



Sandford St. Martin's

PRIMARY SCHOOL

Thursday 10th December 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

We hope this letter finds you well.

We were informed on Tuesday afternoon (about 3pm) by the DfE that their guidance was to reconsider the December end of term arrangements at all schools nationally. We have copied the communication at the end of this letter so you can see the text.

The advice is to consider **closing on Thursday 17th December**. This is because school staff will remain responsible for contact tracing in the event of any positive cases in the school or community. They will be on call essentially until and including Christmas Eve in the case of a confirmed case and will have to contact all those identified in bubbles as 'close contacts'. Closing on 17th December (rather than Friday 18th December) will reduce this by a day, avoid a further risk of infection and offer more peace of mind to them and you.

This has now been fully discussed with the leadership team and voted on by full governors this evening.

The decision governors have taken is that we will close at usual times on Thursday 17th December and WILL NOT BE OPEN on Friday 18th December to children or staff. Staff will complete online training from home and this 'teaching day' will be made up on Thursday April 1st when the school was due to be closed for INSET (absences that day involving evidence of a holiday booked before this decision will be recorded as an 'authorised absence'). We can confirm that school will still be closed to children on Monday 4th January as an INSET day. The return date for children remains Tuesday 5th January 2021.

We do understand that this **is late notice** but we only found out 48 hours ago and felt the need to discuss the relevance of this information/advice with the full governing body. The decision taken (by majority vote) has come close to being within 48 hours of this new information being released from the DfE.

Whilst government direction still means that some staff may need to work in the Christmas break, they are happy to provide this offer to support your child's health and that of your family. If you have any questions, please do contact the school. If they have any positive cases that concern your child, they will certainly contact you.

Headteacher : Mr Paul Beveridge
Sandford, Nr. Wareham, Dorset, BH20 7BN
Tel: 01929 552949, **E-mail:** office@sandfordprimary.dorset.sch.uk
School mobile: 07395 902324



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There is a system for reporting to school if your child tests positive for COVID between Sat 18th and Wed 23rd December and the details of this are included here (and will be repeated in newsletters, facebook, Class Dojo and the school website)

Until then, please report any positive test results or symptoms of COVID using the normal procedure of phoning the school office. May we also remind you that children should isolate if a household member is waiting for a test result, until confirmed negative.

If your child tests positive for COVID 19 between Fri 18th Dec and Wed 23rd Dec please let us know between 9am and 12 noon by text or email. Someone from the school team will then phone and cascade the relevant advice to others in the bubble as necessary.

The school mobile **07395 902324**

Dedicated email address covidsupport@sandfordprimary.dorset.sch.uk

Either can be used to notify us if you have a positive case in your household. Please do not use other school email addresses. Emails and texts will be checked between 9am and 12 noon each day of the holidays, including Sat 19th and Sun 20th December, with contact tracing being carried out by us as necessary.

From December 24th (Christmas Eve) the following applies:

*DfE/government advice stipulates: "Where pupils are required to self-isolate due to contact with a positive case **after** the first 6 days following the end of term, schools do not need to be informed about their absence until the first day of the new term."*

Again, apologies for any disruption to your work, commitments or childcare that this unavoidably late decision cause. We thank you for your understanding and wish you a safe and happy Christmas.

Yours sincerely,

The Sandford St Martin's governing body.

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End of term – advice for schools

To ensure that staff get the time off they need and deserve, schools may wish to use an INSET day, making Friday 18 December a non-teaching day and using the day for staff training, which could be delivered online. Where term would normally finish in the week commencing 21 December, schools may wish to consider adjusting term dates to make Friday 18 December the last day of term (which could be an INSET day), and bringing forward the start of term in January by the same number of days.

In all circumstances, teaching time must be made up at another point in the academic year. You should not limit attendance at school before Friday 18 December. It remains vital for all children to be in school up to the last day of teaching.

We recognise this communication has arrived with schools late in the term but would ask schools to be as helpful to parents as they can by sharing any changes to end of term arrangements as soon as possible, particularly where schools choose to make Friday 18 December a non-teaching day. Your support with this is appreciated.

We recommend all schools ensure staff, parents and carers are aware of the following information and relevant arrangements regarding positive cases in the holidays:

- Where a **pupil or staff member** tests positive for coronavirus (COVID-19), having developed symptoms more than 48 hours since being in school, **the school should NOT** be contacted. Parents and carers should follow contact tracing instructions provided by NHS Test and Trace.
- For the first 6 days after teaching ends (18th-23rd Dec), if a pupil or staff member tests positive for coronavirus (COVID-19), having developed symptoms within 48 hours of being in school, the school is asked to assist in identifying close contacts and advising self-isolation, as the individual *may have been* infectious whilst in school.
- School staff are not asked to remain on-call or conduct any contact tracing more than 6 days after the final day of teaching. Where a schools last teaching day is on Thursday 17 December, there should be no pupil contact tracing asks beyond Wednesday 23 December. *(So if school was to open on 18th December to pupils and staff, school staff maybe required to work on Christmas Eve, contacting families)*



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P R I M A R Y S C H O O L

- For the first 6 days after the end of term, schools are **not** asked to be on-call **at all times**. Staff responsible for contact tracing may designate a limited period in the day to receive notification of positive cases and advise close contacts to self-isolate (this can be done by **text** or **email**).

If your child tests positive for COVID 19 between Fri 18th Dec and Wed 23rd Dec please let us know between 9am and 12 noon by text or email. Someone from the school team will then phone and cascade the relevant advice to others in the bubble as necessary.

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Either can be used to notify us if you have a positive case in your household. Please do not use other school email addresses. Emails and texts will be checked between 9am and 12 noon each day of the holidays, including Sat 19th and Sun 20th December, with contact tracing being carried out by us as necessary.

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