



St. Paulinus Catholic Primary School

Inspiring all to live, learn and love in the light of Jesus.

(cf John 8:12)



Wednesday 2nd March 2022

Dear parents, guardians, carers,

Updates to Covid-19 guidance for schools and parents

From the 24th February 2022, you may have heard that there is no longer a legal requirement to self-isolate following a positive test. **However, public health advice remains the same: COVID-19 is still an infectious disease and any adult or child who tests positive should stay at home and not attend the school setting.**

As you can see from the above, COVID now falls under our infectious disease management system just as other diseases such as diarrhoea, sickness, measles, conjunctivitis or worms does. Infectious diseases require children/ adults to be clear of symptoms for a fixed period of time before returning to school. Public Health guidance has not changed their guidance for those that test positive for COVID -19. Any adult or child who tests positive must do the following:

- Send a copy of the test and NHS notification to school via the school email office@stpaulinus.org. This will allow us to code your child's absence correctly and not unfairly disadvantage their attendance score.
- **The person who tested positive must self-isolate for at least 5 full days**
- **and then continue to stay at home until they receive 2 negative tests on consecutive days (24 hours apart) or they have completed the full 10 days isolation. The photographic evidence of this will need to be provided to school before they return to school**
- Routine contact tracing has now ended and it is up to the positive case to inform their close contacts that they may have been exposed to the virus.
- Close contacts do not need to isolate and do not need to take daily tests, however, their general health should be monitored and if they feel unwell they should take a test.
- Close contacts need to take extra care to keep others safe around them for at least 10 days after being a close contact – this includes wearing a face covering and keeping 2m distance away from others.

Masks:

Masks are no longer required, however, they are still recommended in crowded spaces and they should be worn by anyone who has been a close contact of a positive case. Staff will no longer be directed to wear face coverings in communal spaces in school unless they choose to do so or they have been a close contact to a positive case but they may be asked to wear them in meetings etc. The same rules will apply to any adults visiting the site including parents. We extend the same offer to children, it is their personal choice if they choose to wear a mask or not – just as it always has been.

Testing:

Primary age children have been recommended to test when there is a positive case in their class if parents choose to. While tests continue to be freely available, we will continue to recommend this approach to protect others in the class and school. Guidance for staff to test twice weekly was also removed, however, we continue to recommend that staff test once a week and staff are keen to do this for their own peace of mind.

It remains essential that anyone with suspected covid or covid like symptoms takes a test.

'An outstanding school, which is deeply committed to the Catholic mission... this school inspires all within this faith community to live life to the full.' Ofsted 2017

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Isolation:

As mentioned above, the legal requirement to self-isolate has been removed. However, there is no change in the advice. Anyone who has tested positive or who has been a close contact should follow public health guidance which can be seen in the bullet points above and they should self-isolate and not leave their home.

It is vital we follow this advice as we have many staff, children and families with household members who are highly vulnerable with serious medical conditions that may mean that COVID could be life threatening. So we hope that all parents, if faced with the decision, make the right choice that will help us protect our whole community. School will be very strict on this and we appreciate your help in advance that allows us to do this.

Other illnesses:

As before, if a child is too unwell to attend school, they should not attend school. A conversation with Mrs Watts in the office will help parents identify if your child needs a fixed period of time off school.

Attendance:

Attendance in school is statutory and it is a parent's responsibility to bring their child to school when they are well enough to attend. School is already trying to catch up 2 terms plus of missed learning with the children and we can only do this if your child is in school. We have had a number of requests for term time holidays and term time leaves of absence, we understand that in the current climate it may feel like exceptional circumstances and that is why you are requesting your holiday be authorised but there are very few occasions where term time holidays meet the exceptional circumstances criteria. Please be aware that it is extremely unlikely your child's absence from school will be authorised for a holiday and it could result in a penalty notice if you take them out of school. We now need to get back on track and back into a normal routine as much as possible.

What is not changing?

Ventilation rules continue to be the same

Hygiene and hand washing rules continue to be the same

We will continue to inform families if there is a positive case in their child's class and offer advice for families who are close contacts or who have a positive case in their household

Hopes for the future:

We are going to monitor the cases in school closely and we hope that we will be able to hold our parents evening in person again this term, and if all goes well, we hope to begin to invite parents back into school for some adapted and more covid-secure events as the year goes on and we hope to take the children out on trips and visits. We all have our fingers crossed that some of our usual big events can go ahead!! Watch out for updates on the newsletters.

I am extremely proud of the way our school community, children, staff and parents have navigated the difficulties of the last 2 years. I am confident that whatever comes next, we will continue to show our school values in all that we do in order to get through this together.

Thank you for your continued understanding, patience and support,

Miss Hayes