



Abbey School

an Academy within Nexus MAT

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Executive Headteacher: Mrs Luci Windle

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INSPIRE...BELIEVE...ACHIEVE

18/10/2021

Dear Families,

I hope this letter finds you all safe and well. I understand that the rules on Covid testing and isolating continue to be confusing. At the start of this academic year we made a decision to test children in school through lateral flow testing, where permission was given. This is to reduce pressure on you as families and to continue to keep everyone safe and prevent the upset some children have experienced whilst taking the tests at home. Testing in school regularly has meant that we have uncovered many asymptomatic cases (where someone doesn't have symptoms but has the virus and is infectious to others). Each of the cases are isolated from other people until they can return home where they are required to be taken for a PCR test. Ultimately, by using this approach we have been informed at our recent incident management meeting with Public Health Protection Team that our practice was exemplary as there wasn't a spread in school. The cases that we have had in school are strongly linked to 'community cases', basically, home or local area cases rather than caught within the school. The challenge this Half Term is that we are officially no longer conducting our own test, track and trace so we are unable to send the letters from Public Health about cases that we have sent previously. This is the rule for all schools across England which is why I thought it was better to write to you today.

Staff are wearing masks in school in busy communal areas to add another layer of protection and most staff are vaccinated, this has really helped reduce the risk in school. However, as seasonal illnesses return and staff have increased family commitments, we are finding staffing challenging. It may mean that your child's class team has been slightly different to usual as we backfill any absent staff.

Many of you with children over 12 years old will have received an invite to get your child vaccinated at school. I understand from news, social media and the amount of often abusive written material I have personally received, that the public have strong feelings towards the Covid vaccine, in particular giving it to healthy children. I absolutely support that it is everyone's choice about vaccinating their child but would like to offer my support to any family who is confused about the vaccine and have unanswered questions. I do not have a medical degree but I am a parent and have gone through exactly the same decision making as some of you are now so please do call if you would like to talk things over. Mostly, I hope we can continue in the true #teamabbey style, to being kind to each other as we come to terms with our own decisions on this matter. The school nurse is also available should you want to talk about vaccinating your child to a medical professional.

This academic year we are really focusing on reading. Your child should be bringing home a reading book that is at their own academic ability and another book that they have chosen from our library which is for you both to share for pleasure. We will also be sending home a copy of the school development plan for this year so that you are aware of what we will be focusing on as a school this year.

Can I finish this letter by thanking each of you for your continued support as we walk this journey together. The feedback that we have received recently through Twitter, annual reviews and family feedback has often lifted us as a group of staff and made what has been quite a difficult Half Term much more bearable. I hope during the Half Term holiday you are in a position to make some wonderful family memories together and enjoy spending time with your children. Please do take special care of each other this holiday.

Yours Sincerely,

Mrs L Windle
Executive Headteacher

