

Dear Parent/Carer,

I hope you had an enjoyable summer and your children have enjoyed their first short week back in school.

I would like to offer my thanks to children and parents for the smooth return to school we have experienced this week. Children at both bases have taken to being dropped off before reaching the playground smoothly and, in the case of Atworth pupils, have responded maturely to a life without bubbles!

School life is returning to as normal as possible whilst being mindful of the community's safety. I am duty-bound to follow the new rules laid out by the Department for Education which have been adapted considerably in light of the increasing percentage of the population that are fully vaccinated against COVID-19. Such changes include the fact that children under 18 years old, and adults two weeks after receiving both vaccination shots, are no longer required to self-isolate if a member of their household tests positive by PCR. This means that schools are unable to authorise pupil absences for this reason and we have been instructed to follow-up on any non-attendance in the usual way. As a staff, we also have to follow these rules in relation to our own households.

**So pupils must only self-isolate if they have:**

**tested positive for COVID-19**

**OR**

**symptoms of COVID-19**

**OR**

**been instructed by NHS Test & Trace to self-isolate**

The key symptoms of COVID-19 are a...

- high temperature to the touch
- new continuous cough
- loss or change of sense of smell or taste

Pupils self-isolating for these reasons will be provided with remote education using Google Classroom to complete if they are not unwell.

I fully appreciate this may cause anxiety for some and am available to speak with any member of the school community to discuss any concerns they may have. I am able to reassure you that all members of staff have now had both vaccination shots, and we continue to encourage good handwashing and cleaning practices across the school alongside adequate ventilation of all school buildings.

We have also been able to welcome back more volunteers into school to support our work with pupils. Like the staff, they are undertaking twice-weekly lateral flow testing and will not attend school if they receive a positive result, and undertake an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check where required. We are always on the lookout for volunteers so if you are able to give some of your time, it doesn't have to be much, we would love to hear from you. Even fifteen to twenty minutes before drop-off or pick-up to listen to readers is likely to be useful. We often need help for trips if you are free for full days now or then. If you are interested, please speak with your child's classteacher for more information. No experience necessary!

Kind regards,

Simon Futcher  
Headteacher