

Hele's School

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2 March 2022

Dear Parent/Carer,

Covid-19 Update: Living with Covid-19 Plan

Following the Prime Minister's announcement last week on the ending of all Covid restrictions in England, we have been considering the implications for us as a school. In doing so, we are, as ever, following the advice and guidance of the experts at the Department for Education (DfE) and the NHS.

Whilst the announcement makes clear that Covid remains present in society, it does bring an end to the series of legal and advisory measures that have been in place in schools over the last two years. I would like to thank everyone in the school – students, parents and carers, staff, governors and visitors – for following the laws and the guidance so that we have been able to minimise the risk of transmitting the virus within the school. Our priority remains the safety and wellbeing of everyone in our school community, and I would hope that we would all continue to act sensibly and considerately in the interests of everyone's health.

Below are the key points from the Government's Operational Guidance for Schools, circulated to school leaders on Thursday 24 February, and what it means for our school policy and practice.

Government's Operational Guidance for Schools	What this means for Hele's School
Self-isolation: The legal requirement to self-isolate following a positive test has ended <i>but</i> adults and children who test positive will continue to be advised to stay at home and avoid contact with other people for at least 5 full days and then continue to follow this guidance until they have received 2 negative test results on consecutive days.	<p><i>If your child does test positive for Covid-19, they should not attend school while they are likely to be infectious.</i> They should continue to self-isolate for at least five days and only return to school after having two negative lateral flow tests on consecutive days after the 5-day minimum isolation period, and if they do not have a high temperature.</p> <p>The Principal retains the right to refuse entry to school if someone is likely to be infectious. This will be an informed decision to protect the wider school community and will be handled sensitively.</p> <p>If your child does test positive and is absent from school, please ring the absence line: Lower School - 01752 231730 or Post 16 - 01752 756715. Please also complete the simple form on the school website to report a Covid case as this will enable us to continue to monitor positive cases and respond accordingly.</p>
Asymptomatic testing: Staff and pupils in mainstream secondary schools will not be expected to continue taking part in regular asymptomatic testing and should follow asymptomatic testing advice for the general population .	<p>Lateral Flow Devices will no longer be distributed to students and staff for twice-weekly routine testing. Tests will continue to be free of charge until 1 April, so do request them from the NHS or your pharmacist if you need them.</p> <p>If symptoms develop during the school day, students will be isolated, and arrangements made for them to be collected from school. You will be advised to get your child a PCR test and for them to isolate whilst awaiting results. If negative, they may return to school when feeling well enough. If positive, they should continue to self-isolate for at least five days and only return to school after having two negative lateral flow tests on consecutive days after the 5-day minimum isolation period, and if they do not have a high temperature.</p>

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<p>Close contacts: Close contacts are no longer required to self-isolate or advised to take daily tests, including those not fully vaccinated.</p>	<p>Household contacts of someone who has tested positive can continue to attend school/work as normal if they are well and do not have a temperature.</p>
<p>Contact Tracing: Contact tracing has ended.</p>	<p>If an individual tests positive, please be responsible and alert close contacts to make them aware so they can exercise caution around those who may be vulnerable.</p>
<p>Face coverings: Face coverings are no longer required for pupils, staff and visitors in classrooms or communal areas.</p>	<p>Students and staff can continue wearing a face covering if they prefer to do so.</p>
<p>Hygiene and cleaning regime: Control measures remain in place, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring good hygiene for everyone. • Maintaining appropriate cleaning regimes. • Keeping occupied spaces well ventilated. • Following public health advice on testing, self-isolation and managing confirmed cases of COVID-19. 	<p>We will be continuing with our stringent infection control cleaning regime throughout the school day, hand sanitiser will remain throughout the school site and classrooms will continue to be well ventilated to minimise the spread of infection.</p>
<p>Vaccinations: Children and young people remain eligible for vaccinations against Covid-19. Vaccinations are regarded as the most important means of protection from the virus.</p>	<p>If your child has not already had their Covid vaccinations, they are available via the NHS and further details on where they are available locally are here https://bit.ly/35evpdC.</p> <p>Alternatively, VirginCare (the Schools Immunisation Service) is offering a clinic at Hele's School in mid-March, details of which were emailed to parents and carers on 1 March.</p>

We are all hopeful that we are now coming to the end of the pandemic, but this is by no means a certainty and, as new variants occur, we may be required to reintroduce some or all of the measures we have lived with over the past two years. As a school, we will be continuing to keep our risk assessment and contingency plan updated so that we are always prepared for anything that needs to be reintroduced at short notice.

Thanks to your vigilance and compliance with the guidance throughout the pandemic, we have managed to keep cases at a minimum in school and to keep the school open and functioning effectively. I am confident that by continuing to work together, booking a PCR test when an individual has symptoms and students and staff remaining at home whilst they have Covid, we will continue to ensure that Hele's School is as safe as possible for everyone.

Kindest regards,



Justine Mason

Principal