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19th July 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

Step 4 changes to Covid restrictions and isolation periods

From today, the government has said that legal restrictions are changing as part of Step 4. However, some of what has been reported on this in the media is leading to confusion. We've attempted to answer some of the FAQs coming through here as well as giving a picture of what we are finding over the last week.

Q: Isn't isolation ending today?

No; it is from 16 August that this change comes into effect for children. Close contacts of a positive case will still have to isolate for 10 days until then.

Q: Haven't all restrictions been lifted?

No. In today's update, the government have said:

"The pandemic is not over. Cases are increasing rapidly and a third wave is underway. Step 4 does not mark the end of the need for caution and restraint. At step 4, while many of the legal restrictions that the Government has imposed through the pandemic will be lifted, cautious guidance will remain, making it clear this is not yet a return to normal. While cases are high and rising, everybody needs to continue to act carefully and remain cautious."

Though nationally there are legal changes, all organisations have a duty of care and may have measures in place to reduce risk of infection. For the remainder of the term we will continue to be operating all of our school precautionary measures as stated by our CEO Mrs Samson in her letter to you on 7th July. The only changes on Monday 19th July, with respect to measures in the school, are that masks are no longer mandatory outside in school grounds and that should there be a positive case in your child's class we will be informing you and asking you to keep your children at home until the end of term. They should take a COVID test if they display any symptoms. We will then put remote learning in place and will provide some fun activities so that they can continue to engage with their friends and their teacher during the week. NHS Test and Trace will be the ones who inform you that your child has to isolate for 10 days.

Q: Haven't they stopped school bubbles closing?

Yes and no. From today, schools will not be advising bubbles to **isolate** but will be asking children not to come in to school if there is a positive case in their class and switch to remote learning. The key difference being that in isolation, children should not be going out at all until the specified date. From today, they only have to do this if NHS Test and Trace contact you personally.

If we were informed before today, their bubble still has to isolate until the date specified in the letter. This applies to those bubbles that were informed yesterday as well.

We would also like to let you know that due to track and trace we have large numbers of staff who are not able to attend school. If we do not have sufficient staff this week to keep the children safe we may also need to send groups home. We very much hope that this will not be the case and we will do everything we can to ensure that your children are able to attend school but we thought it better to alert you to our concerns.

Q: If my child has symptoms but a negative Lateral Flow Test (LFT) are they still ok to come in?

No. The government do not advise for children under the age of 11 to use LFTs. We have seen these used instead of PCRs and not being accurate. When PCRs have later been booked they have come back positive, meaning that the child has extended the period of time they were in contact with others.

Please book a PCR if your child is displaying any of the 3 symptoms.

You should also be aware that some children have had positive PCR results without these symptoms as well. If you have any doubts, try to obtain a PCR instead of using a LFT.

We hope this has been helpful, and that the end of term progresses well for everyone. We know some children are now isolating until the holidays, but hopefully they will be able to enjoy themselves when they are allowed back out again.

You can find more information about Stage 4 here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-response-summer-2021-roadmap/moving-to-step-4-of-the-roadmap>

Yours sincerely,

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