almost closed whilst children are in the classroom, allowing some fresh air to circulate, but windows should be flung open again when children go out at break and lunchtime and again at the end of the day. **This means the School will be cold so please wrap your children up warm.**

- **Social Distancing**

Difficult for those working with the younger children but teachers have been asked to keep their proximity in mind and space your children out as much as they can. We are advised to wear face coverings where social distancing is not possible so - when teaching from the front of the class teachers can remove their face covering but when working closely with the children they are asked to put face coverings back on.

From Class 6 upwards it is possible to teach with the class reasonably socially distanced and from a socially distanced space at the front of the classroom, more difficult in Class 8/9 especially if they are in the lab. We will look at them having classes in the French Doors Classroom as much as possible and this being their go to space with Class 10/11 using the handwork room for lunch and break times.

In order to minimise close interactions and maintain social distancing, **we need to limit access to groups of parents in the School building at present.** We will continue with our separate entrances and encouraging parents to minimise time spent at pick-up and drop off time to no longer than necessary.

- **Face Coverings**

Pupils from Class 6/7 upwards must bring a face covering to School and wear this except when socially distanced and static in a classroom. Unless they are exempt of course. **Please make sure that your child has a face covering to wear every day.**

We do have disposable masks available when pupils forget but it hurts us to hand these out given the harm they have on the environment.

- **Hygiene**

Hand washing or sanitising, and disinfecting of frequently touched surfaces and desks will be taking place as needed. Enhanced disinfection of toilets and bathrooms will be taking place daily. All food waste and food wrapping from snacks and lunches will be taken home at the end of the day. **Please will you make sure that your child has a plastic bag or container** to hold this waste and return it to you to dispose of.

Here we go again! Happy New Year to you all and thank you for your continued support in protecting our School. Any questions at all just ask.

Kind Regards



Miranda Knight
School Administrative Manager /Designated Safeguarding Lead/ Health and Safety Lead