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10<sup>th</sup> January 2022

Dear Parent/Carer

### January 2022...and so the challenges continue!

Welcome back and a belated happy New Year. I hope that you were able to enjoy the festivities, spending quality time with friends and family. Thankfully school has remained open. However, although I know potentially, we have a few tricky weeks ahead due to the surge in COVID rates locally and nationally and the impact of isolation regulations.

Our aim is to maintain as much normality as possible, minimise disruption, keep school open and continue to provide the best quality education for all our children by doing everything possible to reduce transmission in school. Our biggest challenge, as for all schools, is dealing with staff shortages. At the moment we are keeping 'the show on the road' by redeploying staff and everyone pulling together to help cover absences although this is likely to become more difficult.

We are continuing with some routines and making adjustments to others in school, which may feel like a backward step, but hopefully these will just be for the short term.

#### KEY PROCEDURES IN SCHOOL

- Frequent hand washing and use of hand gel
- Rigorous cleaning protocols
- Good ventilation with doors and windows open
- Use of CO<sub>2</sub> monitors to keep a check on ventilation
- Staff/visitors to wear face coverings in central areas in the building
- Social distancing where possible
- All meetings to be held virtually where possible
- Staff to minimise mixing outside of bubbles for lunch/break
- Staff requested to take regular LFD tests
- Assemblies to be held remotely

#### MANAGING STAFF ABSENCES

When a teacher is absent, and unable to teach their class remotely from home, we will, in the first instance, try to cover using either our own support staff, part time or employ supply teachers if available.

If staff absences reach a level where it will be difficult to operate as normal, we will do our utmost to keep the children in school rather than switch to remote learning immediately. This may involve regrouping the children if space allows until cover can be arranged.

As a last resort, if we do not have enough staff to operate safely, we will have no alternative but to ask some children to work remotely from home for a short period of time. Work will be provided, as it was in the last lockdown using Class Dojo for EYFS and KS1 and Google

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Classroom for KS2. Naturally we hope this will not be necessary and will only happen if all other possibilities have been exhausted.

### **SYMPTOMS AND TESTING**

Please err on the side of caution if your child becomes unwell. A headache, cold or flu-like symptoms may well be a precursor to a positive Covid diagnosis. In this event, please do not send your child to school.

From tomorrow In England, asymptomatic individuals who receive a positive LFD test results for COVID-19 will be required to self-isolate immediately but will not be required to take a confirmatory PCR test. **LFD tests should not be used if staff or pupils are experiencing symptoms**, particularly the main COVID-19 symptoms:

- high temperature
- persistent cough
- loss of sense of smell and taste

If anyone experiences these, they should continue to seek a PCR test through the normal routes. This is a temporary measure while COVID-19 rates remain high across the UK. Whilst levels of COVID-19 are high, most people with positive LFD results can be confident that they have COVID-19. Analysis by NHS Test and Trace shows LFD tests to have an estimated specificity of at least 99.97% when used in the community. Under this approach, anyone who is asymptomatic and receives a positive LFD test result should report their result on GOV.UK and must self-isolate immediately but will not need to take a follow-up PCR test.

After reporting a positive LFD test result, they will be contacted by NHS Test and Trace so that their contacts can be traced.

I can assure you that myself and all the staff are working hard to keep 'business as usual' here at Elloughton although as you can appreciate this is a rapidly changing situation. We will continue to keep you informed should the situation in school change significantly.

Over the past two years our whole community has worked together and been so understanding of our shared circumstances and needs. We have protected our pupils' education and together we will continue to achieve this. We will get through this, together.

Best wishes



Mrs Fulstow  
**Headteacher**