



# Colebourne Primary School

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Headteacher: Mr S. Guest B.Ed (Hons) NPQH



2nd January 2021

## **Ref: Omicron – parent update**

Dear Families of Colebourne,

Happy New Year and I hope you and your family have had a good Christmas break and are all well.

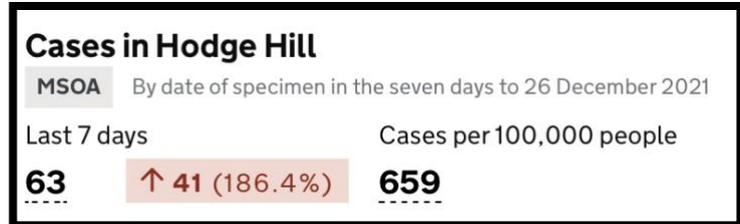
As we prepare to return to school on Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> January, I am writing to update you in the current situation regarding COVID and our approach to managing this to ensure the continuation of effective provision of a high quality education for the children.

UK government website states: *“COVID-19 infection rates are very high and the Omicron variant is spreading rapidly. It is important that we all take steps to reduce the spread of COVID-19 infection in the community to save lives and protect the NHS.”*

As we are seeing a significant increase in cases locally and nationally and with the reported rates of the Omicron variant being much higher for rates of transmission, we need to make additional preparation for the return.

In Hodge Hill we have seen a rapid increase in cases from when we broke up in December.

We also know that in Hodge Hill, only 66% have had their 1<sup>st</sup> dose of the vaccine, 57% their 2<sup>nd</sup> dose and 25% their 3<sup>rd</sup> dose/booster, so it's important that we try to contribute to helping minimise infections.



This morning, we have received guidance from the Department for Education about the return next week; this does not contain any significant changes for primary schools.

We have updated our own risk assessment and have decided to increase our control measures for the return in January's 2022. As before, some of our approaches go above the National requirements. We are doing this in the best interests of safety for pupils, staff, families and the wider community.

Please take particular note of the request for children to take a lateral flow test before returning. We know there are some reports of shortages of these tests so please try to get some in time for the start back. All children should return to school on Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> January (even if they have not managed to do a lateral flow test). Please do what you can to get some tests, and test your child; this will help keep everyone safer and reduce the chances of more significant disruption in the early part of the term. Staff will also be taking tests before the return.

## **Staffing issues**

At Colebourne we need to ensure we have adequate staffing for teaching and learning, site safety, hygiene and cleaning, lunchtime supervision and food preparation for snack and dinner.

One of our main concerns is the levels of staff absence that may occur.

We have several contingencies in place and the most appropriate ones will be used based on the specific circumstances of the absence – e.g. year group, length of absence, illness level of staff member, numbers of pupils off at that time.

Contingencies include:

- Non class based staff (senior leaders) covering
- Support staff to cover while teachers remotely teach into the classroom.
- Use of supply teachers (but there is very high demand for these and they are not always available)
- Doubling up with one teacher providing the core input for lessons and then support staff supporting the learning
- Remote learning: certain classes or year groups being asked to remain at home and take part in remote learning – this is a last resort.

We also have contingencies if we have issues with kitchen staff and food preparation.

## **Control measures**

### **Hygiene and cleaning**

- Additional on-site cleaning throughout the day
- Hand sanitiser on entry to classrooms
- Hand sanitising / washing before snack and lunch and throughout the day

### **Ventilation and air quality**

- Trickle vent windows open all day
- Purge ventilation by full window and doors opening at break and dinner
- Air quality monitors in each classroom and alarms if air quality reduces
- Hepa air filters for all classrooms (on order)

### **Face covering**

- All staff and visitors to wear while in shared spaces
- All parents to wear for drop off and pick up
- Children may wear in school if they would like to

### **Minimising contact between year groups**

- Moved all assemblies to virtual – streamed into classrooms
- Maintaining year group bubbles for break and dinner
- Minimising cross year group mixing to only:
  - Phonics groups
  - Intervention groups
  - Tuition sessions
  - After school clubs
  - Breakfast club/ Funtime club

### **Testing**

- At least twice weekly lateral flow testing by staff
- **Highly recommend lateral flow testing for all children** (reception to year 6) **once a week and before returning from Christmas holidays**; *Nurse children can do lateral flows if parent feel they can.*
- PCR tests for anyone with symptoms and must remain off school pending results.

### **Family members with COVID**

- No pupil should attend school if a household member is positive, without first discussing the situation with school
- We will continue to discuss approved absence for pupils where a household member has COVID
- Where children do attend, daily lateral flows are required

### **Close contacts (outside of household)**

- Pupils should take daily lateral flows while continuing to attend school.  
*“Anyone aged 5 years and over, who has been identified as a contact of someone with COVID-19 and who is not legally required to self-isolate, is now strongly advised to take a rapid lateral flow device (LFD) test every day for 7 days or until 10 days since their last contact with the person who tested positive for COVID-19 if this is earlier. If any of these LFD tests are positive they should self-isolate in order to protect other people.”*

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-for-contacts-of-people-with-possible-or-confirmed-coronavirus-covid-19-infection-who-do-not-live-with-the-person/guidance-for-contacts-of-people-with-possible-or-confirmed-coronavirus-covid-19-infection-who-do-not-live-with-the-person>

### **Food provision**

Where staffing issues or food delivery issues arise we may:

- Provide alternative lunches eg. Packed lunches for some or all of the usual dinner children.
- Bring in food from other kitchens.

### **Isolation periods for positive cases**

The government has announced that those who have tested positive may finish their self isolation on day 7 if they have negative lateral flows on days 6 and 7.

If this is the case, and to further reduce the chance of passing COVID-19 on to others, if you end your self-isolation period before 10 full days the government guidance ‘strongly advises’ you:

- to limit close contact with other people outside your household, especially in crowded, enclosed or poorly ventilated spaces
- to work from home if you are able to
- in addition to venues where it is a legal requirement, to wear a face covering in crowded, enclosed or poorly ventilated spaces and where you are in close contact with other people
- to limit contact with anyone who is at higher risk of severe illness if infected with COVID-19

Despite the Department for Education saying that the 7 day guidance also applies to children, we are retaining the 10 day isolation for all pupils as we define classrooms and school as crowded, and children in their class are not part of their ‘household’.

This will be held under review pending direct guidance from the Department for Education.

We will endeavour to keep you updated if we need to make any changes.

If you have any questions please get in touch.

Warmest best wishes and we look forward to welcoming the children back on Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> January.

Mr. Guest  
(Headteacher)