

Thursday 20th January 2022

Dear Parents/Carers,

RE: Covid Update – Latest Guidance

As you will be aware, recent changes in guidance around the length of the isolation period for anyone testing positive as well as changes around the need to wear face coverings have been published.

This letter is to summarise these changes.

Face-coverings in Schools

The government has published two key changes in the guidance:

- From today, face coverings are no longer advised for students, staff and visitors in classrooms.
- From 27th January, face coverings are no longer advised for students, staff and visitors in communal areas.

Despite these guidelines, you will agree that we must continue to do all that we can to minimise the risk of infection transmission. For this reason, any student, staff, parent or visitor that chooses to continue to wear a face-covering is of course able to do so. We will continue to keep a limited supply of face-coverings in Reception. In addition, although the recommendation for students has been lifted, I would expect many to continue to wear masks when in communal areas or moving around the site – this is a positive habit already in place.

Finally, I will ask that staff do continue to wear masks when in communal areas or around the site, with a review at the end of this term (February 18th) – to mitigate against any possible rise in infection rates as masks start to come off locally and nationally.

Changes to the self-isolation period if anyone tests positive for Covid-19

Since Monday, people who are self-isolating with COVID-19 have had the option to reduce their isolation period after 5 full days if they test negative with a lateral flow device (LFD) test on both day 5 and day 6 and they do not have a temperature.

For example, if they test negative on the morning of day 5 and the morning of day 6, they can return to their education or childcare setting immediately on day 6.

The first test must be taken no earlier than day 5 of the self-isolation period, and the second must be taken the following day. All test results should be reported to NHS Test and Trace.

If the result of either of their tests is positive, they should continue to self-isolate until they get negative results from two LFD tests on consecutive days or until they have completed 10 full days of self-isolation, whichever is earliest.

Anyone who is unable to take LFD tests or anyone who continues to have a temperature will need to complete the full 10-day period of self-isolation. Further information on self-isolation for those with COVID-19 is available.

Oak Academy

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Temporary suspension of confirmatory PCR tests in education and childcare settings

Confirmatory PCR testing following a positive result on a lateral flow device (LFD) was temporarily suspended from Tuesday.

This means that for all education and childcare settings, staff and students who have tested and reported a positive LFD result will no longer be advised to get a confirmatory PCR test.

This change is informed by public health advice. With high COVID-19 rates, the risk of a positive LFD result being false is very small.

We therefore don't need to ask people to do a confirmatory PCR unless they:

- have symptoms (in which case they need to follow the stay-at-home guidance, self-isolate and order a PCR test)
- wish to claim the Test and Trace Support Payment
- have been advised to take a PCR test because they are in a clinically vulnerable group
- have been advised to do so as part of a research or surveillance programme

Home Testing for Students and Staff

Testing using LFD kits continues as normal. We are asking students and staff to continue testing at home on a Wednesday and Sunday evening, reporting all results to the NHS here:

[Report a COVID-19 rapid lateral flow test result - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/report-a-covid-19-rapid-lateral-flow-test-result)

As well as reporting results to us here: [COVID 19 Self Testing for Students \(office.com\)](https://office.com/covid-19-self-testing-for-students)

It's important that we continue to consider the actions we can take to always keep ourselves and others safe and well, and we will continue to follow the guidance and consider additional measures that will minimise the risk of infection transmission.

As always, our parents and carers are a vital component in our risk management plan, thank you from all the staff at Oak for your continued support in this regard.

Yours sincerely,



Richard Burgas
Principal