

30th November 2021

Dear parents/carers,

Re Covid update 30 November 2021

As you have no doubt seen, over the weekend the government announced some changes to national guidance around Covid-19, following the discovery of the 'Omicron' variant.

For schools, the guidance states that face coverings should be worn in communal areas by staff, visitors and students. This does not currently include classrooms. The guidance also reiterates that students who use dedicated school transport (i.e. our buses) or public transport to travel to and from school should also wear a face covering whilst doing so.

Of course, John O'Gaunt was already adhering to these approaches, following the recommendations made to all West Berkshire schools from the Local Authority just before half term. The school has been following all other guidance, such as that around additional cleaning and ventilation, since the beginning of the academic year. Therefore, the changes announced over the weekend do not change what we're doing in school, although I would of course take this opportunity to urge you to ensure that your child has a face covering with them at all times. LFD testing twice per week should also continue until further notice. On Friday, the DfE announced that schools should test students upon their return in January and we will be writing to you with further details about this in due course.

One change in the guidance that I would like to draw your attention to, is what to do if your child is identified as a close contact of someone shown to have the Omicron variant of Covid. Unlike any other Covid variants, the current guidance states that; "All individuals who have been identified as a close contact of a suspected or confirmed case of the Omicron variant of COVID-19, irrespective of vaccination status and age, will be contacted directly and required to self-isolate immediately." Close contacts are now identified by NHS Test and Trace, so the school does not have a say in this. However, should your child need to self-isolate for any reasons, work will be set via Class Charts as part of our remote learning contingency plans. If you'd like to find out more about the recent changes, a summary can be found by navigating here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/covid-19-coronavirus-restrictions-what-you-can-and-cannot-do#what-has-changed> . This page also has useful links to a range of other helpful information regarding Covid-19.

I hope that this makes sense but if not or you have any other queries then please do not hesitate to contact the school.

Yours sincerely,



Mr Richard Hawthorne
Head of School