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Dear Parents and Carers,

We would like to thank parents for their efforts as we work to keep COVID at bay.

We have received updated advice from the South West Directors of Public Health alerting all schools in BCP and Dorset Councils that these are areas of rapidly rising infection. **Given this, all schools have been asked to strengthen their COVID-prevention measures for at least two consecutive weeks after the half term break.** The situation will be reviewed again at that point.

There may be some variation in this between schools as COVID has impacted some places more than others. Schools will write directly to their parents soon. However, this letter sets out the minimum of what will be in place for all schools within CLP. We would greatly appreciate all parents' support with the following:

1. **Get a PCR test for everyone in your household if anyone has symptoms which might be COVID.** There are lots of coughs and colds around at the moment, but if you have any symptoms get tested to rule out COVID-19. You can book a test [here](#) or by calling 119. You may be eligible for support from [BCP](#) or [Dorset Council](#) if you or your child need to self-isolate (for example, eligible individuals have received a one-off taxable payment of £500).
2. **Keep your child at home if they have tested positive or have symptoms.** At the end of half term, if this applies to your child then don't send them to school. This will be an authorised absence.
3. **Children who have no symptoms but are waiting for a PCR test result are encouraged to take daily lateral flow tests.** These children can still come to school but a daily test will help spot any COVID infection before the PCR result comes back. It is fine to use these lateral flow tests with younger children (if they allow you to do so, of course – for some children, this may not be appropriate and that is fine and understood). These tests are free and you can [order them online](#) or collect from a local pharmacy
4. **Siblings of children who are positive are also encouraged to take daily lateral flow tests.** If one child in the household has tested positive, it is quite likely that the other children at home will also become infected. Although siblings should continue to come to school, they can take daily lateral flow tests in order to identify COVID infection early (again, that is if lateral flow testing is appropriate for your child).
5. **Test everyone in the household twice weekly with rapid lateral flow tests.** Don't use a lateral flow test if you develop any symptoms, you must book a PCR test.
6. **Use a face covering around school if areas become crowded.** For example, at collection and drop off times we would encourage parents to have a face mask to hand in case it gets busy.

As well as asking parents to support in these ways, schools will be doing the following:

A. **Taking opportunities to reduce the mixing of children where it is practical to do so.** This does not signify a return to 'bubbles' but schools will reduce mixing between pupils where they can.

B. **Avoiding large gatherings in school.** For this period of time, events such as assemblies and worship will not take place for large mixed groups.

C. **Reducing visitors into the school.** Schools certainly are not 'locking down' but it is likely that they will need to postpone events which involve large numbers of visitors at the same time (such as open days, parents' evenings and so on).

Through the above combined, our schools will contribute to the 'extra push' needed in BCP and Dorset to press COVID cases down. It will allow us to keep everyone safe and to keep educating our pupils. We will review this position following updated Public Health advice around two weeks after half term.

In the meantime, my thanks to all of our parents for their continued patience and support. On balance, we have had a successful half term and enjoyed a good level of 'normality'! These extra measures for two weeks initially will help keep us all on the right track.

Kind regards



Paul Howieson
CEO, Coastal Learning Partnership