



# Great Chart Primary School

## Covid 19 Operational Guidance

### JANUARY 2022

The following policy is written to provide the school community of Great Chart Primary School with an awareness of how we are going to approach an outbreak of covid 19. Great Chart Primary School will continue to follow Government guidance, considering the needs of our local community.

This will be amended following advice from central Government and Kent County Council

#### **Mixing and bubbles**

Bubbles will not need to be used in schools from the autumn term. As well as enabling flexibility in curriculum delivery, this means that assemblies can resume, and we no longer need to make alternative arrangements to avoid mixing at lunch.

*However, within our risk assessment for an outbreak we will be aware of the possibility that in some local areas it may become necessary to reintroduce 'bubbles' for a temporary period, to reduce mixing between groups. Any decision to recommend the reintroduction of 'bubbles' would not be taken lightly and would need to take account of the detrimental impact they can have on the delivery of education.*

## **Tracing Close Contacts and Isolation**

### **Education settings will no longer be expected to undertake contact tracing.**

As with positive cases in any other setting, NHS Test and Trace will work with a positive case to identify close contacts. Contacts from a school setting will only be traced by NHS Test and Trace where the positive case specifically identifies the individual as being a close contact. This is likely to be a small number of individuals who would be most at risk of contracting COVID-19 due to the nature of the close contact.

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 and asked to book a PCR test. They will be informed by the local health protection team or NHS Test and Trace if they fall into this category and provided details about self-isolation. Further actions for educational settings may be advised by a local Incident Management Team (IMT) investigating a suspected or confirmed case of the Omicron variant of COVID-19.

For everyone else, isolation rules are unchanged. Individuals are not required to self isolate if they live in the same household as someone with COVID-19 who is not a suspected or confirmed case of the Omicron variant, or are a close contact of someone with COVID-19 who is not a suspected or confirmed case of the Omicron variant, and any of the following apply:

- they are fully vaccinated
- they are below the age of 18 years and 6 months
- they have taken part in or are currently part of an approved COVID-19 vaccine trial
- they are not able to get vaccinated for medical reasons. Instead, they will be contacted by NHS Test and Trace, informed they have been in close contact with a positive case and advised to take a PCR test.

We would encourage all individuals to take a PCR test if advised to do so. Staff who do not need to isolate, and children and young people aged under 18 years 6 months who usually attend school, and have been identified as a close contact of someone with COVID-19 who is not a suspected or confirmed case of the Omicron variant, should continue to attend school as normal.

We will continue to have a role in working with health protection teams in the case of a local outbreak. If there is an outbreak in school or if central government offers the area an enhanced response package, a director of public health might advise us to temporarily reintroduce some control measures.

### **Self isolation reduction**

People who receive negative LFD results on day 6 and day 7 of their self-isolation period – with tests taken 24 hours apart – will no longer have to self-isolate for the full 10 days. The first test must be taken no earlier than day 6 of the self-isolation period.

Those who leave self-isolation on or after day 7 are strongly advised to limit close contact with other people in crowded or poorly ventilated spaces, work from home and minimise contact with anyone who is at higher risk of severe illness if infected with COVID- 19.

## **Face Coverings**

It is recommended that face coverings should be worn by staff and adults (including visitors) when moving around in corridors and communal areas. Health advice continues to be that children in primary schools should not be asked to wear face coverings. However, for school trips we are advising parents that children should wear face coverings on the coach.

**Transparent face/ visors** can be worn to assist communication with someone who relies on: lip reading; clear sound; facial expression. Transparent face coverings may be effective in reducing the spread of COVID-19. However, the evidence to support this is currently very limited. The benefits of transparent face coverings should be considered alongside the comfort and breathability of a face covering that contains plastic, which may mean that the face covering is less breathable than layers of cloth. Face coverings (whether transparent or cloth) should fit securely around the face to cover the nose and mouth and be made with a breathable material capable of filtering airborne particles. A face visor or shield may be worn in addition to a face covering but not instead of one. This is because face visors or shields do not adequately cover the nose and mouth, and do not filter airborne particles.

We would recommend, when working closely with someone, face coverings should be worn instead of a visor. If staff can safely social distance then a visor can be used.

Face coverings are not mandatory in Primary Schools and so staff should make an informed decision as and when to wear face coverings and or visors.

## **Stepping Measures up or down**

Given the detrimental impact that restrictions on education can have on children, any measures in school should only ever be considered as a last resort, kept to the minimum number of groups possible, and for the shortest amount of time possible. Central government may offer local areas of particular concern an enhanced response package to help limit increases in transmission.

