



29 January 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

Re: Update COVID-19

I writing to update you on information regarding Reopening of Schools, February half-term arrangements, Contact tracing and Lateral Flow Tests.

1. Reopening of schools

As you will be aware, the Prime Minister has announced that the consideration for the wider reopening of schools has been delayed until Monday 8 March 2021. The following information has been emailed to all schools:

"the Prime Minister announced that it will not be possible to resume face-to-face learning immediately after the February half-term and instead hopes it will be safe to commence the reopening of schools and colleges from Monday 8 March. This is in response to the national public health data and pressure on NHS capacity.

Education settings, as well as students, parents and carers will be given at least two week's notice to prepare for a return to face-to-face education."

At this stage, no guidance has been issued to schools and colleges regarding the format of a wider reopening; there has been speculation that this will be a phased return for some year groups to have face to face education in school or be based on a rota system. We should expect that the information is provided either during the half-term break or the first week back.

Once again, I wish to remind parents and carers that provision in school is only for vulnerable and children of critical (key) workers where a child is not able to be on their own at home or who are not at home with an older sibling or a parent or carer and it is felt there is a safeguarding concern. We have several children attending school at present who have a sibling or parent/carer at home, and I wish to remind parents/carers that the clear message is to stay at home, especially if there are other members of the household at home. We would very much appreciate your support with this; individual circumstances can be discussed by telephoning the Year Leader or Assistant Year Leader of your child's year group.

2. February half-term closure and contact tracing

On Tuesday 26 January 2021, the Department for Education (DfE) issued the following statement:

"Schools will close as usual over February half-term and are not expected to remain open to vulnerable children and the children of critical workers during that week.

Schools do not need to provide lunch parcels or vouchers during the February half-term. There is wider government support in place to support families and children outside of term-time through the Covid Winter Grant Scheme. The £170 million scheme is being run by local authorities in England, with at least 80% of the funding earmarked to support with food and essential utility costs and will cover the period to the end of March 2021. It will allow local authorities to directly help the hardest-hit families and individuals over the winter period. Local authorities have local ties and knowledge, making them best placed to identify and help those children and families most in need."

Therefore, we will **close for the February half-term break on Friday 12 February 2021** and reopen to vulnerable and children of critical (key) workers on Monday 22 February 2021.

I wish to remind parents and carers that in my last letter of 22 January 2021 I explained that the whole of the week commencing Monday 8 February 2021 to Friday 12 February 2021 inclusive is to be used as a "catch up / review of work" week, so no new lesson content is to be published on Microsoft Teams; it is to be a week of using lesson time to finish off, improve, review and reflect on work covered since 5 January 2021.

3. Contact tracing during February half-term

The DfE and Public Health England (PHE) expect schools to continue having procedures in place for contact tracing over the February half-term break:

"Where pupils or staff still attending their school test positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) during the holidays, having developed symptoms more than 48 hours since being in school, schools are not required to take any action. Staff, parents and carers should follow contact tracing instructions provided by NHS Test and Trace. However, where pupils or staff still attending their school test positive having developed symptoms within 48 hours of being in school, the school is asked to assist in identifying close contacts and advising self-isolation, as the individual may have been infectious whilst in school."

In response to this, we will implement the same procedure we had in place for contact tracing over the period of the Christmas break:

For a pupil who tests positive for COVID-19 or develops symptoms during February half-term up to Thursday 18 February 2021 and who attended school between Monday 8 February 2021 and Friday 12 February 2021, parents/carers are to email: enquiries@titussaltschool.co.uk and leave the following information:

- The name of your child who has tested positive and attends TSS
- Year Group and Form Tutor
- Symptoms and the date they started
- The date of the positive test
- Names of other children who are in your child's social group who they may have had contact with prior to symptoms and testing positive
- Names of other children who your child may have travelled to school with and not implemented protective measures

On each day, including Saturday 13 February 2021 and Thursday 18 February 2021, any information emailed on enquiries@titussaltschool.co.uk between 9.00am and 11.00am will be forwarded to a member of the Senior Leadership Team, after a review of classroom contacts has been made. Once classroom proximity contacts have been identified, the member of the Senior Leadership Team On Call for that day, will email parents/carers that their child has been identified as being in close proximity to a child who has tested positive for COVID-19 and will therefore need to self-isolate for a period of ten days – no one else in the household will need to isolate unless they have symptoms.

The advice and guidance from Public Health England, which we have followed since publication in March 2020, is that the infectious period is forty-eight hours prior to the onset of symptoms and for an asymptomatic case, it is forty-eight hours prior to the positive test. Therefore, any pupil who has symptoms up to and including Sunday 14 February 2021 will impact on pupils in school who will need to be notified to self-isolate for a period of ten days.

4. Lateral Flow Tests

The Government changed the advice and guidance to schools for Lateral Flow Tests regarding the daily or serial testing of pupils identified as being in close proximity to someone who has tested positive for COVID-19. Originally the advice stated that anyone who has been in close proximity of a positive case in school are to be in school and be tested daily; this has changed to anyone who is identified as being in close proximity of someone testing positive for COVID-19 are to self-isolate for a period of ten days.

We began with a trial of Lateral Flow Tests on Wednesday 27 January 2021 and extended the programme yesterday and today; all members of staff we have so far tested have a negative result. We will be increasing both the number and frequency from next week. It is the intention that during the week commencing Monday 8 February 2021, we will test those pupils who are in school on a regular

basis and who have given consent for a Lateral Flow Test. When we are given more information regarding the wider reopening of school, we will increase the number of members of staff on the team and be calling on those parents/carers who have contacted us to volunteer to help with mass testing.

Once again, I hope this letter provides clarification and is helpful as we continue to work within the challenges of living with a pandemic. As always, as I receive further information or changes to advice and guidance from the Department for Education (DfE) I will let you know. Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ian Morrel', written in a cursive style.

Ian Morrel
Headteacher