

Shepherds Down School

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Headteacher: Mrs Debby Gooderham



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Dear Parents/Carers,

I am looking forward to the day when I am not talking about COVID-19 in the newsletter! However, unfortunately at the moment, the school continues to be impacted by COVID-19. The number of positive cases in both children and adults remains relatively high. There has been at least one positive case in 12 out of our 18 classes since January. Fortunately, no-one to my knowledge, has been seriously ill and most cases are fit to return to school after their isolation period is over. Even so, the number of cases is still having an impact most noticeably on the frequency we are advising daily lateral flows, the continued restriction on mixing, any offsite activities, and the staffing levels in classes. The latter has meant that a number of classes have either been closed for a short period of time and/or we have had to introduce a short period of restricted attendance where all children have had to remain at home for one or two days during the week. We have only done this because there have not been safe staffing levels within the class due to the number of the staff team isolating, to keep the class running a normal. I know that at times the need to do this has been quite last minute or has seemed to continue after the weekend when it was originally thought normal attendance would be resumed. For this I am sorry, however, sometimes this is due to the timing of the results received or because I was wrongly optimistic that the staff would be able to return on the 6th day, but this has been proved to be less likely and we have recently been more cautious with our planning to avoid this. We know how difficult this continues to be for all the children and families involved, however I hope you can appreciate we are doing all we can to continue to provide as much face to face education as possible, in this challenging context.

There have been some slight changes in the guidance over the term so here are a few reminders of the current guidance:

- If your child has been identified as a close contact of a positive case, either in school (class/bus) or at home, the advice is to carry out daily lateral flow tests for 7 days from the day of contact. Your child can continue to attend school, as long as they have a negative Lateral Flow each morning.
- If the lateral flow test is positive then your child needs to self - isolate; **they do not need a PCR test to confirm the positive result.**
- We will continue to let you know if your child has been a close contact of a positive case, either on the bus or in their class and advise you to carry out daily lateral flow tests with your child. If your child has had contact with a positive case outside of school, such as their family we also ask that you let us know so that we can be particularly vigilant to any symptoms and support you.
- If your child has tested positive for COVID-19 they can return to school on the 6th day if they have a negative lateral flow on day 5 and 6 of their isolation period and no longer have a temperature. If the result of either of these tests is positive they should continue to isolate until they get negative results from two Lateral Flow tests on consecutive days or until the 11th day, whichever is earliest.



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- We would appreciate you letting school know the results of the LF's on these days to assist with planning of staffing.
- We would also need to see proof of the two negative Lateral Flow results taken 24 hours apart before your child returns to school, if they are returning before the 11th day.
- If your child is not able to complete a lateral flow on these days then your child should remain at home for the 10-day period.
- If your child does display any of the 3 symptoms, particularly dry persistent cough or a temperature (above 37.8) even if this is short lived, we ask that you keep them off school/pick them up as soon as possible and keep them at home until the result of a PCR
- If your child has displayed symptoms **school need to have a copy of the negative PCR result before you send your child back to school.**
- If you are not able to do a PCR please keep your child at home for 10 days. Please remember - **a Lateral flow test is not sufficient if your child is showing COVID-19 symptoms.**
- Please also continue with twice weekly asymptomatic testing if you are able to.

Parents Evening:

There is an opportunity to meet with your child's class teacher during the week before half term (week beginning 14th February). This is one of 3 opportunities we provide during the year, other than your child's annual review, for you to discuss your child's progress and any other issues you want. Your child's class teacher will be sending out a letter with the times they are available for to meet with you over the next few days. You can also request whether the meeting is in school (face to face), virtual or via the telephone depending on your preferences and what will work best for you. If you are not able to meet during the times suggested please let your child's class teacher know and they will try and arrange another time.

Parent Training:

We will be providing some parent training over the next few weeks, covering subjects such as providing visual support and supporting your child's communication at home. The intention is that this could also lead into individual home/school support during the Summer term if needed. There has been a separate letter sent out about this but it is not too late to join, if you are interested let myself or Megan know. It has been a while since we have been able to provide any parent support so please take advantage of it if you think it will be beneficial to you.

Parent Mornings:

We are also restarting parent mornings on Monday 7th March. This is an opportunity for parents to come together and chat, share and discuss common issues. It can be either virtual or face to face - you can choose. During the first meeting there will be an opportunity to consider what format the mornings should take moving forward and what input (if any) everyone wants, so we can plan future mornings.

Dates for the term:

Friday 4th February - INSET day - school closed

Week beginning 14th February - Parent Evening times (to be set by class teachers)

Friday 18th February - Break up for half term

Monday 28th February - Return to school

Monday 7th March - Parents morning

Friday 8th April - Break up for Easter holidays

Monday 25th April - Return to school

Don't forget the INSET day on Friday!

Kind Regards

Debby