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Dear Parents and Carers

Update about COVID measures in schools and Christmas arrangements

As you know, all schools in Dorset are now required to have tighter COVID measures in place because cases are high. **The South West Directors of Public Health have now asked schools to extend this period until the end of term.** This is because COVID cases are not yet falling and also to help contain the new variant, 'Omicron'.

This means that we must ask all parents to keep going with those measures that we have set out recently: they are copied again below for your convenience. Please especially note the point about face coverings as we see the re-introduction of this measure nationally: if you are in a situation around school where social distancing is difficult, such as during drop off and collection times, please use a face covering.

Schools are still planning their Christmas activities, amended to be COVID-secure. Christmas arrangements will vary between schools according to their specific circumstances. Headteachers are telling me that parents are being really supportive of schools' efforts around this and I am very grateful for that: schools are trying to find the balance between staying festive and staying safe!

With thanks, once again, for your patience and support

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Paul Howieson'.

Paul Howieson
CEO, Coastal Learning Partnership

Parents should keep going with these things:

1. **Get a PCR test for everyone in your household if anyone has symptoms which might be COVID.**
2. **Keep your child at home if they have tested positive or have symptoms.**
3. **Children who have no symptoms but are waiting for a PCR test result are encouraged to take daily lateral flow tests.** 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).
4. **Siblings of children who are positive are also encouraged to take daily lateral flow tests.**
5. **Test everyone in the household twice weekly with rapid lateral flow tests.**
6. **Use a face covering around school if areas become crowded.**

In their Christmas plans, schools will be trying to achieve these things:

- A. Reduce mixing of children where possible
- B. Minimise the size of any gathering and the number of visitors into school
- C. Use other measures to be COVID-secure (e.g. lateral flow tests, face coverings, outside spaces)