

Our Ref : CM/pk

29 November 2021

Dear Parents/Carers,

**Re: Omicron Covid 19 variant**

Further to the press conference given by Boris Johnson on Saturday evening regarding the new variant, I wanted to update you on the current restrictions and how they affect us all in school.

The Prime Minister announced new temporary measures following the emergence of the Omicron variant of COVID-19 in the UK. The new measures will be introduced as a precaution to slow down the spread of the variant.

Most of the guidance hasn't changed and the new measures that are being introduced are temporary and precautionary and will be reviewed in three weeks.

**Education Secretary Nadhim Zahawi said:**

The news of a new variant – the so-called Omicron variant – will have understandably caused concern for people across our country, including our teachers, wider education and childcare staff, parents, pupils and students.

We are already taking targeted and proportionate action as a precaution while we find out more information about the new variant. As we do so, we will continue to prioritise children's and young people's education and wellbeing, making sure education and childcare settings are as safe as possible and children continue to benefit from classroom teaching.

We are working with education and childcare settings to enhance safety measures where needed, including introducing isolation for 10 days for close contacts of suspected Omicron cases.

I'd like to thank everyone working to support our children and young people for their patience and hard work.

Here we outline what the new measures mean for education and childcare settings and what's changed.

**Face coverings**

**From tomorrow (Monday 29 November), we are strongly advising that face coverings should be worn in communal areas in all settings by staff, visitors and pupils or students in year 7 and above, unless they are exempt.**

**Pupils or students (in year 7 or above) should continue to wear face coverings on public and dedicated school transport, unless they are exempt.**

## **Testing**

All educational and childcare settings should continue to encourage staff and students to twice weekly using lateral flow device (LFD) tests.

## **Contact tracing and isolation**

The current guidance on contact tracing and isolation remains in place - which means that close contacts should take PCR tests but do not need to isolate unless they are over 18 and unvaccinated. The exception is for close contacts of suspected or confirmed Omicron cases, who will be asked to isolate for 10 days.

## **Vaccination**

All eligible staff and students aged 12 and over are encouraged to take up the offer of the vaccine, including boosters.

Vaccines are our best defence against COVID-19. They help protect young people and adults, and benefit those around them. Vaccination makes people less likely to catch the virus and less likely to pass it on.

To book a vaccine, please visit: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/book-coronavirus-vaccination/>.

## **Good hygiene**

Across all settings, people should continue to follow the basic rules of good hygiene. This will help to protect individuals and others from COVID-19. These are:

- washing your hands
- cleaning your surroundings
- covering your nose and mouth when you cough and sneeze.

Thank you to all of you for continuing to support us in difficult times.

Yours sincerely,



Mrs Christine Marshall  
Headteacher

