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small community **thinking big**

14th December 2021

Dear Parents & carers,

Another busy term draws to a close and I'm sure we're all looking forward to spending a 'proper' Christmas with family and friends this year!

Despite the rapid rise in Covid-19 cases across the country (as well as in many Surrey schools), I am pleased to report that the re-introduction of a range of protective measures at Carwarden has helped to keep our infection rates very low since half-term and we have been able to really enjoy all the festive celebrations together (albeit sticking to the revised safety rules)!

New rules on isolating

I'm sure, like me, you are struggling to keep up with all the latest Government requirements but I thought it might be helpful to remind you of the new guidance around isolating. **From Tuesday 14 December, people who are fully vaccinated and identified as a contact of someone with COVID-19 – whether Omicron or not – should take an NHS rapid lateral flow test every day for 7 days to help slow the spread of COVID-19.**

The practical move comes as Omicron infections are rising significantly in the UK and it is expected to become the dominant strain in the UK by mid-December. It aims to reduce pressures on people's everyday lives by replacing the requirement for Omicron contacts to isolate for 10 days, while protecting the public by identifying asymptomatic cases and stopping the chains of transmission. Testing daily will also help the Government understand how and where the virus is spreading.

As now, **anyone whose rapid test (LFT) comes back positive or who develops COVID-19 symptoms should self-isolate and take a confirmatory PCR test to verify the result.**

If the PCR result comes back positive, contacts must self-isolate for 10 days from the day they took the positive rapid test or developed symptoms. They do not need to continue taking rapid tests during that 10 day isolation period.

If the PCR result comes back negative, contacts can leave self-isolation but should continue to take rapid tests for the remainder of the 7 days.

Anyone identified as a contact with a negative rapid lateral flow result is strongly advised to limit close contact with other people outside their household, especially in crowded or enclosed spaces and with anyone who is more vulnerable. They should also follow government guidance on wearing a face covering and working from home where possible.

Unvaccinated adults are not eligible for this new daily testing policy, they must self-isolate for 10 days if they are a contact of someone who tests positive for COVID-19 – Omicron or not – unless eligible for an existing workplace daily contact testing.

People will be contacted by NHS Test and Trace by phone, email or text or they will receive a notification from the NHS COVID-19 app to tell them they are a contact of someone who tested positive and what action they need to take.

They will be advised to get a box of 7 lateral flow tests free of charge from NHS Test and Trace either through pharmacies or home delivery by ordering online. People are encouraged to use the tests they already have at home before ordering more. People should take these tests from the day they are notified as being a contact and report their results to NHS Test and Trace on GOV.UK or by calling 119.

Daily rapid testing applies to all contacts who are:

- fully vaccinated adults – people who have had 2 jabs
- all children aged 5 to 18 years and 6 months, regardless of their vaccination status
- people who can prove they are unable to be vaccinated for clinical reasons
- people taking part, or have taken part, in an approved clinical trial for a COVID-19 vaccine

Under 5s are exempt from self-isolation and do not need to take part in daily rapid lateral flow testing.

As during the holiday periods in the past months, **we are asking that your child continues to take a lateral flow test (LFT) twice a week over the Christmas break and definitely on Tuesday 4th January – the day before they come back to school.**

Thank-yous

Once again and from the bottom of my heart, I wanted to thank the entire staff team and Board of Trustees for working so hard to ensure Carwarden has been able to continue to offer your child the best possible education, and particularly during such challenging times. I am so very proud to lead such an amazing team!

Thanks too to the PTA for organising our wonderful Christmas raffle and to you all for your generous donations making this possible.

And, as always, our thanks go to the various charities and sponsors who give of their time and resources to support our wonderful students in so many different ways.

Wishing you, your families and loved ones a very merry Christmas and a happy & healthy New Year!

Tim

Mr T S Stokes
Headteacher