

## Southview School Covid Restrictions from February 2022

*(Risk assessment dated 31<sup>st</sup> January 2022 remains in place)*

The government has brought forward plans to remove the restrictions for asymptomatic individuals (or those with mild symptoms) to isolate for a minimum period of five days following a positive lateral flow test. This now comes into force a month earlier than anticipated, on the 24<sup>th</sup> February.

Our assessment is that this places a vulnerable group of children at undue risk. This is a view shared by the overwhelming majority of staff and all parents/carers who expressed a view.

The school will therefore place the following protocol in place with effect from the 24<sup>th</sup> February 2022. The risk assessment dated 31/01/22 will remain in place (subject to the isolation/mask wearing protocols detailed below).

- To continue to wear face coverings in communal areas of the school, this will now be recommended and encouraged, rather than required.
- To maintain the requirement to isolate for **five full days** for both staff and children/students before returning to school following a positive Covid test. The current rules require a negative test result on day five and day six (24 hours apart) before an individual can return to school; this will no longer be required. We will not require tests for the following seven days to avoid the potential cycle of returning to school and having to isolate the next time a test is taken. Research indicates that an individual is at their most contagious in the first few days of infection, and a five day isolation period would eliminate most of this risk.

The maintenance of these restrictions for a further period would allow the vaccine programme to 'catch up' with our most vulnerable cohort, currently those children in the primary age group, and to ensure the vast majority of children throughout the school have been vaccinated.

It is therefore the aspiration of the school, following an assessment of the situation at the time, to be fully removing all restrictions by the June half term 2022. We will effectively delay the removal of restrictions by approximately three months.