Tuesday 4th January 2022

Dear Parents,

It is sad that this is the first letter of the new year but highlights just how severely Covid -19 continues to threaten our children’s education. As we return to school I am very mindful of the number of Covid cases that are present, affecting both our families and our staff, and for that reason I am writing to you in the hope that we can continue to work together to make the start of this term run with as little disruption as possible for the children.

Public Health Calderdale have written to all Heads as we return for the Spring Term and are advising that within our local area, we implement measures that run in addition to those that have been put in place nationally for all Primary Schools, so that we can respond proactively to the on-going pressure caused by the Omicron variant. As a school we feel these measures are appropriate and proportionate to the challenges we face and so will endeavour to implement these and ask for your support and understanding in doing the same. The aim of these measures is to slow the transmission of the virus as we return to school.

**Measures we are asking parents to follow at present:**

1. If someone in the household has tested positive for COVID-19 (on LFD or PCR), pupils should stay at home. If they develop symptoms, they should get a PCR test straight away. If they don’t have symptoms, they should get a PCR test 3-5 days after their household member started with symptoms (or took their test if they had no symptoms). If this test is negative, the child can return to school but must stay at home and arrange another test if they go on to develop symptoms.

Some children are exempt from this advice:

* Any child aged between 5 – 16 who has tested positive for COVID-19 via a PCR test within the past 90 days.

Please follow the measures on isolation periods and release dates strictly and share any information about isolation immediately with the school office.

1. Please use of face coverings when entering the school grounds and particularly at the point of drop off and collection at the school doors.
2. Please use the telephone for passing on messages to staff wherever this is possible. Face to face meetings will only be held in extreme cases if a telephone conversation or virtual meeting is not appropriate.
3. Please ensure that all household members who are 12 year + are fully up-to-date with their vaccinations.
4. Please encourage regular lateral flow tests to be carried out by all household members who are secondary age and above. (Tests can be ordered online and sent to your home address or collected from local collection points such as libraries and pharmacies with a ‘collect code’)

**Measures school are continuing to follow:**

1. Children will continue to use a wider range of entrances and exits across the school for drop off and pick ups to avoid congestion.
2. Both gates will remain open for drop off and pick ups to alleviate congestion with parents.
3. Children will regularly wash and gel hands as appropriate throughout the school day and between classes/activities.
4. There will be reduced mixing between groups where this does not have a detrimental effect on the children’s curriculum, to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19.
5. CO2 monitors are installed in each classroom to provide constant feedback to staff relating to the current levels of ventilation in each room; windows are open in the classroom to facilitate good ventilation in line with the requirements.
6. Staff and regular professionals to school will be expected to carry out Lateral Flow Tests at least twice a week in line with Government Guidance.
7. Staff and visitors will be expected to wear face masks in communal areas in line with Government Guidance.
8. We will continue to provide remote learning for children who are isolating but are not unwell.
9. We will communicate any logistical changes as a result of Covid-19 to parents in a timely manner as possible.

As I write this letter we currently have a third of our staff either off ill or isolating and we are continuing to monitor this situation as it can change several times within one day. I’m sure you can understand that even with the support of some supply staff, there may come a point where it is untenable to sustain learning for some year groups in school and at this point we would need to switch to remote learning for a short period of time once more. This would absolutely be a last resort and we would deliver any notifications of this sort via email and text in as timely a manner as possible. Please make a point of checking these services on a regular basis.

**Further Information**

Further information is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/what-parents-and-carers-need-to-know-about-early-years-providers-schools-and-colleges-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak/step-4-update-what-parents-and-carers-need-to-know-about-early-years-providers-schools-and-colleges>

**Information about testing**

Testing remains important in reducing the risk of transmission of infection within nurseries, schools and colleges. Continuing to take regular rapid tests will help you to identify infections early and reduce transmission.

There is no need for primary age pupils (those in year 6 and below) to test regularly, unless they have been identified as a contact for someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 and therefore take lateral flow tests every day for 7 days.

Parents and other visitors are strongly advised to take a lateral flow device (LFD) test before entering a school or college.

If the number of positive cases substantially increases in our school, we might be advised to increase the use of lateral flow device (LFD) testing.

Please can all parents ensure test results are sent promptly fao Mrs Brierley in the school office on

admin@stjosephs.romerocat.com

Requests for home learning should also be made through the school office. Children who are unwell are not expected to complete home learning.

It is only with everyone working together that we will keep disruption to a minimum and we can start to enjoy a Happy New Year!

Kind regards and best wishes for 2022,

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Mrs E Lloyd