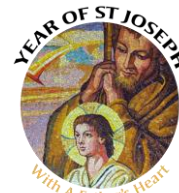




St Joseph's Catholic Primary School
Diocese of Clifton

Inspiring everyone to **REACH** through
Faith, Hope, Love



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Acting Headteacher: Mrs Clare Howells

COVID Update

Dear parents/carers

3rd November 2021

As I am sure that you are aware, we are in an area of rapidly rising infection and this is therefore triggering thresholds for additional action.

Situation Summary

- The South West is experiencing the impact of national rising case rates and the impact of increased transmission arising from false negative PCR results.
- South West case rates have increased sharply against the national average and are expected to continue to rise.
- The majority of cases are in school age groups. There is evidence of this translating into adults of parent age.
- Over 60 rates are rising steadily.
- Hospital Admissions for COVID19 have increased.

Because local rates are high, and many schools are experiencing challenges from widespread transmission, the South West Directors of Public Health have recommended that we invoke a precautionary and sensible set of measures; maintaining these for 14 days post half term (whilst they review) to limit the impact of social mixing at half term.

Having reviewed our risk assessment and managing outbreak plan, particular measures that we have considered include:

1. Continued good infection prevention control (ventilation, touchpoint cleaning), including in areas where staff gather.
2. Continued efforts on testing. including:
 - a. Household siblings (secondary school age) of confirmed cases are advised to take daily LFD while awaiting their PCR test results and to continue to attend school (unless test is positive). ***This is also advised for primary school aged children but is at the discretion of the parent/guardian.***
 - b. Given high prevalence it is appropriate to recommend daily LFD testing for all close contacts identified by NHS Test and Trace whilst individuals await their PCR results.
 - c. Promotion of twice weekly asymptomatic testing.
 - d. During an outbreak and following a risk assessment with the Local Authority Public Health team or the UK Health Security Agency Health Protection Team, to extend daily LFD testing for close or household contacts (identified by NHS Test and Trace) while awaiting PCR results to a minimum of 5 days, increasing to 7 days as necessary to ensure the final test is taken on a school day. If unwell stay at home. If negative for COVID19 individuals should still wait until 24 hours post fever to go back into a setting. ***Colds and other non-COVID19 symptoms are circulating but in the first instance cardinal symptoms should be treated as possible COVID19 and trigger isolation and testing. This is the case even if others in the setting /group have tested negative for similar symptoms.***
3. The re-introduction of face coverings for staff when they are likely to come into contact with other adults.

4. Reduced mixing between groups of students as much as possible, 'whole school' assemblies for the time being will be on TEAMS.
5. Reducing movement of classes around the school at the same time, entering and exiting the building.

We have continued to reintroduce clubs this term but staff are ensuring that the children attending clubs are only mixing with their year groups and enhanced cleaning will take place once the children have gone home.

At this point, we will not be staggering the start and end of the day but this may be something that we need to consider as well as specifying the entry point to school for some year groups, should our rates in school increase again.

I would like to thank all of the parents/carers who have kept their children off school and taken them to get a PCR, equally the parents/carers who are using LFDs as a precautionary measure. Your actions are supporting us to stay open and keep our staff and children safe.

Kind regards

Clare Howells

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