

Dudley Academies Trust

Executive offices, Dudley College of Technology
Priory Villa, 3 Ednam Road, Dudley, West
Midlands, DY1 1HL
Chair of Board of Trustees: Lowell Williams
Chief Executive: Jo Higgins



15/12/21

Dear Parents and Carers

Re: **Coronavirus (COVID-19) Latest Measures**

I am writing to confirm changes to the arrangements in our academies as a result of the new Omicron variant.

The government continues to manage the risk of serious illness from the spread of the virus. The Prime Minister announced on 27 November 2021 the temporary introduction of new measures as a result of the Omicron variant and on 8 December 2021 that Plan B, set out in the [autumn and winter plan 2021](#), was being enacted. As a result, we are reflecting these measures in our academies. These measures remain subject to change as the situation develops.

Face Coverings

Face coverings help protect the wearer and others against the spread of infection because they cover the nose and mouth, which are the main confirmed sources of transmission of COVID-19.

Face coverings should continue to be worn in communal areas of our academies by learners, staff and visitors, unless they are exempt. Learners in Year 7 or above should also continue to wear face coverings on public and dedicated school transport, unless they are exempt. Please ensure that your child is adhering to this advice.

In our primary school, we recommend that face coverings should be worn by staff and adult visitors when moving around in corridors and communal areas. Health advice continues to be that children in primary schools should not be asked to wear face coverings.

Symptoms, Testing and Self-Isolation

We are aware of a wide variety of symptoms being associated with positive cases of COVID-19. While some children appear to be presenting with symptoms such as diarrhoea and vomiting, the Government advice is still focused on the main three symptoms which can be found here: [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) symptoms in children](#). If your child is unwell with a symptom not on the NHS list, it would be advisable to test them with an Lateral Flow Device (LFD) test.

If your child tests positive on the LFD Test, your child should isolate, and you should book a PCR test online: [PCR Test Booking](#). Your child's academy will arrange remote education so that they can continue their learning, if they are well enough to do so.

Close contacts will continue to be identified via NHS Test and Trace. This is likely to be a small number of individuals who would be most at risk of contracting COVID-19 due to the nature of the close contact. Contacts from a school setting will only be traced by NHS Test and Trace where the positive case and/or their parent/carer specifically identifies the individual as being a close contact.



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Daily rapid testing is now recommended for contact of COVID-19 variants. The following contacts of a positive COVID-19 case are **strongly advised** to take a LFD test every day for 7 days and continue to attend their setting as normal, unless they have a positive test result:

- Adults who are fully vaccinated (2 doses of an approved vaccine).
- All children and young people aged between 5 and 18 years and 6 months.
- People who are not able to get vaccinated for medical reasons.
- People taking part, or who have taken part, in an approved clinical trial for a COVID-19 vaccine.
- This means that the people listed above:
 - Don't need to self-isolate for up to 10 days as a result of being a contact of Omicron, or
 - Take a polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test if a contact of other variants.

Further information is available in:

- [NHS Test and Trace: what to do if you are contacted.](#)
- [stay at home: guidance for households](#) with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection.

Asymptomatic Testing

We continue to **strongly encourage** all learners, staff and all households to take part in regular testing if they are not showing symptoms. This will help to reduce the risk of the virus unknowingly entering our academies communities. We will continue to support your child to participate in twice weekly testing, where requested. In addition, we request that all parents/carers and visitors entering our academies take a lateral flow test before they arrive.

LFD test kits are available from the academy. You can also access free LFD tests in a number of ways, including at the local LFD site in your district, by collecting a home LFD kit from a test site, or by ordering online. More information about these options can be found here: [Regular Rapid Lateral Flow Coronavirus \(Covid-19\) Tests](#).

School attendance

Children and young people must continue to attend school unless they develop symptoms likely to be COVID-19, have tested positive or any other appropriate reason.

Vaccinations

Government advice confirms that the best way to protect yourself and others from COVID-19 is to be fully vaccinated and also get the booster when you are eligible. Most children aged 12 to 15 are currently only being offered a first dose. Find out more about COVID-19 vaccines [here](#).



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The new Omicron COVID-19 variant is spreading fast. Anyone who is **unvaccinated** or who **has not had their booster** is at even greater risk from COVID-19 and more serious illness.

People aged **18 years and over**, and those aged **16 years and over** who are at risk (including health and social care workers) are being offered a booster dose of coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccine.

Preparation for the start of the new term in January

We would encourage your child to continue to undertake twice weekly LFD tests during the Christmas holiday and prior to returning to their academy in January 2022. With social mixing during the holiday period, it is vital that we support a successful start to the new term.

We appreciate that the changes in guidance can cause anxiety for some but it is important that the education of our children is prioritised this academic year. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your continued support and understating at this time.

Yours sincerely

Jo Higgins
Chief Executive



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