*If we have several confirmed cases within 14 days, we may have an outbreak.*

In the event of an outbreak we will call the dedicated advice service who will escalate the issue to our local health protection team where necessary and advise if any additional action is required. We can reach them by calling the DfE helpline on 0800 046 8687 and selecting option 1 for advice on the action to take in response to a positive case. The contingency framework describes the principles of managing local outbreaks of COVID-19 in education and childcare settings. Local authorities, directors of public health (DsPH) and PHE health protection teams (HPTs) can recommend measures described in the contingency framework in individual education and childcare settings – or a small cluster of settings – as part of their outbreak management responsibilities.

## **Control Measures in place**

1. Ensure good hygiene for everyone.
2. Maintain appropriate cleaning regimes.
3. Keep occupied spaces well ventilated.
4. Follow public health advice on testing, self-isolation and managing confirmed cases of COVID-19.

## **1. Ensure good hygiene for everyone**

### *Hand hygiene*

Frequent and thorough hand cleaning should now be regular practice. We will continue to ensure that pupils clean their hands regularly. This can be done with soap and water or hand sanitiser.

### *Respiratory hygiene*

The 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach continues to be very important. The e-Bug COVID-19 website contains free resources, including materials to encourage good hand and respiratory hygiene.

### *Use of personal protective equipment (PPE)*

Most staff will not require PPE beyond what they would normally need for their work. The guidance on the use of PPE in education, childcare and children's social care settings provides more information on the use of PPE for COVID-19.

## **2. Maintain appropriate cleaning regimes,**

We will maintain our cleaning schedule that we have used during covid 19. This will include regular cleaning of areas and equipment (for example, twice per day), with a particular focus on frequently touched surfaces. PHE has published guidance on the cleaning of non-healthcare settings.

## **3. Keep occupied spaces well ventilated**

It is important to ensure school is well ventilated and that a comfortable teaching environment is maintained.

Opening external windows can improve natural ventilation, and in addition, opening internal doors can also assist with creating a throughput of air. If necessary, external opening doors may also be used. Internal door, if fire doors, must be closed. We will balance the need for increased ventilation while maintaining a comfortable temperature.

## **4. Follow public health advice on testing, self-isolation and managing confirmed cases of COVID-19**

When an individual develops COVID-19 symptoms or has a positive test, pupils, staff and other adults should follow public health advice on when to self-isolate and what to do. They should not come into school if they have symptoms, have had a positive test result or other reasons requiring them to stay at home due to the risk of them passing on COVID-19 (for example, they are required to quarantine or they are a close contact of a suspected or confirmed case of the Omicron variant of COVID-19 as per NHS track and trace).

If anyone in school develops COVID-19 symptoms, however mild, the school will send them home and they should follow public health advice. For everyone with symptoms, they should avoid using public transport and, wherever possible, be collected by a member of their family or household.

If a pupil is awaiting collection, they should be left in a room on their own if possible and safe to do so. A window should be opened for fresh air ventilation if possible. Appropriate PPE should also be used if close contact is necessary, further information on this can be found in the use of PPE in education, childcare and children's social care settings guidance. Any rooms they use should be cleaned after they

have left. The household (including any siblings) should follow the PHE stay at home guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection.

## Daily Testing

Daily testing for contacts of COVID-19 From Tuesday 14 December, a new national approach to daily testing for contacts of COVID-19 is being introduced (including until the end of this term). All adults who are fully vaccinated and children aged 5 to 18 years and 6 months, identified as a contact of someone with COVID-19 – whether Omicron or not – should take a lateral flow device (LFD) test every day for 7 days instead of self-isolating. Daily testing by close contacts will help to slow the spread of COVID-19. Daily testing for contacts of COVID-19 will help protect education settings by reducing transmission and will also help keep pupils in face-to-face education.

**Once notified by NHS Test and Trace as a close contact**, all eligible staff, pupils and students should take an LFD each day for 7 days and report the results through the [Online Reporting System](#). If they test negative, they can continue to attend their education setting. Outside of the education setting, they should continue to follow the advice set out in the [Sunday 12 December press release](#). This approach should also be adopted over the winter break and on return in January.

If they test positive, they should self-isolate and [order a PCR test](#) to confirm the result. If the PCR is positive, they must self-isolate for 10 days. If the PCR test is negative, they no longer need to self-isolate but should continue to carry out the remainder of the daily tests, and only need to isolate if it is positive.

All staff should have access to a box of 7 LFD tests from their education setting. If your setting requires additional test kits sooner than they would be available through the standard ordering process, or will run out of test kits imminently, you can contact 119 to request an emergency replenishment.

