16 September 2021

Dear Parent

**COVID-19 TRACK AND TRACE**

Now that PHA are responsible for ‘Track and Trace’ within schools I wanted to write and provide an update on what this new system will look like and how the new guidance will impact upon all of us.

Previously a positive case of Covid-19 resulted in all ‘close contacts’ having to be collected from school. This effectively meant that all pupils in that class or bubble would have to go home from school and not return until a negative PCR test result had been confirmed. Naturally this was disruptive to our pupils and staff, it did however help keep the spread of Covid-19 at a lower rate.

The new system will not impact upon school life this way and all pupils and staff will remain in school until they are contacted by PHA and have been identified as a ‘close contact’. Schools will no longer be informed by PHA if there is a positive case among our pupils and **we are relying on you to let us know if your child has tested positive.**

Contact tracing from PHA have indicated that under the new guidance it is highly likely, that in a majority of cases within primary school, there will be NO close contacts identified. This is a little concerning given the fact that in September four pupils, who all sit relatively close to each other, have ALL tested positive following one positive case within that class.

We are therefore asking for your help and assistance in managing our response to this current situation. While I am in full support of the aim of keeping pupils in school I would ask you to continue to exercise caution. When there is a positive case confirmed within your child’s class I will send home a ‘Warn and Inform’ letter provided by PHA, this will let you know that there is a positive case.

As long as your child isn’t contacted by PHA (which is unlikely and, in any case, will take a number of days before contact is made) we are asking that you use your judgement. If your child is not showing any signs or symptoms please send them to school as normal, however if they are unwell in any way I would request that you keep them off school until they are tested. This will help reduce any spread and will keep all our pupils and staff safe.

While this is a significant change it will enable us to operate more normally which is to be welcomed. I am extremely thankful to have supportive and understanding parents during this which makes managing this whole situation much easier. As always, please contact me if you have any questions or if there is anything you are concerned about.

Yours sincerely

K Sterritt (Mr)

Principal