

Newchurch Community Primary School  
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Headteacher: Mrs J Narraway

11<sup>th</sup> November 2021

Dear parent/carer,

You may be aware that this week we have seen an increase in the number of positive COVID cases in some of our Newchurch robins, particularly Year 5 including Mr Duckett. As a result of the number of cases, which came to light at the weekend when parents contacted the school office email, we were able to act immediately. On Sunday, staff were informed of the implementation of the Outbreak Management Plan and since then, all classes have returned to their bubbles and mixing has been restricted. In addition to this, all assemblies and staff meetings are being held virtually.

Over the weekend, we were in contact with Public Health England and the Local Authority and an emergency strategy meeting was held on Monday with them and the school. At the meeting, we talked about the cases we had identified, the method of communication and the infection control measures in place. Public Health were very pleased with the control measures the school implement on a daily basis already and the further restrictions put in place, stating that there was no further actions the school could take to mitigate the risk.

Public Health stated that thanks to the swift action of our parents in following the recommendation in our letter asking parents to take their child for a PCR test if they have been in close contact, we have been able to contain the spread of the virus. What we discovered is that a large number of the positive cases were linked to asymptomatic children and that had parents not given them a lateral flow test or taken them for a PCR test, the virus could have potentially spread further across school as we would not have implemented the Outbreak Management Plan. In addition to this, some parents chose to use a lateral flow test rather than the recommended PCR test. We have found that on a few occasions, the lateral flow tests came back negative but the PCR was positive. Therefore, the recommendation to take your child for a PCR test if they have been in close contact is the best idea.

As there were a large number of positive cases in one class, we spoke with Public Health and the Local Authority who were very keen for us to remain delivering face to face education to the children who were negative. Therefore, in line with government guidance, we did not isolate the class and ask them to work remotely. Instead, we implemented a blended approach to learning with myself teaching online to both groups of children, Mrs Wilkinson-Gamble being online support and staff in school supporting the children in the classroom.



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The need to ensure continuity of learning is in-keeping with the guidance that came into effect on 16<sup>th</sup> August 2021 which states that individuals who are identified as a contact of a confirmed case of COVID-19 in England and meet one of the exemption criteria which are listed below are now exempt from the legal duty to self-isolate:

1. You are fully vaccinated and have received their final dose of an approved vaccine at least 14 days prior to contact with a positive case.
2. **You are under the age of 18 years and 6 months**
3. You have taken part in – or are currently taking part in – an approved MHRA vaccine clinical trial
4. You have a medical exemption and can evidence they cannot be vaccinated for medical reasons.

**Individuals who are exempt from self-isolation are advised to take a PCR test as soon as possible, unless they have received a positive PCR test result in the previous 90 days. It is recommended that a PCR test is taken.** All individuals identified as contacts of a positive case will continue to be contact traced.

If your child develops any of the symptoms of COVID-19 please get them tested as soon as possible. The symptoms of COVID-19 are:

- a new continuous cough and/or
- high temperature and/or
- a loss of, or change in, normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia)

Please can we remind you of the information we received earlier in the year from the local Public Health Education teams regarding the wider symptoms people have also been testing positive with. They include:

- Diarrhoea
- A persistent headache
- Fever and chills
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting

Testing can be arranged via <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test> or by calling 119.

Please seek prompt medical attention if your child's illness is worsening. If it's not an emergency, contact [NHS 111 online](#). If you have no internet access, you should call NHS 111.

If it is an emergency and you need to call an ambulance, dial 999 and inform the call handler or operator that the patient has coronavirus (COVID-19).



If your child displays any of the above symptoms, we will ask you to collect them and recommend a PCR test. Please keep this in mind when sending them to school in the morning if they are not 100%. As you can appreciate, we need to be cautious and keep our children, staff and wider Newchurch family safe. We appreciate that PCR tests are unpleasant but they are necessary to help early identification of positive cases and help us mitigate any risks. In addition, if you have a positive case in your household, it is recommended that a lateral flow test is carried out daily for children in Year 2 to Year 6 as it is recommended that children in Reception and Year 1 should not be expected to do tests more than once a week.

We are taking into consideration any steps we need to take with regards the seasonal festivities. As much as we love Christmas and all that goes with it, we need to ensure that safety comes first and that all families can enjoy the Christmas period. We are therefore just waiting to see what happens over the next few weeks since the implementation of the Outbreak Management Plan before making any decisions to postpone any Christmas events.

As the parental conferences are imminent, we have decided to hold these virtually or via telephone for all classes rather than have any additional adults in the school building. We are sure you understand the need for this precaution and hope that come the spring, we can have face to face meetings. We will send out details of this on Monday.

### How to stop COVID-19 spreading

There are things you can do to help reduce the risk of you and anyone you live with getting ill with COVID-19

- wash your hands with soap and water often – do this for at least 20 seconds
- use hand sanitiser gel if soap and water are not available
- wash your hands as soon as you get home
- cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when you cough or sneeze
- put used tissues in the bin immediately and wash your hands afterward

### Further Information

The Warrington Borough Council website contains information on the range of support that is available for you in these difficult times. [Education, schools and childcare - Coronavirus update | warrington.gov.uk](https://www.warrington.gov.uk/education/schools-and-childcare/coronavirus-update/) .Further information is also available at <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

If you do not have access to the internet, you can also call **0303 333 4300 or 0151 511 5200** If you need help or support.

I hope you keep safe and well and I thank you for supporting the battle against COVID 19 at Newchurch and in the wider community.



Kind regards,

Mrs Jayne Narraway

Headteacher



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