For primary aged children [LFD test kits are available through the usual routes](#) (community test sites, local pharmacies or online).

Children under five years old do not need to take part in daily testing for contacts of COVID-19 and do not need to isolate.

Anyone over the age of 18 years and 6 months who is not vaccinated, must isolate in line with government guidelines if they are a close contact of a positive case.

For students with SEND who struggle to or are unable to self-swab daily for 7 days, settings should work with students and their families to agree an appropriate testing route, such as assisted swabbing.

Information on further support measures will be provided.

Finally, it is important to continue regular twice weekly, at-home testing for all education and childcare workforce and all students of secondary age and above

## Asymptomatic Testing

Testing remains important in reducing the risk of transmission of infection within schools. That is why, whilst some measures are relaxed, others will remain, and if necessary, in response to the latest epidemiological data, we all need to be prepared to step measures up or down in future depending on local circumstances.

As staff will potentially mix with lots of other people during the summer holidays, we will commence testing twice weekly, from 3 working days before the start of term.

## Confirmatory PCR tests

Staff and pupils with a positive LFD test result should self-isolate in line with the stay at home guidance. They will also need to get a free PCR test to check if they have COVID19. Whilst awaiting the PCR result, the individual should continue to self-isolate. If the PCR test is taken within 2 days of the positive lateral flow test, and is negative, it overrides the self-test LFD test and the pupil can return to school, as long as the individual doesn't have COVID-19 symptoms.

### **Admitting children into school**

In most cases, parents and carers will agree that a pupil with symptoms should not attend school, given the potential risk to others. If a parent or carer insists on a pupil attending your school, we will take the decision to refuse the pupil if, in our reasonable judgement, it is necessary to protect other pupils and staff from possible infection with COVID-19.

### **Attendance**

School attendance is mandatory for all pupils of compulsory school age and it is our priority to ensure that as many children as possible regularly attend school. Where a child is required to self-isolate or quarantine because of COVID-19 in accordance with relevant legislation or guidance published by PHE or the DHSC they should be recorded as code X (not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus). Where they are unable to attend because they have a confirmed case of COVID-19 they should be recorded as code I (illness). For pupils abroad who are unable to return, code X is unlikely to apply. In some specific cases, code Y (unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances) will apply. Further guidance about the use of codes is provided in the school attendance guidance.

All CEV children and young people should attend their education setting unless they are one of the very small number of children and young people under paediatric or other specialist care who have been advised by their GP or clinician not to attend.

### **Travel and quarantine**

Parents travelling abroad should bear in mind the impact on their child's education which may result from any requirement to quarantine or isolate upon return.

### **Remote Education**

Not all people with COVID-19 have symptoms. Where appropriate, you should support those who need to self-isolate because they have tested positive or are quarantining, to work or learn from home if they are well enough to do so. We will provide remote education to these pupils. The remote education provided should be equivalent in length to the core teaching pupils would receive in school. We will work collaboratively with families and put in place reasonable adjustments so that pupils with SEND can successfully access remote education.

### **School Workforce**

Clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV) people are no longer advised to shield but may wish to take extra precautions to protect themselves, and to follow the practical steps set out in the CEV guidance to minimise their risk of exposure to the virus. Staff who are CEV should currently attend their place of work if they cannot work from home.

We encourage vaccine take up and enable staff who are eligible for a vaccination to attend booked vaccine appointments where possible even during term time.

### **School Meals**

We will continue to provide free school meal support to any pupils who are eligible for benefits-related free school meals and who are learning at home during term time.

### **Christmas shows and other festive events in school**

Christmas and nativity plays are one of our most cherished school traditions. Sadly last year many had to be cancelled but this year, as we are at a different stage of the pandemic and so many people are benefitting from the protections the vaccines offer, we hope these will be able to go ahead. In order for events to take place for parents, children and visitors we will take steps to improve fresh air flow in the areas where gatherings are taking place. We will also be asking parents/ staff to wear a face covering and recommend that they take a LFD test before coming to an event.

However, if positive cases increase we may have to cancel planned events to limit transmission.

### **Educational Visits**

Schools have been advised to ensure that any new bookings for educational visits have adequate financial protection in place. Educational visits can commence but we will also continue to use the local community. Parents will be advised that their child will need to wear a face covering on the coach and bring their own hand sanitizer.

### **Wrap around provision and extra-curricular activity**

Wrap around provision and extra- curricular activity will continue

### **Inspections**

For state-funded schools, it is intended that Ofsted will return to a full programme of routine inspections from September 2021 and will aim to inspect every state-funded school within the next 5 academic years.

