



Rigby Lane, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire B60 2EP

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Thursday 6th January 2022

Dear Families,

Welcome back, officially, today!

We send our best wishes to those of you we know are going through COVID at the minute and hope you are not affected too badly.

I wanted to take the opportunity to update you with a few things.

As you might appreciate, this week has involved several documents and further updates from the Government and also the DfE on a daily basis, with links to schools and more specifically specialist settings such as ours.

I will be completely honest, I have swung between wanting a complete lockdown for us in school with 2020 measures, to now a more measured, but equally safe (with introduced advancements such as testing and vaccines) approach for the school in order for the children and staff to continue to move forwards, make progress and start living life again! Please don't think I am being blasé about the current situation or that your child's health is not a priority, it very much still remains, as does the staff health, the most crucial factor at the heart of every decision made.

With this in mind, I want to share some of what is happening and what we are doing.

In school, we are already significantly impacted by the increase in positive cases locally with several members of staff absent due to either nearing the end of their isolation periods or just testing positive. The guidance now states those identified as close contacts need to LFD daily, and so we are aware that this means that at any point during these 7 days, those close contacts could receive a positive LFD too.

As I stated in my letter at the start of the week, closing classes will be the very last resort. When I mentioned some of the staffing issues to the LORT yesterday, they were very impressed that we were still able to keep open today with the joining of classes as we could have closed 3 classes today but have managed not to.



“Valuing every achievement”



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The reason we are open is all credit to our amazing staff team, their creativity, flexibility and a shared desire to keep things as ‘normal’ and ‘typical’ for our pupils as well as you, our families.

We are trying to keep the children and staff to their key areas, wherever they are positioned in the school. This is to ensure that if anyone tests positive, we know the children haven’t all been around each other! We are trying to staff in this way too. We can’t have staff moving between departments and then potentially increasing the number of close contacts.

Clubs have been postponed for this half term. If the situation improves slightly and we feel able, we will reinstate before that time. However, although clubs are department based, they pose an additional pressure alongside the staff shortages. I would prefer you knew that they weren’t happening, rather than receiving messages through the day to say they had to be cancelled.

I would like to thank all of you who regularly LFD test your children (Year 7 and above) on Mondays and Thursdays before school. This has been invaluable this week already for both staff and pupils in stopping the virus from coming in to the building. From Monday we will be sending the link for the form to complete to let us know your child’s result.

We did our onsite testing this morning. Again, thank you to those of you who consented to this. 100% of children we tested today were negative (total of 68 children).

Some latest changes that have been introduced this week include:

- Confirmatory PCR tests following a positive lateral flow device (LFD) test result are to be temporarily suspended from Tuesday 11 January. This will mean that anyone who receives a positive LFD test result will be required to self-isolate immediately and will not be required to take a confirmatory PCR test.
- Parents can book vaccinations for their child, if aged 12 or over, through the [NHS booking system](#). Vaccination for this group will also continue to be carried out by the school age immunisation service (SAIS). In school vaccination will begin from Monday 10 January. We await to hear more details of this with our confirmed date for vaccinations, should you wish to consent to your child having theirs.



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We continue to carry out meetings virtually. This helps not only for health reasons, but in terms of space around school at the moment in which to accommodate meetings. It also allows the opportunity to continue to work with families as you don't need to physically come into the building. That said, we do miss seeing our families so as soon as we feel it is appropriate, we will be doing coffee mornings, meetings and visits again... which we look forward to already!

The children are still able to take part in Dress Down Friday each week. This was a staff initiative in the beginning that pupils felt they would like to take part in too. This is not obligatory and only for those who wish to finish off their week feeling more relaxed in their own clothes. I even allow blue jeans on this day!!

If anything changes further to this at any point, I will of course keep you up to date. The only thing I can foresee at the moment may be the last minute class closure if it is not viable to remain open. This will be the result of us not being able to staff even combined classes. But, please be assured, this will only happen as a very last resort and if this needs to be the case, be aware that our staffing levels have dropped to a standard that will not effectively keep your child safe.

I thank you all as always for your co-operation and support with this. Hopefully in the coming weeks things will become easier and cases will have decreased.

Take care

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Tracey'.

Tracey



“Valuing every achievement”