



The Federation of West Leigh Infant School and Backwell C of E Junior School



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Executive Headteacher: Mr Nick Webster

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Dear Parents

I hope you have had a restful and enjoyable Christmas period and have managed to spend some time with family and friends. We are very much looking forward to welcoming the pupils back to both schools tomorrow and beginning what will hopefully be a busy and fulfilling Term 3.

I am sure you will have read in national press about increasing concerns regarding the availability of staff in schools and public services due to the rise in the number of people isolating due to Omicron. Fortunately, we currently do not have any issues in this area, however given the continued upsurge in Covid infections over the Christmas break, there is the potential for us to be faced with:

- 1. A significant level of staff absence** – this could mean that we simply don't have enough staff to cover all classes, in which case we will have to ask one or more year groups to switch to learning 'from home', potentially at short notice. We would always accommodate more vulnerable students where being in school was a priority, and staff would be in contact with families accordingly. If this approach is needed, we will inform you as soon as we know of any potential disruption.
- 2. A significant level of pupil absence** – this adds very considerable burden on teaching staff, who need to provide work for those isolating at home in addition to their usual teaching and planning load. As such, work will be set on MS Teams for pupils to complete, but our ability to regularly communicate with those at home will be more limited than previously.



Changes to Self-Isolation Rules

You may have noted that the self-isolation rules for confirmed positive cases have now changed, which allows people to stop self-isolating on 'Day 7' if they have negative lateral flow tests on Days 6 and 7 (nb 'Day 0' is the date of the positive test). This is welcome in lots of ways, but will add a layer of complexity regarding the end of self-isolation and the return to school for pupils. Where students are not able to return after 7 days (due to continued positive LFD results) please ensure that you contact the school offices to avoid any risk of absence being marked as unauthorised.

In-school Covid measures

We will be continuing to ask that all visitors to either school site wear a face covering at all times and try to maintain a 2m distance from others where possible. Enhanced cleaning, ventilation and hand washing for all will remain in place.

We expect this to be an unpredictable time and it is possible that we will face some disruption to the continuity of education as the Omicron wave passes. We will do all we can to minimise impact and inform you of changes with as much warning as possible, but we are likely to have to continue to make some late changes based on an ever-changing situation. Your patience and support through this tricky time is hugely appreciated, just as you have demonstrated throughout the last couple of years. It makes a huge difference in our ability to navigate the current challenges.

Yours sincerely

Nick Webster

Headteacher