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November 24<sup>th</sup> 2021

Dear Parents/Carers,

I am writing to give you an update and to clear up some inaccuracies and rumours that have been circulating amongst parents about COVID cases in the school.

Firstly, we currently have 23 children in the school with COVID and two members of staff. Each class has at least one pupil affected apart from Jays. The number of children that are absent from school remains higher than usual because children have other illnesses, are self-isolating for various reasons or waiting for a PCR test result.

When children have symptoms, they seem to be incredibly varied and include mouth ulcers, sickness, headaches, dizziness, sore throats as well as the usual three symptoms. Some children have also lost their appetite as a result of the lack of taste and smell (this is not something that young children are able to articulate).

We are reliant on your support in informing us if your child has tested positive and in testing your child with LFTs in classes with several cases (currently YR, Y3 and Y6). Lateral Flow Tests can be ordered through this website – ignore the advice that it is for children aged 11 and over as this refers to the regular twice weekly LFT programme in secondary schools.

<https://www.gov.uk/order-coronavirus-rapid-lateral-flow-tests>

Until now, we have been lucky as a school not to have considerable COVID disruption but Barham is not unique in seeing a sudden increase in cases. I am aware of several other primary schools both in this county and across the country that are in the same position.

I understand parental concerns but can assure you that we follow all the Department for Education guidance for COVID management. As a school, we have gone further than many schools in providing air filters in each classroom and ensuring ventilation is effective by using carbon dioxide monitors at strategic points in the classroom. Children have always been allowed to wear masks and can continue to do so. In cases where children are living with vulnerable family members, I have authorised their absence in classes affected by a higher number of cases and all teachers are providing remote learning for the children self-isolating or with asymptomatic cases of COVID.

### **Pantomime and Astrodome**

We are hoping that we will still be able to take part in both the Astrodome and pantomime at the Marlowe. For the Astrodome, children will visit in their class bubble and there will be



a time interval between each class. Children will also use the hand sanitiser before and after entering the dome.

For the pantomime, we are looking at how we can organise class groups differently so that they children sit in year group clusters both in the coach and in the theatre rather than across rows and with buddies as we usually do. As before, children will be able to wear masks at all times if preferred.

### **Other Christmas Events**

We will continue to provide Christmas activities, like we did last year, to ensure the children don't miss out on the usual festive events.

To finish, I would just like to ask you to be mindful about what you post on the parents' class WhatsApp. At the moment, these groups seem to be fuelling some of the anxiety for parents with inaccurate information and speculation. The WhatsApp groups were set up to support you all with updates and reminders. I am very grateful to the parents who are class reps and have done a brilliant job in adding letters/reminders to support school communication.

I have always been transparent with you about COVID issues and am more than happy to speak to any of you about your concerns or queries. The parental support of the school has been amazing, particularly over the last couple of years and without your support, my role and the role of the other school leaders would have been even more challenging than it currently is. We are truly grateful for your continuing support.

Yours sincerely



Alison Higgins