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30<sup>th</sup> November 2021

## COVID19 Update for All Families

Dear Parents/ Carers,

We are continuing to struggle on in the face of increased cases and I know that many families are becoming anxious about the number of cases that we currently have in school and the most recent Government announcements. I never would have thought we would still be dealing with these infection rates moving towards another Christmas and all staff are deeply saddened and concerned. We currently have 14 confirmed cases within the last 10 days with Year 3 now classed as an 'outbreak'.

Unless you've been on a news blackout this weekend you will have heard the latest on measures being reintroduced to help manage infection rates and the new variant, Omicron. We have received DfE and Public Health update and there is no current changes to how we are being asked to operate school at this time apart from updating our current risk assessment and make changes in school based on our number of current cases.

### Wirral Public Health Update

After a couple of weeks of slow decline, positive case numbers have crept back up in the past week. As of Friday, we were 391/100,000 representing a 17% increase and an average of 181 cases per day. The largest proportion of cases is again in 10-19 year olds but there is an increase in the 0-9s. **However, we still remain lower than most of our North West neighbours.** We have 17 "live" outbreaks in Wirral primary schools at the moment but in most of these cases, there is no change in advice to the schools. The advice from Public Health states a school 'outbreak' is 5% of whole school population testing positive within a 7 day period and a class 'outbreak' is 10% of the cohort testing positive within the same timeframe.

### Next Steps for Eastway

Please note that the following measures are not part of Public Health advice and guidance but part of our school's own precautionary measures to minimise transmission and ensure that all in our school community are fit and well and there is little disruption for our children, especially leading up to the Christmas period. We understand that it will be challenging and children and families may feel disheartened and disappointed by some of the new restrictions but we must exercise caution.

### Bubbles

- From w/c Monday 29<sup>th</sup> November we will return to Bubbles. Each bubble will be allocated their own room, zones, staff, toilets, playtimes, lunchtimes, and entrance and exit areas to avoid any mixing in school.
- When a class has an 'outbreak' they will act in a strict bubble, remaining in their own classroom
- From Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> December all KS2 classes will eat lunch in their classrooms
- All KS2 classes will be back sitting in rows as this minimises transmission
- Children will not share equipment in school and reduce items brought in from home and taken home from school
- Hygiene measures and infection controls in place- regular cleaning of touch points, tissues available for children, use of hygiene bins in all classrooms, hand washing on entry and exit to classes and when children may have mixed
- We maintain very calm and ordered classrooms with no unnecessary movement or loud voices (we know that the virus spreads through water droplets and the louder they are increases the risk)

- Children have been reminded about all these restrictions and the reasons that they are in place, children will need to be directly taught and routines re-established and we would like your support with this at home.
- Ventilation is key to reduce the spread of the virus- all our windows and internal doors remain open. We have made use of the DfE allocated CO2 monitors in school and the results are good, showing that our preventative measures and increased ventilation is effective. I know that it is cold so I remind all families to provide layers for their children and outdoor PE kits as we will continue to play and have PE, forest schools and outdoor learning taking place.
- Christmas Dinner & Class Parties/trips/events can take place within a bubble and class teachers will let you know of any changes to their arrangements

### **Staff**

- Staff to continue to wear masks in communal areas, gates and where social distancing is not possible
- All staff complete twice weekly LFT testing
- All staff are vaccinated and part of the booster programme
- Daily LFT testing and two PCRs (day 2 and 5) for those with close contact with a positive case
- Staffrooms are not in use and our staff do not mix across bubbles unless covering teacher absence

### **Minimising Contact & Risk**

- Parents & Visitors to wear masks in the school building, gates and where social distancing is not possible
- No visitors into school (including parents/carers/professionals) unless through prior arrangement with Headteacher
- No assemblies will take place
- No trips- we have now cancelled the theatre trip to Liverpool and will look at issuing tickets for families to attend a Panto in the holidays
- We are reviewing our Chester Zoo trip as the risk at the zoo is low but it is transport that is causing an issue, so we will let you know by the end of the week.
- No Christmas events or productions will go ahead with an audience in school. We will record events for families and set up virtual fundraising activities or small outdoor activities, where possible.
- We are working with Neo Community regarding the Christmas Parties and Dinner scheduled for Monday 20<sup>th</sup> December and will let you know when we have an update.

We are advising all families to continue testing their older children with lateral flow tests wherever possible and PCR test on day 2 and day 5 if they have had direct contact with a positive case in the household or in school or they are unwell. If your child is unwell, they must not attend school.

Public Health and Government guidelines state that if a child does not have symptoms they can attend school even if they have been a close contact, has a household positive case or are awaiting a PCR result.

As we have found out today, this advice is not always helpful and which is why I would prefer that all children who have had direct contact are given PCR tests and remain at home until they receive a negative result but it is not something that I can ask of families or enforce.

If you have any questions or concerns please speak to me.

Sending our love and well wishes to all of those who are unwell or currently isolating. Take care and stay safe,

Mrs Morris