

Aldryngton Primary School

Silverdale Road,
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Headteacher: Mark Wieder

COVID Update: 4th January 2022

Dear Parent/ Carer,

Happy New Year! I hope that you all had a great Christmas break. We are all looking forward to welcoming the children back tomorrow with everyone refreshed and ready to go again. Over the Christmas break, ten further cases of Covid were reported to the school (2 in Foundation Stage, 4 in Lower School and 4 in Upper School). I hope that both children and families impacted over the Christmas break did not become unwell and were able to enjoy at least some family time over the Christmas break.

The Department for Education's operational guidance for schools was updated on the 2nd January with the most significant change occurring at secondary school level. Staff are currently being consulted with our updated risk assessment and once this process has been completed, I will upload the current risk assessment onto the website.

The key updates are:

- Where children have been identified as a close contact or a member of the household has tested positive, close contacts over the age of 5 years and adults that have been at least doubly vaccinated are strongly advised to complete a daily lateral flow test for 7 days and can continue to attend the setting as long as they continue to test negative. Children below the age of 5 do not have to test daily if they are a close contact. In the event of lateral flow tests being unavailable, families would be encouraged to engage in remote learning. **Please note that this guidance now replaces the previous local guidance of PCR testing between day 3 and 5. However, particularly with the Omicron variant, it is worth pointing out that if you live in the same household with someone who has tested positive for Covid, you are at significantly higher risk of catching Covid yourself. Therefore, we will continue to authorise absence for close contacts if you choose to keep your child off school in this circumstance or are unable to bring your child in because you have Covid yourself and cannot make other arrangements. Remote learning will continue to be uploaded to Microsoft Teams.**
- No pupil, staff member or parent required to self-isolate will be allowed back in school until the quarantine period has been served. Currently, the earliest a child/ staff member could return would be day 7, providing that there have been two negative lateral flow test results at least 24 hours apart. Lateral flow testing should then continue on days 8, 9, 10 prior to coming into school.
- Pupils will be allowed to wear face masks but staff are not to assist with them. Pupils must have a sealable plastic bag for storage of their masks. Health advice continues to be that children in primary schools should not be asked to wear face coverings.
- Staff encouraged to wear face masks/ coverings where social distancing is not possible with other staff members. This is highly recommended in communal areas such as the staffroom and corridors at busy parts of the day.
- Staff are not ordinarily expected to wear face coverings when delivering lessons, but staff may choose to do so if they wish.



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- Schools are not required to use the NHS Covid Pass unless they are holding a specific event (such as reception, concert or party) that meets the attendance thresholds (currently 500+ indoors or 4,000+ outdoors). Children are counted towards attendance thresholds, but are exempt from showing their Covid status.

School will operate similarly to how it operated at the end of last term. We have made the strategic decision to continue running extra-curricular clubs within teams to ensure that they can run throughout all stages this term.

As of 1pm today, I have not been informed of any staff member that is unwell, so our staffing capacity is back to full strength. If like in many industries our staffing capacity does become stretched at points this term and we are unable to source cover, our business continuity plan will be:

1. Consider whether it is possible to redeploy staff from another area of the school. If not, then:
2. Move to remote learning for that particular area of the school and consider whether there is sufficient resource to run a provision for vulnerable children and critical workers. The lists for both of these categories were also recently updated and can be accessed via the link below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision>

Apologies for the rather lengthy email, but I hope that this has been able to answer any questions that you may have had before your child returns back to school tomorrow.

I shall look forward to welcoming you all back to Aldryngton tomorrow.

Yours sincerely

Mark Wieder
Headteacher

