



Downton Church of England VA Primary School

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Friday 4th March 2022

Dear Parents/Carers,

Covid-19 Update

As you will be aware, last week the Government announced long-anticipated changes to the guidance and laws around Covid, reflecting the understanding that we now have to live with Covid. As we still have a duty of care to all members of our community to ensure their safety as best we can, we would ask you to read the updates below, which are in-line with Department for Education and Government advice to schools.

Face masks – although these are no longer required, we recommend that you wear them in crowded spaces; it helps some to feel more comfortable at drop-off and collection times.

Testing - Children of primary age with symptoms of Covid are expected to go for a PCR test up to 1st April of this year, we will continue to hold this as an expectation. For School Staff, the changes mean that they no longer need to routinely test, however, we will continue to provide Staff with test kits so that they can test themselves if they have been in contact with someone with Covid or if they wish to maintain a testing strategy. Should they display Covid symptoms, they will be expected to have a PCR test up to 1st April 2022.

Isolation - From 24th February, the law changed and it is no longer a legal obligation to isolate. Instead, the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) advice should be followed:

UKHSA advice states that individuals should isolate for five full days. They should then have two negative tests before ending isolation after day 5 (testing negative on day 5 and day 6). There is, therefore, no expected change in the advice, just to the law enforcing that advice.

What does that mean for schools?

This places Covid on the same level as the current policy in place for when children have other infectious or potentially infectious illnesses – such as vomiting or diarrhoea. These require children to be clear of symptoms for a fixed period of time before returning to school (for example, for vomiting or diarrhoea this is 48 hours clear) and we will adopt this approach for Covid. As before, children absent with Covid should take a LFD test on day 5 and day 6 after their symptoms began or their first test. This is to ensure the continued safety of other pupils, staff and their families and we will review this approach at the end of the term.

We have been advised by Public Health that if a child is asymptomatic and tests positive, the day they test positive counts as day one. A negative test on days five and six is then required before the child should return to an educational setting.

Absences - Please continue to provide us your test results – this allows us to confirm the reason for absence.

What is not changing?

- We will continue to ventilate all spaces used by children and staff in school. Hygiene measures (hand washing/sanitising and cleaning routines) will also remain in place.
- We will continue to monitor and report cases as required, and offer advice for families with positive cases.
- We will continue to monitor the number of cases in one classroom and implement Public Health guidance as a result of an outbreak.



- We will continue to use the one-way system and routes around the school entrances for collections and drop off.
- Children will continue to come to school in their PE kit on PE days.
- We will continue to provide home learning via our website for those who are staying at home but are well enough to do so.

I appreciate that the current changes may bring more questions than answers. Some families will be pleased to see the changes, while others will be extremely worried about what it means for them. Please continue to be considerate towards others and their feelings regarding the latest changes. As always, we will continue to take a balanced and measured approach that aims to enable children to have all the opportunities we can provide, while keeping them as safe as we can.

We are hoping to receive further guidance in relation to Wiltshire primary schools next Tuesday and will update you further should anything change.

As always, thank you for your understanding and support, the parent community at Downton has been so considerate of each other and we are as a school most grateful to each and every one of you. If you have any specific concerns, please do get in touch with me, I am always happy to share the rationale for our decisions with you.

Yours sincerely,



Paula Carlton

