



BACK TO SCHOOL

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3 January 2022

Be the best you can be...

Happy New Year to all our Fir Ends families. I hope that you've had a reasonably relaxing Christmas Break and have greeted 2022 with optimism!

At the time of writing, the messaging from government remains 'carry on' and, notwithstanding last-minute changes in national guidance we look forward to starting the new term on Wednesday.

You will be aware that the news story of the day is 'masks and testing in (secondary) schools to protect GCSE exams'. Whilst it seems primary education is less of a priority for ministers, all schools have been advised to take appropriate steps to limit the risks of omicron outbreaks.

For us, that will mean reinstating some of the simple measures that we know have been effective previously and reviewing these as the term progresses. In doing so, we will aim to contain any cases that do emerge, and ensure that we have sufficient staff to cover classes onsite.

As always, the most effective measure we have is not having poorly children in school in the first place. Please help us to prevent the spread of all communicable diseases this term by keeping children home if they are unwell, and getting PCR (airport) tests if there is *any* suspicion of covid symptoms (see below).

COVID SYMPTOMS - OMICRON

It is now widely recognised that omicron infections rarely involve traditional covid symptoms of fever and changes to senses.

The best description of an omicron infection is now 'like having a cold', in particular:

- Runny nose
- Scratchy throat and/or cough
- Night sweats
- Fatigue & aching limbs
- Headaches

Please understand that any child who is unwell, particularly with possible covid symptoms, should **not** be sent to school and if they exhibit the 'new' symptoms whilst cases remain high, covid should be suspected.

If symptoms develop during the school day, we will isolate and send children home and ask you to consider a PCR test before their return.

Please pre-empt this if you/your child currently has any of these symptoms, or reports them outside school hours, and do not send poorly pupils into school.

COVID CONTROLS – START OF TERM

Children who are unwell should **not** attend school. Children who may have covid symptoms should have a **PCR** test.

Robust ventilation throughout the school – please ensure children have a vest on!

Children will be 'bubbled' to some degree – mixing only with class peers during the day – and will have seating plans to limit spread if children become symptomatic during the school day and allowing for contact tracing

Video/Phone calls will be preferred methods for speaking with parents, where this is necessary.

When in close proximity to people they would not normally have contact with, all adults onsite should wear a face covering and observe social distancing of 2m.

Parents are asked not to congregate at the start and end of the school day, and to observe social distancing whilst onsite. Face coverings are optional while dropping off/collecting, but strongly recommended.