

3 December 2020

Dear Parents, Carers and Staff,

I am writing to remind everyone of the need to be extra Covid vigilant in the last weeks of this term so that our schools can remain open.

The majority of positive cases in our schools that have resulted in bubble closures have been from asymptomatic pupils, who have also tested positive after a household member had a positive result. **In the last week we have had a number of cases where a household member has felt unwell and chose to be tested, whilst the pupil has continued to be sent to school.** This impacts greatly on our ability to limit the transmission within our school communities.

The Government states:

“The medical advice is clear: you must self-isolate if you have coronavirus symptoms or live in the same household as somebody who does. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nhs-test-and-trace-how-it-works>”

Therefore, **if anyone has COVID symptoms, then all household members should self-isolate** immediately and not wait for confirmation of a positive result.

If everyone follows this clear advice, we are more likely to keep bubbles open. All positive cases are referred to the Department of Education, Public Health England and the Local Authority regarding decisions on class or year group closures. The decision is based on detailed information from the school contingency plan and risk assessment, identified pupil /staff interaction, the school environment and organisation. All cases are tracked to establish local outbreak information and the need for possible further restrictions.

We keep reiterating the government guidance, emphasising the need for social distancing and robust mitigation measures as the impact of a positive case and closure will affect everyone’s Christmas. We want everyone to be able to enjoy the holiday period and any positive case in the last week of term will curtail family celebrations. Health information highlights that the majority of children do not become unwell with COVID, but there is transmission even with all the mitigating measures in our schools. The younger the child, the more likely close contact and transmission will occur.

We need to be especially careful about the impact of social interaction outside of school as these are not always as COVID compliant situations and may result in a bubble closure in school. Any symptoms should be taken seriously, self-isolation should be used as a preventative measure to keep the wider community safe.

On behalf of everyone in a NEST School and our wider communities I thank you for your continued support as we move towards the end of term.

Yours faithfully

Paula Farrow

CEO