

Parents and Carers

13 December 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

Parents' and carers' role in reducing the impact of COVID-19 this winter

As we approach the end of term, levels of COVID-19 infections in school aged children remain high in East Sussex. The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) are closely watching the number of confirmed Omicron cases, and you will have seen the announcement from government about moving to 'Plan B'.

Pupils must continue to attend school; it is really important for their learning and their wellbeing. Headteachers and principals are working hard to make sure that their schools and colleges are as safe as they can be for your children. Please find below some important information about the current situation and the start of the term in January.

- Christmas events – individual schools have all completed a risk assessment and made important decisions regarding Christmas events. For some schools this has included cancelling/postponing events, changing them to reduce risk of transmission, or moving them online. Decisions made by individual schools will be different because they are specific to each school. This may mean that in your local area some schools are holding Christmas events face to face and others are not.
- Omicron – individuals who test positive for Omicron or are identified as a contact of a suspected or confirmed Omicron case, will be notified directly by Test and Trace. The Government plans to introduce daily contact testing as soon as possible as an alternative to self-isolation for contacts who are fully vaccinated or under the age of 18 years and 6 months. This may come into effect on 14th December
- Lateral Flow Device (LFD) testing on return to school – It is important that you follow the instructions given by your school to ensure that all pupils are tested at the start of the term.
- At the moment, we expect that the advice to schools and the additional measures to slow the spread of Omicron will stay in place for the start of Term 3. This includes face masks for all staff, students (year 7 upwards), and visitors to secondary schools and colleges. Face masks are advised for staff and visitors who visit primary schools and early years settings.

Further guidance may be released over the coming weeks and your school will inform you of any changes that affect schools, prior to the start of term.

We thank you for your support in respecting the measures schools are putting in place to protect the school community. We wish you a restful, safe and merry Christmas.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Darrell Gale', with a horizontal line underneath.

Darrell Gale FFPH
Director of Public Health

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alison Jeffery'.

Alison Jeffery
Director of Children's Services