



Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> September 2021

## **Welcome to the new Academic Year!**

Your children have arrived with their contagious enthusiasm and smiles, excited to see their friends and teachers, with stories of their adventures during the summer. A wonderful start to the year!

After the disruptions of the past eighteen months we are hopeful that this year will bring greater stability so that we can place greater emphasis on teaching and learning to enable every child to get back on track.

There are some changes, according to government advice, regarding the management of Covid-19 that I have included in this letter. The most significant changes are regarding self-isolation which means that it is likely that year groups will not need to isolate for ten days. Please read on for the details.

We look forward to a successful and 'normal' (please!) school year.

The weather forecast for this week is hot and sunny so please ensure your children have all day sun cream applied before they attend school with hats and water bottles. Let's enjoy the fine weather before Autumn begins.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Newton and the Woodlands family

## **Control Measures to keep us safe**

Our Risk Assessment has been reviewed and updated in accordance with government guidelines in readiness for the new academic year. We will continue to implement many of the control measures that have been in place during the past eighteen months with some subtle changes in accordance with government guidance.

The key control measures from the RA are:

- Hand hygiene through regular hand washing or sanitising
- Good ventilation
- To promote good respiratory hygiene through the use of 'Catch it, kill it, bin it'
- Additional cleaning of the school site

- Staff continue to test twice weekly
- We shall continue to advocate space between year groups inside the school building

**Any child or staff member who feels unwell must not attend school, particularly if they have any of the covid symptoms or the wider covid symptoms.**

We shall continue to monitor children in school and if any children are unwell then we shall contact you to take your child home.

Secondary school children continue to test twice weekly and I know many of our families also undertake this routine testing at home with their primary children, for which we are very grateful.

We shall also continue to work closely with Public Health when there is a positive case and follow their advice.

### **Face Coverings**

In accordance with government guidance; wearing a face covering is now a choice, unless you travel on public transport. This currently applies to parents and staff members.

### **Outbreak Management Plan**

Parents need to be aware that if cases in school rise at any point during the next term we may be advised by Public Health to implement our Outbreak Management Plan. This would mean a return to the stringent control measures of the past academic year. If this occurred then changes would happen very quickly but as always, we shall keep you updated.

### **The main symptoms of Covid-19**

- high temperature – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature)
- a new, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or three or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual)
- a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste – this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal.

**If you have any of the main symptoms of Covid-19, self-isolate along with anyone you live with and get a PCR test. You should all stay at home until you get the results.**

You can get a PCR test online either by booking an appointment at a local test centre or having a test kit delivered to home or by calling 119.

**If you've been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for Covid-19 you can get a PCR Covid-19 test, whether or not you have symptoms.** Read more on the NHS website about getting tested for Covid-19.

## **Wider symptoms of Covid-19**

Walsall borough is now one of a growing number of areas where people with new and unexplained other symptoms are recommended to seek a PCR test to help slow the spread of the virus. These symptoms include:

- Shortness of breath or unexplained fatigue
- Diarrhoea, nausea and vomiting
- Headache that lasts a long time
- Myalgia (muscle aches or full body pains)
- Sore throat
- Blocked or runny nose

**Although these are not the usual symptoms associated with Covid-19, Public Health would like to encourage pupils / staff / residents to get tested as a precaution.**

You can register for a PCR test at a local testing centre online at [www.nhs.uk/coronavirus](http://www.nhs.uk/coronavirus) and tick the box that says your local authority asked you to take a test. Or you can call 119 and say the same thing to book a test. You can also choose to have a PCR test delivered to your home.

## **Isolation**

Parents and families have been wonderful over the past year in keeping us updated regarding positive cases in their household or through their close contacts. We ask families to continue to keep us updated.

The government have significantly altered the requirement to self-isolate.

Children are not required to self-isolate if they live in the same household as someone with Covid-19, or are a close contact of someone with Covid-19. Instead they will be contacted by NHS Track and Trace, informed they have been in close contact with a positive case and advised to take a PCR test.

**We would strongly encourage all individuals to take a PCR test if someone in their household or a close contact has tested positive.**

If they have taken a PCR test and the result comes back negative then children can return to school.

If the test is negative, it would be helpful and safer for the school community if the family could continue regular testing for the ten-day period using the lateral tests (in addition to the PCR test) as an additional safety control.

We shall continue to provide remote learning for any child that is self-isolating.

