

WESTGARTH WEEKLY



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Tuesday 4th January 2022

Dear Families,



Happy New Year

On behalf of staff and governors, may I wish all families a very happy and healthy new year. We appreciate that, for many families, it has been a challenging festive season, and we are all hoping for a much improved situation in the coming weeks.

It has been lovely to see the children back in school together and to hear all of their news and laughter.

Staffing Capacity Update

I am sure you will be aware from the media that, like all public and private sectors where staff are unable to work from home, schools are struggling with staffing capacity as absences mount and, unfortunately, Westgarth is no exception.

We have started the term with three absent teachers and two absent teaching assistants. I am grateful to some of our part-time members of staff who have been able to temporarily increase their hours, but you will be aware that there is a national crisis for sourcing other qualified replacement staff. The government has suggested such measures as doubling up classes in order to keep schools open for face to face learning. We ask for your support and understanding as we try to keep our classes open to all children with what is likely to be a significantly depleted staffing capacity for much of this half term.

Due to such staffing shortages, at times we may also need to signpost you to resources such as the Oak National Academy for remote learning, when it is required for children isolating at home who are well enough to complete schoolwork. We may not always have the capacity to produce bespoke daily resources.



Updated National and Local COVID-19 Guidance

During the Christmas break, the 10 day self-isolation period for people who record a positive PCR test result for COVID-19 was reduced to 7 days. Children may now take LFD tests on day 6 and day 7 of their self-isolation period.

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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 of these test results are negative, and there is no high temperature, self-isolation after the second negative test result can stop and children can return to school from day 7, if the negative tests were taken early on the morning of day 6 and 7, or day 8 if taken later in the day.

When a positive COVID-19 case is identified in a child's household, our local Public Health Team is continuing to advise that the child takes a PCR test and does not attend school until a negative PCR test result is received. An LFD test should then be taken every day for 7 days. Children should only attend school if the LFD test is negative.

If in doubt, please ring the school office for advice and clarification.

Thank you, as always, for your support, co-operation and understanding during this challenging period.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs J Woodhead
Headteacher