

4th January 2022

Dear Families,

Firstly, may I take this opportunity to wish you all a Happy New Year!

As many of you will know, COVID cases have risen significantly over the Christmas break. Hartlepool is now following the national picture with *Omicron* being the dominant variant. Whilst it is reported that symptoms maybe milder with this variant, we know that it is much more transmissible than the *Delta* variant. We have therefore reintroduced some additional measures, which are listed below along with existing measures that we already have in place:

- Staff and visitors to wear face coverings in communal areas and corridors
- Separate entrances to reduce pinch points
- Good respiratory and hand hygiene
- Opening of windows to increase ventilation
- Regular cleaning
- No visitors in school/college other than those who are essential to support the students' education
- Meetings with professionals from other agencies to be held virtually
- EHCP reviews to be held virtually throughout January (to be reviewed at the end of January)
- No visits to indoor venues
- Breakfast club to be held in classrooms

As we return following the Christmas break we have a significant amount of staff absence related to COVID. We are using staff flexibly to remain operational so students can attend school/college. If staffing levels become unsafe we may have to temporarily educate classes remotely, however, this would be our last resort after all other options have been exhausted.

Please can we remind all families of the procedures to follow in relation to COVID-19 in order to keep students and staff as safe as possible.

Your child has symptoms

If your child has any COVID symptoms (**high temperature, a new or continuous cough or loss of or change of taste or smell**) they MUST not come into school or college. They must book a PCR test as soon as possible and isolate until the results come back. If the result comes back positive your child will have to isolate. Our Family Liaison Officer or Health Care Assistant will discuss the day of your child's return with you.

Your child has a positive result on a lateral flow test

Your child MUST not come into school or college and must book a PCR test to confirm the result of the Lateral Flow Test. If the PCR test is negative they will be able to return to school/college. If the result is positive then they will have to isolate. Again, our Family Liaison Officer or Health Care Assistant will discuss the day of your child's return with you.

A household member has COVID-19

It is vital that you inform the school/college if a household member that your child lives with tests positive for COVID. Your child will still be able to attend school/college; however, we ask where appropriate that they carry out a lateral flow test daily for ten days.

Your child is a contact of a positive case that doesn't live in the same house

Again, your child can attend school/college, however, we ask where appropriate that they carry out a lateral flow test daily for ten days.

Please can I remind parents and carers to regularly check our social media sites as this is the quickest way we can communicate any updates with you.

Thank you for your continued support.

Kindest Regards



Mrs L. Greig

(CEO)