Tuesday 1st March 2022

**RE: COVID-19, Changes to national guidance**

Dear Parents,

I hope that the half term break has provided you with opportunities for some quality time with friends and family.

During the break, the Department for Education and Public Health guidance for management of and protection against COVID-19 changed. New guidance was released 24th February and is publicly available using these links:

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1057106/220224_Schools_guidance.pdf>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-response-living-with-covid-19/covid-19-response-living-with-covid-19>

For primary schools the main changes to the new guidance includes:

* Tracing close contacts and isolation - These changes reflect that contacts are no longer required to self-isolate or advised to take daily tests, and contact tracing has ended.
* If you have any of the main symptoms of Covid-19 (a recent onset of a new continuous cough; a high temperature; or a loss of, or change in, your normal sense of taste or smell) you should order a PCR test. You are advised to stay at home and avoid contact with other people while you wait for the test result.
* If you test positive, you should continue to stay at home and avoid contact with other people. This includes not attending work.
* If you can, you should let people who you have been in close contact with know about your positive test result.
* Children and young people with Covid-19 should not attend their education setting while they are infectious. They should take an LFD test from five days after their symptoms started (or the day their test was taken if they did not have symptoms) followed by another one the next day. If both these tests results are negative, they should return to their educational setting, as long as they feel well enough to do so and do not have a temperature.
* The Government is removing the guidance for staff in most education and childcare settings to undertake twice-weekly asymptomatic testing. Please note that the new guidance states that “face coverings are no longer advised for pupils, staff and visitors in classrooms or communal areas”. However, parents and staff may wish to continue wearing face coverings, should they feel more comfortable doing so.

However, I want to highlight one area where the information that is at odds with guidance issued to schools; that of isolation for people who test positive. The general advice states that “There is no longer a legal requirement for people with coronavirus (COVID-19) infection to self-isolate, however if you have any of the main symptoms of COVID-19 or a positive test result, the public health advice is to stay at home and avoid contact with other people.”

But, within the school guidance, “Welcoming children back to school” section, it states that “If a parent or carer insists on a pupil attending your school where they have a confirmed or suspected case of COVID-19, you can take the decision to refuse the pupil if, in your reasonable judgement, it is necessary to protect other pupils and staff from possible infection with COVID-19.”

**Iqra Primary school will follow the advice within the school guidance document; where a pupil, or member of staff, tests positive for COVID-19 they will be instructed to stay away from the school until they can safely return to school.**

There are plans for further changes to be made to national guidance in the coming weeks, at the latest changes will be made 1st April 2022. We will write to you again as circumstances and advice changes

Yours Sincerely,

Dr M Maher

Headteacher

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