

Highworth Combined School

Dear all

Happy New Year. I hope you and your families were able to enjoy some happy times during the holiday period.

We are very much looking forward to having your children back at school tomorrow and hugely relieved to be able to say this! Like you I am sure, I feel some trepidation about what the ongoing pandemic and new Omicron variant will mean for us at Highworth. Case numbers for COVID-19 in the local area are higher than they have ever been and this is bound to have implications.

As at all other times during the pandemic when considering how to manage these implications, we have 2 over riding objectives: to limit the disruption to learning for pupils; keep pupils, families and staff as safe as possible. After discussions with senior leaders, head teacher colleagues, the Co-Chairs of Governors and staff I have decided that these 2 objectives can best be achieved by maintaining a 10-day self-isolation period for staff and pupils (not the 7-day period suggested in some circumstances). This is necessary for the following reasons:

- Classrooms are crowded and social distancing is not possible
- Primary school age children are not required to wear masks
- At Highworth there are a number of children and adults who are at higher risk of serious illness from COVID-19

Remote learning can be provided for children who are isolating, but well enough to complete it.

It is also important that you support us with all of the other ways of minimising the spread of COVID-19 as follows (and shown on the attached Parental Agreement):

- *I will never enter any part of the school site if me or my child has any of the symptoms of Covid 19*
- *Symptoms of Coronavirus*

- *high temperature – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature)*
- *new, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual)*
- *loss or change to your sense of smell or taste – this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal*
- *Please note that the symptoms of the Omicron variant are often likened to those of a cold. If your child has a cold, there is a more than 50% chance that they actually have COVID-19*
- *If my child has any of these symptoms, regardless of what I think may have caused them, I will ensure that they take a PCR test. I know that my child will be allowed to return to school once they have received a negative result or, if the test is positive, that they have self-isolated for 10 days*
- *If my child receives a positive PCR test, I will let the school know and ensure that they self-isolate for 10 days from the start of symptoms (or test date if no symptoms)*
- *If my child is a contact of someone who has tested positive for COVID 19, I know that government guidance is that they should take an LFD test every day for 7 days, seeking a PCR test if they have a positive LFD result during the 7 days*
- *I know that if my child develops symptoms of Covid 19 (see above) at school, I will be contacted and asked to collect them immediately. I will take them for a PCR test as soon as possible. I know that my child will be allowed to return to school once they have received a negative result or, if the test is positive, that they have self-isolated for 10 days*

In addition, please consider completing regular LFD tests (twice weekly) for you and your children.

Finally, I would like to remind you that a well fitted mask can significantly reduce the risk of transmission of the virus. It is advised that parents wear one at busy drop off and collection times.

See you tomorrow!

Best wishes

Clare Pankhania

Parental agreement for safe return to school of all pupils on 5th January 2022

You must read, understand and agree every point before sending your child to school

The safe opening of school is dependent upon avoiding all contact with anyone who is, or could be, infected with coronavirus. The safety of our whole community is dependent on all of us following these rules. They must be followed:

- **I will never enter any part of the school site if me or my child has any of the symptoms of Covid 19**

Symptoms of Coronavirus

- **high temperature – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature)**
- **new, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual)**
- **loss or change to your sense of smell or taste – this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal**

Please note that the symptoms of the Omicron variant are often likened to those of a cold. If your child has a cold, there is a more than 50% chance that they actually have COVID-19

- **If my child has any of these symptoms, regardless of what I think may have caused them, I will ensure that they take a PCR test. I know that my child will be allowed to return to school once they have received a negative result or, if the test is positive, that they have self-isolated for 10 days**
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- **I know that if my child develops symptoms of Covid 19 (see above) at school, I will be contacted and asked to collect them immediately. I will take them for a PCR test as soon as possible. I know that my child will be allowed to return to school once they have received a negative result or, if the test is positive, that they have self-isolated for 10 days**

In addition, I know that in sending my child to school I am agreeing that everyone in my household will follow every one of these steps. I know that this is essential to ensure the safety of my child, Highworth staff and our community.

- I know that if my child is unable to attend school, I need to email reception@highworthcombined.co.uk, giving the following information: child's name and class; likely length of absence; Reason for absence. Please specify whether this is due to:
 - Illness and that this is unrelated to Covid 19
 - Self-isolation due to symptoms of Covid 19, or contact with a positive case
- I will send my child to school every day with a bottle of water with their name written clearly on it as I know that the school drinking fountains will not be available
- I will send my child to school with their lunchbox if needed
- If my child is in Nursery, I will send them to school with a change of clothes in a named bag
- I will ensure that my child is ready to start lessons by arriving between 8.45am and 8.55am. If my child is late, I know that I will need to take them to the main office entrance to the school and that they will be recorded as having arrived late
- If my child is in Nursery, I know that I should take them into the cloakroom, help them hang up their coat etc. and then accompany them into the classroom
- If my child is in Reception, I will wait with them behind the gate to the playground until it opens at 8.40am, when I will walk with them to the classroom door
- If my child is in Years 1 to 4, I will ensure that they are supervised until the gates to the quadrangle open, when I will say goodbye and allow them to walk independently to their classroom
- If my child is in Year 5 or 6, I know that they will be able to walk to the door to their classroom at 8.40am when the gate to the playground opens
- I will collect my child promptly at 3.20pm from the door to the classroom. If I wish my child (years 4 to 6 only) to walk home independently, I will send a letter saying so to their class teacher
- I will send my child to school in their school uniform, except when they have a PE lesson (please see new Uniform guide)
- I will send my child to school in their PE kit one day a week, when their class has a PE lesson:
 - Monday: Year 4 and Year 6; Tuesday: Year 3; Wednesday: Year R and Year 1; Thursday: Year 5; Friday: Year 2
- If my child is having a school packed lunch, I will order it on line before Thursday each week for the following week (for all year groups including Nursery and Reception). I will do this even if my child qualifies for a free school meal.
- I will not send hand sanitiser to school with my child as I know that they will wash their hands several times during the day

- I will ensure that I have given my child any required medication and applied sun protection or lotions before they come to school
- I will not send my child to school with a pencil case as I know that one will be provided by school

Claire Pankhania

Mrs C. Pankhania
Head Teacher