



WILLIAM HARDING SCHOOL
Aim high... Work hard... Be kind...

WILLIAM HARDING SCHOOL

Hazlehurst Drive, Aylesbury, Bucks. HP21 9TJ

Phone: 01296 421733

E-mail: office@williamharding.school

Website: www.williamhardingschool.co.uk

Head Teacher: Miss T Cotchin BA(Hons) PGCE NPQH



9th December 2021

Dear parents and families,

Re: Updated COVID guidance

As you may be aware, the government have updated their COVID guidance. As a school we have had more details this and as always we would like to share this with you.

Attendance

The Government is clear on the critical importance of not disrupting the education of children and young people and the Government will prioritise keeping all education and childcare settings open. School attendance remains mandatory and all the usual rules continue to apply. Enabling children and young people to attend their education setting regularly continues to be a national priority.

Face coverings

Face coverings should be worn by staff and visitors in communal areas, unless exempt. The guidance does not recommend that staff wear face coverings in classrooms.

Wrap around provision

Schools and early years settings should continue to offer their usual before and after-school activities, including wraparound childcare.

Visitors to school that support learning

Therapists and wider children's service professionals should continue to be invited into education and childcare settings.

Vulnerable and clinically extremely vulnerable

Following expert clinical advice and the successful rollout of the COVID-19 vaccine programme, people previously considered to be particularly vulnerable, clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV), and high or higher-risk are not being advised to shield again.

Children and young people previously considered CEV should attend their setting and should follow the same guidance as the rest of the population. In some circumstances, a child or young person may have received personal advice from their specialist or clinician on additional precautions to take and they should continue to follow that advice.

Our School Values are: Inclusion, Perseverance, Honesty, Respect, Responsibility and Collaboration.



Testing

We strongly encourage all those involved in education and childcare settings to continue regular testing (LFD not PCR) and reporting their results. Settings are strongly encouraged to ask parents, guardians and other visitors to take a lateral flow device (LFD) test before entering the setting.

For those in settings closing over Christmas, all staff should test over the holidays in line with national guidance. This means that they should test if they will be in a high-risk situation that day and before visiting people who are at higher risk of severe illness if they get COVID-19.

Isolation

All individuals who have been identified as a close contact of a suspected or confirmed case of the Omicron variant only of COVID-19, irrespective of vaccination status and age, will continue to be required to self-isolate and asked to book a PCR test.

January return

To prepare for any possible changes in public health advice, all education and childcare settings should now revisit their existing outbreak plans to ensure they are well prepared for any future changes.

Contact tracing

NHS Test and Trace will continue to check with all positive cases whether they need support to self-isolate, find out who they may have passed the virus onto and alert those contacts, and ask all contacts to take a PCR test as soon as possible to help identify positive cases.

Getting a vaccine for influenza (flu)

The Government recommends as many people as possible receive a vaccination against flu this autumn and winter. This could help to reduce overall pressure on the NHS and is especially important this year given the possibility of a substantial resurgence in flu. The NHS has begun to roll out the annual campaign for the flu vaccination from August 2021. A free flu vaccination will still be available for all previously eligible groups:

- a. Primary school children.
- b. 65 year olds and over.
- c. Vulnerable groups.
- d. Pregnant women.

The Government has also extended eligibility for a free flu vaccination this year to include:

- a. Secondary school children.
- b. 50-64 year olds.

Safer behaviours and actions that reduce the spread of COVID-19

The behaviours encouraged to prevent the spread include:

- Let fresh air in if you meet indoors. Meeting outdoors is safer. Meeting outdoors vastly reduces the risk of airborne transmission, however, it is not always possible, particularly through the winter.
- If you are indoors, be in a room with fresh air (and, for example, opening your windows regularly for 10 minutes or a small amount continuously)
- Wear a face covering in crowded and enclosed settings where you come into contact with people you do not normally meet.
- Get tested, and self-isolate if required. Anyone with symptoms of COVID-19 should self-isolate and take a free PCR test as soon as possible. Anyone who tests positive must self-isolate. Anyone who is notified they are a close contact of someone who has tested positive should also take a free PCR test as soon as possible.
- Try to stay at home if you are feeling unwell.
- Wash your hands with soap and water or use hand sanitiser regularly throughout the day.
- Download and use the NHS COVID-19 app to know if you've been exposed to the virus.

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As a result, we will be updating our risk assessments and again in January.

Thank you for your ongoing support.

Miss Cotchin
Headteacher

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