

28th February 2022

Covid Update

Dear Parents and Friends of Castle Hill,

We hope you and your children have had a lovely half term. It is hard to believe that just over two years ago, we wrote to you with our first Covid advisory about the measures we were putting in place to help protect our community. We would like to pass on our sincere thanks for all your support as we navigated uncharted territory to ensure teaching and learning continued with the same breadth and speed of any other academic year.

Following the Prime Minister's announcement last week, we are pleased to be writing to you about the removal of almost all Covid measures at Castle Hill Primary. Whilst we must remain vigilant, and continue to take precautions, we are learning to live with the virus. With immediate effect, please note the following changes:

Testing

- Staff are no longer required to complete routine, twice weekly, lateral flow tests.
- While routine testing is not recommended, pupils and staff can still access test kits by [ordering them online](#) or by picking up a kit from a local pharmacy.
- Should there be an outbreak of Covid at the school, we will follow the local public health authority's advice.

Self-isolation

The Government has removed all *legal requirements* to self-isolate following a positive test. Fully vaccinated close contacts and those aged under 18 are not required to test daily for seven days and contact tracing has ended.

However, **Public Health guidance remains unchanged:**

- If your child has any of the main Covid symptoms: you should book a Covid test ([Get a free PCR test](#)), your child should avoid close contact with people and they **should not** come to school while you wait for the result.
- If your child has a **positive Covid test result**: they should stay at home and avoid contact with people for at least five full days and then follow [the guidance](#) until they have received two negative results on consecutive days.
- Pupils and staff who are close contacts should attend school as normal.

Face coverings

- Face coverings are no longer required in communal indoor areas at school. However, we strongly encourage staff to wear a face covering when in close proximity indoors to pupils of different year groups for extended periods of time.
- If anyone wishes to continue wearing a mask at school in the interests of their own personal concerns, then this will be allowed.

Hygiene and ventilation

- All pupils will continue to be encouraged to wash their hands throughout the school day and to use the hand sanitisers available across the school campuses.
- We will continue to ensure classrooms and communal areas are well-ventilated and utilise our CO2 monitors.

- We will continue with our enhanced Covid cleaning regime throughout the day in addition to the normal daily cleaning.

Parents and visitors onsite

- Parents will be allowed into the school grounds from Monday 7th March to drop off and pick up your child. Access to the school buildings will continue to be by appointment only at this time. One of the positive outcomes of the Covid arrangements is that we have improved our online information and this in turn has helped to free up office staff a peak time. Furthermore, the website has been enhanced to act as the primary source of information to address day to day queries.
- From Monday 7th March you can use whichever gate is the most convenient to you, but we would encourage you to continue to socially distance where possible.
- We will continue with the same staggered start and end times until Easter, at which point these will be reviewed. This will help reduce congestion on the school grounds.
- Could we please remind you that communication with the class teacher should be via the Class Dojo system. Where possible please try to avoid catching the teacher at the door as they are settling the class in at that time.

Trips, tournaments and extracurricular clubs

- This is something that we are currently in discussion with various providers and club leaders about. We will be moving away from class and year group bubbles, so this gives us greater opportunity to expand our offerings. More details to follow.
- We are keen to get back to our competitive sports and planning some school trips these will start to appear in the diary.

Listening exercise and moving forward

A number of things, good and bad, have come out as a result of Covid and later this term we will be surveying staff and parents on their thoughts about some aspects going forward. We are always looking to improve, so please bear with us in the coming weeks as we try and return to a more 'normal' approach. We might not always get everything right, but we are keen to listen and take on board any constructive feedback received through the correct route.

Spring is almost here and we are looking forward positively to the relaxing of the restrictions whilst ensuring that our vulnerable members of the community continue to be protected.

Thank you as always for your continued partnership and ongoing support.



Yours sincerely

Mr John DF Martin and the Castle Hill Team