

Essex County Council

Dedham Church of England Primary School

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15th September 2021

Dear families of Dedham Church of England Primary School,

I am writing to update you on the improving COVID19 situation in school and clarify the government guidance regarding when children should self-isolate and remain at home, when they should attend school and in what circumstances remote education should be provided.

Four children have completed their period of self-isolation having tested positive for COVID19 and we are delighted that they are now back in school. Two children remain at home having tested positive for COVID19 and we look forward to seeing them back in school very soon when their isolation period ends.

I am very grateful for the proactive response of parents when children are identified as a close contact in booking a PCR test. This will contribute significantly to controlling transmission of the virus.

Self-isolation

The latest government guidelines released in August 2021 are a significant change from those we followed last term. Importantly, **children do not self-isolate if a member of their household has tested positive for COVID19 and should attend school. They are advised to take a PCR test and should continue to attend school whilst awaiting the outcome.** This change is challenging for parents and school staff and requires our mindset to change also. We wholeheartedly support families in sending their children to school in these circumstances in line with government guidance. **Equally, the same applies to children identified as a close contact and advised to take a PCR test by NHS Test and Trace. Children should continue to attend school whilst awaiting the outcome.**

Your child should only self-isolate in the following circumstances:

- They have tested positive for COVID19 using a PCR (polymerase chain reaction) test. They should stay at home for the 10-day isolation period and we will arrange remote education so that they can continue their learning, if they are well enough to do so.
- They have tested positive for COVID19 using an LFD (rapid lateral flow) test. They need to stay at home, self-isolate and take a confirmatory PCR test. If the outcome is negative and they are well they should return to school. If the outcome is positive they should stay at home for the 10-day isolation period and we will arrange remote education so that they can continue their learning, if they are well enough to do so.
- They are symptomatic displaying one of the three COVID19 symptoms. They need to stay at home, self-isolate and should take a PCR test. If the outcome is negative and they are well they should return to school. If the outcome is positive they should stay at home for the 10-day isolation period and we will arrange remote education so that they can continue their learning, if they are well enough to do so.



The Church of England
in Essex and East London
Diocese of Chelmsford



Remote Education

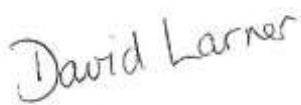
As stated above, remote education will only be provided to children who have tested positive for COVID19 and are well enough to complete it. Our Remote Learning Policy states, *'When the school is notified of a positive LFT or PCR test, teachers should ensure remote learning is available for the next school day. If notification is received over a weekend or bank holiday, then teachers will have one working day to put remote learning in place.'*

Following government guidance, remote education will not be provided if a parent chooses to keep their child at home when another member of the household has tested positive for COVID19. In this instance, the guidance states that the child should be in school and take a PCR test. Also, remote education will not be extended to children who are absent for other reasons (E.g. illness, holiday).

For our school, it has been a bumpy beginning to the term but hopefully we are now seeing a downward trend in positive COVID19 cases. However, I do think we should all be prepared for a few more bumps in the road in coming months. Although many of us are challenged by the new guidance, I am sure we all support the intention of the changes to prioritise children being in school. Under previous guidance, ninety children at our school would have been required to learn remotely for a period of ten days so far this term.

Thank you for your support and understanding for the school and each other as together we negotiate our way through the coming weeks and months.

My very best wishes,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "David Larner".

Mr David Larner

Headteacher