

Newchurch Community Primary School  
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Headteacher: Mrs J Narraway

29<sup>th</sup> November 2021

Dear Parent/Carer,

On the 27<sup>th</sup> November, the Prime Minister announced the temporary introduction of new measures as a result of the Omicron variant. We are assured that these measures are precautionary, whilst the variant is being tracked and assessed. As a result, guidance has been given to schools, mostly the recommendation to wear face masks and some changes to isolation requirements for confirmed and suspected cases of the Omicron variant and their contacts. As the situation develops, the advice and guidance is subject to change. We will keep you updated as soon as we know anything.

Both Newchurch's and the government's priority is to deliver face-to-face, high quality education for all our Newchurch Robins in order to ensure they maintain a high level of educational attainment which leads to improved life chances and better physical and mental health.

Currently, the guidance states that we do not need to keep the children in bubbles as this is believed to have a detrimental effect on them. Therefore, assemblies and lunchtimes will remain as normal for the time being. However, should there be an increase in cases, we will implement our Outbreak Management Plan on a temporary basis, just as we did earlier this half term, in order to mitigate the risk of the virus spreading further. A copy of our plan can be found on our school website. We were complemented by Public Health England and the Local Authority for our quick action and containment of the virus within such a short space of time.

As before, close contacts in schools are identified by NHS Test and Trace and schools are not expected to undertake any contact tracing. However, to safeguard our families, we will continue to inform you when a positive case has been identified in your child's class and recommend that you take your child for a PCR test. As we have found out recently, many children are asymptomatic and so a PCR test is best to ensure that they are in fact negative.



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**Any adult or child who have been indentified as a close contact of a suspected or confirmed case of the Omicron variant of COVID-19, irrespective of their vaccination status and age, will be contacted directy by the local public health team or NHS Test and Trace and required to self-isolate immediately and asked to book a PCR test.**

For everyone else, isolation rules remain unchanged. You are not required to self-isolate if you live in a household with someone who has COVID-19 **who is not a suspected or confirmed case of the Omicron variant, or are a close contact of someone with COVID-19 who is not a suspected or confirmed case of the Omicron varieant, and the following apply:**

- they are fully vaccinated
- they are below the age of 18 years and 6 months
- they have taken part in or are currently on an approved COVID-19 vaccine trial
- they are not able to get vaccinated for medical reasons

Basically, unless your child has been in close contact with a person who has tested positive for the new variant, your child can attend school; however, understandably, we do ask that if they have been in close contact, you take your child for a PCR test. All children should remain at home until the results of their PCR test have been received. If the PCR test is taken within two days of the positive lateral flow test, and it is negative, then it overrides the self-tested lateral flow test and your child can return to school as long as they do not have any symptoms.

As you know, we have asked that all adults coming onto the school site wear a face covering from tomorrow. Please could we also ask that you do maintain social distancing as best you can and only arrive at your allocated time slot thus reducing the number of people on site. You probably feel as we do that this is a step backwards but we are keen for all our families to enjoy Christmas time and so want to mitigate as many risks as possible in school.

With regards to the Christmas plays, we are still awaiting further guidance from the local authority. We do hope they will go ahead but the safety of our children, staff and families is the most important thing at this time. We will keep you informed.

The Prime Minister has stated that the guidance will be reviewed in three weeks time which takes us up to the end of this term. Therefore, school may possibly have closed before we hear the plans. If you remember just before we were due to return in January 2021, an announcement was made that all schools were only open to children of critical workers and children considered vulnerable and we had less than 24 hours notice to provide remote learning to all our Newchurch robins. We were able to do this because we were prepared for such occasion.

At this moment, there is no indication that we are going to be asked to resort to remote learning but we do want to be ready should the need be in order to seamlessly continue the education of your children. With this in mind, we need to review our list of children whose parents are critical workers. Therefore, if you are considered a critical worker please contact the office with details of your role



[newchurch\\_primary@sch.warrington.gov.uk](mailto:newchurch_primary@sch.warrington.gov.uk) For those parents who were on the list last time, you will remain on the list so there is no need to contact the school office.

Our remote learning provision was so effective because we ensured that all children had a device from which they could access Google Classroom. Many of the children who loaned a device have received a replacement laptop. We do have a number of laptops which have been changed into chromebooks so if you are in a position in which your child was asked to work from home and they do not have a device to use throughout the day, please ring Janine in the school office on 01925 763427.

Once again, we reiterate that we have not been informed of any plans for the school to close or to ask pupils to work from home. We just want to be ready and give our Newchurch robins the very best we can.

As always, we will keep you posted should we hear of any changes.

Take care and please keep safe.

*Mrs Jayne Narraway*

Headteacher



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