



1<sup>st</sup> April 2022

Dear Parents/ Carers

I am writing to update you on the coronavirus situation at Highampton Primary School and to inform you of the changes to HM Government advice that come into effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022.

We continue to consider the health, safety and wellbeing of children, staff and the community as our top priority; closely followed by ensuring that education provision continues. I am pleased to say that whilst many schools closed during the recent spike in cases in the area, the DMAT primary schools were able to remain open for all children despite having many staff absent. Presently, cases in the area continue to be extremely high, much higher than at the height of the pandemic. [Covid cases in the West Devon area](#). Thank you for your ongoing support over the previous weeks when we have suffered staff absences.

### **National Arrangements for 'Living with COVID' from 1 April**

The Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC) [released this information this week](#) on the 'next steps for living with COVID'. The Department for Education also [published this blog](#) yesterday to clarify how 'living with COVID' will apply to schools, in preparation for all relevant guidance to be updated published on 1<sup>st</sup> April. Should there be any significant and material differences in the guidance we expect to be published tomorrow, I will write again to outline them for you. The key points and changes that will come into effect from tomorrow are as follows:

- Coronavirus (COVID-19) tests are no longer be freely available, including to schools, and routine testing will no longer be expected in schools. (The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) have provided new information [here](#) on who can access free tests from now on.)
- Adults with a positive COVID-19 test result are now advised to try to stay at home and avoid contact with other people for 5 days. This of course applies to all staff at the school.
- Children with a positive COVID-19 test result are now advised to try to stay at home and avoid contact with other people for 3 days. This means that all children currently isolating can return to school on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> April if, of course, they do not have a high temperature and are well enough to attend.
- Adults with symptoms of a respiratory infection, including COVID-19, and a high temperature or who feel unwell, are advised to try to stay at home and avoid contact

with other people, until they feel well enough to resume normal activities and they no longer have a high temperature.

- Children and young people who are unwell and have a high temperature should stay at home and avoid contact with other people, where they can. They can return to school when they no longer have a high temperature, and they are well enough to attend.
- It is deemed 'sensible' to wear a mask in enclosed spaces, keep indoor spaces ventilated and stay away from others if you have any symptoms of a respiratory illness, including COVID.
- Children and young people aged 5 and over are encouraged to get vaccinated, although the in-school COVID-19 vaccination programme will come to an end.

I would like to reassure you that the health and safety of our students and staff continues to be paramount. We will continue to maintain our enhanced control measures to mitigate the transmission of the virus on site, which can be seen in the school's Covid Risk Assessment published on our website and will continue to monitor the situation in the school carefully.

Once again, I would like to thank you very much in advance for your ongoing support. Should you have any questions or queries, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Deirdre Petersen', written in a cursive style.

Deirdre Petersen, Principal