

1st December 2021

Dear Parents/Carers,

Following the Prime Minister's announcements over the weekend and updated Department of Education (DfE) guidance, I am writing to update you on the measures we have in place to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19 in the school community. The latest guidance from the DfE, communicated in an email sent to schools today is detailed below.

Face coverings

Face coverings should be worn in communal areas in all settings for staff, visitors and pupils or students in year 7 and above, unless they are exempt. Pupils or students (in year 7 or above) should continue to wear face coverings on public and dedicated school transport, unless they are exempt.

Due to the layout of Oakwood and Cedarwood we do not really have congested communal areas, so masks are not mandatory for students during the school day. However, students may, of course, wear their face coverings in classrooms and outside areas if they feel more comfortable doing so. Students will need to wear masks in their transport to and from school. I would be grateful if you supported this by ensuring that your child has a supply of clean, plain face coverings. Please also ensure that your child knows how to put their face covering on and take it off, ensuring that it remains clean.

Testing

All educational and childcare settings should continue to encourage staff and students to test twice weekly using lateral flow device (LFD). If you require more LFD tests, these are available to order for free on GOV.UK or at your local pharmacy.

We remain grateful for your support with testing at home and would ask that you continue to do this twice weekly (on Sunday and Wednesday evenings) to prevent the risk of asymptomatic transmission.

If staff or student has to go for a PCR test we are requesting that they remain away from school until the results are in. This is to protect any staff and students that are particularly vulnerable and to hopefully avoiding spreading the virus.

Contact tracing and isolation

The current guidance on contact tracing and isolation remains in place. Any suspected or confirmed close contacts of the Omicron variant will be asked to isolate for 10 days.

We have not had any confirmed or suspected cases of the new Omicron variant at school. If we are informed of any confirmed cases, then we will be required to identify any close contacts and these students / staff would be required to isolate for a ten-day period.

Vaccination

All eligible staff and students aged 12 and over are encouraged to take up the offer of the vaccine, including boosters. Vaccines are our best defence against COVID-19. They help protect young people and adults, and benefit those around them. Vaccination makes people less likely to catch the virus and less likely to pass it on.

To book a vaccine, please visit this [website](#).

New changes to the red list for international travel to England

South Africa, Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Namibia and Zimbabwe moved onto the red list at 12.00 midday Friday 26th November. Angola, Malawi, Mozambique and Zambia were added to the UK red list at 4am Sunday 28th November. If individuals arrive in England from 4am 28th November, they must follow the red list rules.

Schools, out of school settings and colleges will want to consider whether to go ahead with planned international educational visits at this time, recognising the risk of disruption to education resulting from the need to isolate and test on arrival back into the UK.

I hope that this letter is helpful, and I wish to thank you for your continued support, and we will continue to keep you updated. If you have any queries, please email kate.tuttle@ocschool.co.uk

Kind regards

Kate Tuttle

Designated Safeguarding Lead