

Dear Parents/ Carers,

I hope you have had a safe and manageable Christmas break. We were so appreciative of your good wishes and thanks at the end of last term. Your encouragement, despite tricky times, has meant so much to staff and has given us the energy to keep going.

We at Glenwood would like to wish you all the very best for 2022 and we will go forward with hope.

We look forward to welcoming our young people back and look ahead to a Spring Term during which they can continue to do well and have a lovely time at school.

The whole nation and our school community are still dealing with the challenges that Covid is presenting us with.

You will know that most organisations are struggling with keeping staffing levels manageable and this continues to be a huge battle for us. Thank you for being so understanding when, on some occasions last term, we could not accommodate your young people safely at school. Not to have young people with us is always the very last resort we take and is not a decision we take lightly. The compassion and support you showed us in challenging circumstances have been incredible.

I think it would be over-optimistic to say, given the overwhelming levels of cases reported nationally each day, that we will be able to operate without glitches this term. We are working very hard to increase our staffing across the board but it is realistic to expect that there will be times when we cannot manage.

Please be assured that we will work hard to deploy staffing as creatively and wisely as possible, in the face of high absence levels, but that we will keep you informed of any difficulties as soon as the particular issues are made known to us.

In the mean-time the Department for Education has updated the guidance for schools. I am providing the links to the full guidance below but will go into more detail about the key changes too:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-for-full-opening-special-schools-and-other-specialist-settings>

Information on the changes to the self-isolation period for individuals who test positive for COVID-19

Since Wednesday 22 December, the 10 day self-isolation period for people who record a positive PCR test result for COVID-19 has been reduced to 7 days in most circumstances, unless you cannot test for any reason.

Individuals may now take LFD tests on day 6 and day 7 of their self-isolation period. Those who receive two negative test results are no longer required to complete 10 full days of self-isolation. The first test must be taken no earlier than day 6 of the self-isolation period and tests must be taken 24 hours apart. This also applies to children under 5, with LFD testing at parental or guardian discretion. If both these test results are negative, and you do not have a high temperature, you may end your self-isolation after the second negative test result and return to your education setting from day 8.

Anyone who is unable to take LFD tests will need to complete the full 10 day period of self-isolation. Further information is available in the [stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed COVID-19 infection](#).

Daily testing for close contacts of COVID-19

People who are fully vaccinated, or children and young people aged between 5 and 18 years and 6 months, identified as a close contact of someone with COVID-19, should take an LFD test every day for seven days and continue to attend their setting as normal, unless they have a positive test result or develop symptoms at any time.

Children under 5 are not being advised to take part in daily testing of close contacts. If a child under 5 is a contact of a confirmed case, they are not required to self-isolate and should not start daily testing. If they live in the same household as someone with COVID-19 they should limit their contact with anyone who is at higher risk of severe illness if infected with COVID-19, and arrange to take a PCR test as soon as possible. They can continue to attend an education or childcare setting while waiting for the PCR result. If the test is positive, they should follow the [stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed COVID-19 infection](#).

Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) advice on COVID-19 vaccination for at-risk 5 to 11 year olds, and booster doses for at-risk 12 to 15 year olds and all 16 to 17 year olds

On Wednesday 22 December, the government accepted advice from the [Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation \(JCVI\)](#) that a primary course of vaccination should be offered to children aged 5 to 11 years old who are in a clinical risk group, or who are a household contact of someone (of any age) who is immunosuppressed. The NHS is working through updated guidance and will set out how this is going to be operationalised shortly.

In response to the threat from the Omicron variant, it has been advised that a Pfizer booster vaccine should be offered to:

- children aged 12 to 15 years old who are in a clinical risk group or who are a household contact of immunosuppressed individuals, and those who are severely immunosuppressed and have had a third primary dose
- all young people aged 16 to 17 years old

The NHS will communicate how eligible children and young people can get their boosters shortly.

The DFE states “Vaccines are our best weapon against this virus and our booster programme has accelerated rapidly, with almost 30 million doses of boosters or third doses administered, and more than half of adults jabbed, securing vital protection. Vaccination reduces the likelihood of infection, helps break chains of transmission and is safe and effective – so we encourage all those eligible to consider taking up the offer.” Whilst we understand families will do their very best to take up the offer of vaccination for eligible young people we also appreciate that the procedure will present a challenge to those young people who do not tend to manage medical procedures well and without distress.

Updated guidance on the use of face coverings in education settings

From Sunday 2 January, it is recommended that face coverings are worn in classrooms where pupils in year 7 and above are educated. All of our young people qualify for exemption from wearing face-

coverings including secondary age. Glenwood staff wear face coverings in communal areas and where staff work across corridors however where the current guidance requests that face coverings should be worn within secondary age classrooms this must and will be met with professional discernment where young people may become distressed or not tolerate this as a safety measure. To mitigate the additional risk this entails we will enhance other control measures described in the guidance.

In line with government requirements we will publish our whole-school risk assessment and approaches on the school website.

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Helpline

The [Department for Education COVID-19 helpline](#) and the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) advice service are available to answer any questions you have about COVID-19 relating to education and childcare settings and children's social care.

The Department for Education COVID-19 helpline is open:

10am to 4pm – Sunday 2 January and Monday 3 January

From Tuesday 4 January:

8am to 6pm – Monday to Friday

10am to 6pm – Saturday and Sunday

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