

Eastlands Primary School

February COVID Update 2022

Hello,

COVID numbers remain concerningly high nationally. In line with the national picture, we are also experiencing extraordinarily high levels of staff absence in school.

Since January, each week we have had 1 or 2 members of the teaching team absent. This has been managed through the reallocation of other teaching staff in school.

We understand that children in school means parents can go to work. Our priority will always be the safety and education of children whilst keeping the school open for as long as possible for as many as possible.

Week beginning the 31st January we had 3 members of the teaching team absent. This week we have started with 5 staff absent (25% of the teaching team). This increasing absence is proving to be very challenging. We are working hard and utilising all options to ensure that we remain open to all year groups wherever possible and to minimise disruption to your child's learning experience. We have covered absence through a combination of supply cover and moving staff around internally. I am in contact with the local authority again today.

It is now a real possibility that we will need to consider closing to one or more year groups if staffing is impacted on further the coming days/weeks. This will never be a decision taken lightly.

Please help us by-

- ⇒ Not sending in your child if they are showing symptoms
- ⇒ Continue with LFT's as these identify non-symptomatic cases.
- ⇒ Keep school informed of any positive tests.

If your child's teacher is too unwell to plan work you will need to use [Oak National Academy](#) and other useful sites on your child's website page.

The situation is under constant review in line with our outbreak planning.

Thank you all for your support. It is much appreciated during these challenging times.

Mrs Edwards

Safeguarding is Everybody's Responsibility

Eastlands Primary School

Lansdowne Place, Rugby CV21 3RY Tel: 01788 57328

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Eastlands COVID practice

- ◆ Please wear face covering over nose and mouth at all times on the school site, including drop off and collection.
- ◆ Maintain 1m + distance at all times
- ◆ Arrive just in time for school and remain distanced at the school gate and playground
- ◆ When approaching the school gate, use the left-hand path to come into school and the right-hand path to walk away from school.
- ◆ Use one-way system on site. It takes 1 minute to walk around the site. Whilst this is an inconvenience for Year 1 & 2 families, it is the safest thing to do. Thank you for following this advice.
- ◆ Families should consider making twice-weekly LFT testing (for both parents and children) part of their regular routine to help identify non-symptomatic positive cases within the school community and therefore reduce the spread of COVID-19. You can order them to be delivered to your house or collect them from a wide range of locations (see <https://www.gov.uk/order-coronavirus-rapid-lateral-flow-tests>? for more information). For information regarding access to lateral flow tests see: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing/regular-rapid-coronavirus-tests-if-you-do-not-have-symptoms/>
- ◆ If you have a positive LFT book a PCR asap. We understand that requests for children to get tests (in some instances several times), children being sent home with possible symptoms etc is frustrating but this is key to the ongoing safety of our staff, children and families.
- ◆ Please also remain vigilant if your child is unwell in any way. If your child develops one or more of the main COVID-19 symptoms (new continuous cough, high temperature, loss/change in taste/smell), irrespective of how mild, they must isolate and have a PCR test (<https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>)
- ◆ If they are sent into school with any of these symptoms, we will have to send them home again. Any child displaying symptoms will not be allowed to return to school until we have notification of a negative PCR test.

These key symptoms are recent onset of:

- ◇ new continuous cough and/or
- ◇ high temperature and/or
- ◇ a loss of, or change in, normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia)
- ◆ Please also be aware of the range of lesser-known symptoms of COVID-19 (headache, sore throat, fatigue, muscle aches, blocked/runny nose, diarrhoea and vomiting) which are, in fact, some of the more common symptoms that we are currently seeing in children in school who have then gone on to test positive. I would strongly recommend you booking a PCR test for these symptoms too.
- ◆ If you have **travelled abroad** and returned within the past week, we would appreciate it if you could send a copy of the PCR result your child received in the 2 days following their return to England. If they have not yet received this result, they should not return to school until they do.

Please continue to keep us informed of any positive or suspected positive COVID-19 cases within your household via admin2415@welearn365.com. Although school is not open to children today, there are staff in school and the admin email will be checked.

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FAQ's

1. What will January term look like?

The Covid situation is different region to region. Under current guidance schools are open and there is an expectation that all pupils will attend. In England, the government's message is schools will stay open come what may, with Education Secretary Nadhim Zahawi saying it would do "everything in its power" to keep pupils in class.

England's measures include:

- ◇ On-site testing on return to school & face coverings (secondaries)
- ◇ Increasing vaccination take-up
- ◇ Classroom ventilation (mainly opening windows and doors)
- ◇ Hygiene and sanitation

2. What are the risk factors for schools staying open?

- ◇ Broadly, there are two main risk factors: that infections among teachers and other school staff could lead to class and even school closures, and secondly,
- ◇ the prospect of pupils bringing Covid into school.

3. What about staff shortages?

- ◇ Supply teachers who usually cover periods of sickness are likely to be in short supply due to the high levels of absence.
- ◇ Many teachers are already working in tutoring organisations as part of education recovery plans.
- ◇ England's education secretary made a plea for retired teachers to return and join teacher supply agencies to fill staffing gaps. There has not been much of a take up for this.

4. What about Pupil Absence?

- ◇ Unidentified infected pupils risk triggering even more infections.

5. What happens if there is an outbreak?

Under England's guidelines, a school must get in touch with its local public health officials if five pupils, teachers or staff in close contact test positive for Covid in a 10-day period. Then school management must work with local health officials to mitigate the spread of disease.

Measures include:

- ◇ encouraging home testing or increasing its frequency
- ◇ reinstating on-site rapid testing in secondaries, colleges and universities for a two-week period
- ◇ extra cleaning and more ventilation.

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6. Return to school lockdown?

- ◇ Short-term attendance restrictions, such as sending home a class or year group can be used only in extreme cases, and under public health advice.

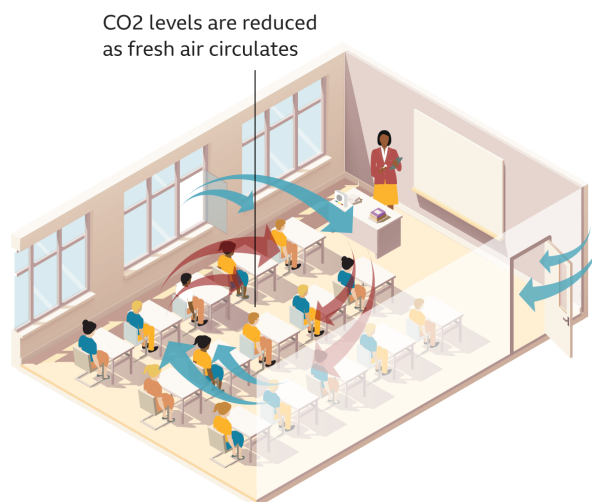
7. Don't vaccinations help?

- ◇ While vaccinations are not 100% guarantee against infection, they should give extra protection from disease, which is generally regarded as mild in young people.
- ◇ According to an Office for National Statistics survey, 50% of adults in Great Britain said 12-to-15-year-olds in their households were vaccinated by 12 December.
- ◇ But that leaves half unvaccinated.

8. What about ventilation?

- ◇ Ventilation is one of the key measures designed to keep schools safe from Covid spread.
- ◇ Some **300,000 carbon dioxide (CO₂) monitors were promised for schools in England** to help identify areas with poor ventilation.

Opening a window and door allows better airflow



At Eastlands we have 8 co₂ detectors and 2 air purifying filter machines - one for EYFS and KS1 and one in KS2 to reduce levels of co₂ if detected as high