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| MAURICEWOOD PRIMARY SCHOOL11 Muirhead PlacePenicuikMidlothianEH26 0LE**Head Teacher: Mrs J Mouat**Tel: 0131 271 4630Email:Mauricewood.PS@midlothian.gov.ukTwitter: @MauricewoodPSApp: Search **“School App for Parents”** |  Education, Communities and Economy Division | leafclipathx**MIDLOTHIAN** |

10th January 2022

Dear Parent/Carer

**Covid-19 Update**

As you may be aware COVID Guidance from the Scottish Government continues to be reviewed and updated guidance was published on Wednesday 5 January. In light of the Omicron variant **safety mitigations that were already in place must continue to be strictly followed and some measures that were previously relaxed are being reintroduced.**

Importance of regular LFD testing is stressed throughout and especially before return to school. Staff working in school will continue to take part in the Asymptomatic testing programme as an added precaution to reduce contact with adults who may be carrying the virus without knowing. (Lateral Flow Testing at least twice a week.)

Key changes include:

* a strengthened approach to minimising contacts, primarily through the reintroduction of groupings where practical
* a strengthened approach to self-isolation for household contacts of positive cases
* tightened restrictions on school visitors
* updated guidance on regular ventilation and CO2 monitoring
* measures aimed at increasing the uptake of regular asymptomatic testing
* an update to guidance on school visits and trips
* a requirement for schools and local authorities to provide essential support for particular groups, including vulnerable children and young people, in the event of temporary school closures at a local level

**Drop off/pick up times**

We will continue with the drop off/pick up arrangements in place but ask that parents please wear face coverings and continue to observe physical distancing from other adults and children. If conversing with staff, even for a short period of time, outdoors, please maintain 2m distancing at all times. All parent who can wait out with the school playground should do so in order to minimise gatherings.

**Groupings**

There will be no mixing between classes indoors, although children will continue to play in year groups in the playground. This may impact on the make-up of some support groups and timetabling.

**Updated Guidance on Covid 19 (Omicron) Isolation Period**

* Anyone who is symptomatic should isolate and book a PCR test
* Anyone who tests positive via PCR test should isolate for 10 days BUT can leave isolation with negative LFD at day 6 and 24 hours later at day 7.
* Contacts identified and advised accordingly:
* High Risk: advised to isolate (by TAP)
* Low Risk: no isolation, warning letter (by school)
* If you have no symptoms and test with a LFD and this is positive you no longer need to take a PCR to confirm this result. Instead you must isolate and report your result online to allow TAP to commence contact tracing. You will also receive an online form to ensure your contacts are notified.
* Non-symptomatic contacts, including household contacts, needn’t isolate or get a PCR if fully vaccinated (2 doses and booster) or under 18yrs 4mths old.  Instead, they should take 7 days of lateral flow tests and report results – only isolating where a LFD result is positive.  (In these circumstances - positive LFD result for a close contact - there is no requirement to take a confirmatory PCR unless applying for the self-isolation support grant.)
* Non-symptomatic adult contacts who are unvaccinated or partially vaccinated must take a PCR and isolate for 10 days.
* Parents should advise school when a child tests positive.
* Schools should encourage parents to engage with TAP when children test positive.

**If a pupil attends school with symptoms of cough and/ or high temperature, they will be sent home immediately**.  While waiting to be collected by their parent or carer, they will be isolated in a private, well ventilated room/area. Isolation rooms will be cleaned after use in keeping with National Guidance.

School staff will be vigilant to any potential signs of Covid-19 and will always err on the side of caution in contacting parents and carers.

**Lunches**

I refer to my letter of 22nd December 2021, in which I laid out changes to lunch arrangements with effect from 11th January 2022, but I would like to remind you that all P6 and P7 pupils should bring a packed lunch every day. BACS payments will be made for those eligible for Free School You can find eligibility criteria and a application form on the council website.

[Free school meals and clothing grants | Midlothian Council](https://www.midlothian.gov.uk/info/855/school_meals/117/free_school_meals_and_clothing_grants)

**Ventilation in buildings**

CO2 monitors are in place in all our schools/ELC settings and spaces are assessed regularly with a view to take remedial action if required.

**Cleaning routines** & [**Hand washing**](https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/best-way-to-wash-your-hands/)

Cleaning and hand hygiene will continue to be of the utmost importance, with touch point cleaning happening throughout the day.

**School Uniform**

A flexible approach to school uniform is in place as the priority is for frequent washing of clothing. We have spare items of pre-loved uniform available on request which we would be happy to gift to families.

**School visitors**

No non-essential visitors will be coming into school. Visits from parents are by appointment only. Where possible, meetings will be conducted virtually or on the telephone. To contact your child’s teacher or a member of the Senior Leadership Team, please contact the school office, by phone or email. It may be that therapeutic services by visiting professionals will be impacted. If this affects your child we will contact you to let you know.

**Contingency plans**

We will do everything we can to ensure our school and ELC setting remain fully open to pupils. However, please remember that we have a contingency plan place, which we may have to enact in the event of staffing levels falling below safe levels. This may involve a class or stage moving to remote learning, with work provided on Google Classroom or in the case of ELC on the school app. We remain hopeful that this won’t be necessary. Please note, Google Classroom will be used for routine Home Learning, and remote learning only in the event of partial closure. For pupils self-isolating, but whose class remains open for in-person learning, there will be a grid of learning activities available on the website and app. The new grids for January 2022 will be available shortly, and we will let you know once these have been updated.

As always, I appreciate your support and patience as we continue to navigate the challenges posed by the changing picture of the pandemic.

Kind regards,

Jen Mouat

Headteacher