16th July 2021

Dear Parents/carers,

We have recently received an update regarding our Covid-19 Operational Guidance to align us with Step 4 of the government roadmap from the 19th July.

However, with only one week until the end of term we will be keeping certain aspects of school operating as they are, and will implement the wider changes from September.

Please keep reading for a full summary of the changes.

**Mixing and bubbles**

* At Step 4 the Department for Education (DfE) no longer recommend that it is necessary to keep children in ‘consistent groups’ (bubbles). The guidance now states that ‘if your school is still open in Step 4 you may wish to continue with these measures until the end of the summer term’. However, due to our split breaks and lunchtimes we will continue with our year group bubbles until the end of term.

**Track and Trace and Isolation**

* From 11.59 on Sunday 18th July schools no longer have a role in track and trace and their legal powers to ask people to isolate will end.
* Contacts identified within settings prior to 19th July **will still be required to complete their ten day isolation period.**
* From Monday 19th NHS Track and Trace will contact parents to ask questions about contacts at home and in the community.  They will not ask them about contacts at school, but they will ask parents to inform the school.
* Parents and students are still required to report all positive tests LFD and PCR to schools
* Schools will not be routinely contacted by track and trace to ask for information, but they may be contacted if they are in an ‘outbreak area’ where there are high levels of community transmission, outbreaks in other settings as currently happens in managing other infectious diseases.
* The legal requirement to self-isolate **does not change** on 19th July for individuals:
  + If they have been notified by NHS Test and Trace that they are a close contact (changes from 16th August awaiting clarification)
  + If they or someone in their household has tested positive with a PCR
  + If they or someone in their household is symptomatic
* From the 19th July students who test positive with an LFD are still required to
  + Self-isolate with their household members
  + Notify school of a positive LFD result
  + Seek a confirmatory PCR test within 2 days of the positive LFD
  + Notify school of their confirmatory PCR test result
  + If PCR test is negative and taken within 2 days, the isolation period will end for the individual and their household
  + If the PCR test is positive full 10 days isolation must be completed by student and household.

**When the school are informed of a positive case**

* Schools must continue to inform the local authority of positive cases.
* While no longer required to contract trace, under the health and safety duty of care regulations schools are required to take appropriate action to protect students and staff; This includes those in relation to communicable diseases such as COVID.  Under this guidance schools can require students who are close contacts of the positive case not to come into school. This however does not mean that the person needs to self-isolate but it is recommended that they limit their contact with others during the identified period.
* Devon County Council will support schools who take action to carry out their duty of care in this way and to continue with the contract tracing arrangements they have in place until the end of term.
* The Devon Public Health and education teams will continue to support schools, as they have done previously, through the last week of term.

**Return in September**

* The DfE are asking all secondary schools to carry out testing on site before students return in September.
* Testing remains important in reducing the risk of transmission of infection within schools.
* As it is likely that students will be mixing with lots of other people over the summer break, it is recommended that all secondary school students should receive two on-site lateral flow (LFD) tests 3-5 days apart on their return in the autumn term.
* We plan to start this mass testing for students whose parents have consented, on Friday 3rd September. Further details will follow in a separate letter.
* Once the two LFD tests have taken place in school, students will be asked to resume testing twice weekly at home until the end of September when it will be reviewed.

**Face Coverings**

* From 19th July face coverings will no longer be advised for students, staff and visitors either in classrooms or in communal areas. However, as a school we have decided that staff and visitors will continue to wear face coverings in communal areas for the last week of term.
* Students on DCC operated school transport routes will be requested to continue to wear face coverings (unless in possession of an exemption card), and to remain seated in year groups/according to seating plans if in place.

**Ensure good hygiene for everyone**

* We will continue to promote good and regular hygiene practices.

**Maintain appropriate cleaning regimes using standard products such as detergents**

* Schools should put in place and maintain an appropriate cleaning schedule. This should include regular cleaning of areas and equipment with a particular focus on frequently touched surfaces.

**Keep occupied spaces well ventilated**

* The school should be well ventilated with opening external windows, opening internal doors to assist with creating a flow of air. It will be important to balance the need for increased ventilation while maintaining a comfortable temperature.

**Remote Education**

* We will continue to provide remoted education for those students who need to self-isolate and for those who have been asked to remain away from school as they have been identified as a ‘close contact’ within the school setting.

We all recognise it has been a very challenging 18 months for everyone and hope that when we return to school in September we will be able to live with the virus as best we can, whilst keeping everyone safe.

Further information about the return to school in September, including whole-school testing, will be shared with parents next week.

Yours sincerely

Sammy Crook  
Head