



Friday 21st January 2022

Dear Parents and Carers,

The Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, has outlined his intention for the country to return to 'Plan A', in moves to keep coronavirus rates as low as possible. Sajid Javid said "we must learn to live with Covid in the same way we have to live with flu. And we will be setting out our long-term plan for living with Covid-19 this spring."

Responding to the statement Steve Brown, Devon's Director of Public Health, said:

"While we have seen a reduction in the overall number of people reporting a positive test in the past week, numbers are now stabilising, and we are seeing increased rates in younger children.

Case rates are still high and it is important that people understand that this announcement is not one of 'freedom day', but a reverting back to plan A.

Devon's uptake of the vaccination is good, with more than 85 per cent of eligible people overall now having had their booster.

However, take-up of the booster is lower in some younger age groups, and it's imperative that they and everyone who is eligible for their booster jab, comes forward as soon as they can.

Being fully vaccinated, and boosted, gives us best protection from this virus. It's not too late to start vaccinations, and there are now plenty of opportunities in Devon to get your booster jabs at walk-in and vaccination centres.

Regular lateral flow device testing for people with no symptoms is still the best way to identify those carrying the virus. As is taking a PCR test by people showing symptoms.

Keeping indoor spaces ventilated is a sensible precaution to reduce risk.

And staying at home and avoiding others if you have symptoms of the virus or test positive for it, is still the most responsible way to avoid spreading it to others.

"Please be cautious, let's use our common sense, and continue to follow good basic public health advice."

How does this affect Mill Water?

- From January 27th staff will no longer be required to wear facemasks in communal areas.
- Assemblies and risk assessed mixing will happen

Standing Covid reminders for you:

- Please provide a negative lateral flow test before any appointment in school. We are asking all visiting professionals to do the same and this remains the advice despite the changes.
- Please ensure your child doesn't attend school if acutely ill or showing any symptoms of covid: new/continuous cough/change to taste/smell and/or a high temperature.
- Individuals may now take LFD tests on day 5 and 6 of their self-isolation period. Those who receive two negative test results are no longer required to complete 10 full days of self-isolation. The first test must be taken no earlier than day 5 of the self-isolation period and tests must be taken on 2 separate days. If both are negative, and you do not have a high temperature, you may end your self-isolation after the second negative test result and return to your education setting from day 6.
- Anyone with symptoms who is unable to take a test will need to complete the full 10-day period of self-isolation.

We also have the Schools Immunisation Team in school again on 8th February. This session is to catch up on any Year 9 pupils who have yet to receive their 1st or 2nd dose of the HPV, and also 1st/2nd Covid vaccinations for pupils 12 - 15 yrs.

And now for something completely different.....

I have been given the remit to put an extra day's holiday in the school calendar, in lieu of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. This will be **Monday 4th July 2022**. Mill Water will be closed for all staff and pupils.

In the run up to the celebrations we will be hosting a range of red, white and blue activities culminating in a tea party (lunch) on **Friday May 27th** in school. So dig out your red, white and blue glad rags and come and join in the fun. More details to follow.

Yours sincerely



Sarah Pickering
Headteacher