



# VERNON PRIMARY SCHOOL

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Dear Parents and Carers,

Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> January 2022

A warm welcome back after the Christmas holidays. I am looking forward to seeing the children for what promises to be an exciting term of learning.

We are fully intending to open the school as normal tomorrow. However, as you will no doubt have seen in the recent media, there are widespread staff shortages in the education sector due to Coronavirus. We are doing absolutely everything we possibly can to ensure that classes remain open at Vernon, despite a large number of staff absences this week and potentially going forward. Our current staff absences include my Deputy Headteacher and SENDCo, Sarah Kiely, who has tested positive for Covid-19. Please direct all SEND-related queries through myself for this week. Our site manager, Paul Gurney, is also absent with Covid; I would like to thank our maintenance officer, Chris Christoforou, for stepping in to ensure the site remains safe. Any site issues or queries, please direct these through Louise Currall, Business Manager. We also have a number of teachers, teaching assistants and kitchen staff who are absent with Covid.

We have part-time staff who are working additional days to help with the situation. There will be classes throughout the school that may be taught by some of our experienced, higher level teaching assistants, some of whom are training to be teachers in the future. We are extremely lucky that we have a strong team who know the school, have a rapport with the children and are familiar with policies, planning and procedures. Although the Government has suggested merging multiple classes to cope with staff shortages, I am trying to avoid this scenario in order to reduce transmission of the virus and to maintain a high standard of education.

We are hoping to resume our teacher-led extra-curricular clubs as normal the week beginning 17<sup>th</sup> January. This will depend, however, on staff absences and any Cheshire East restrictions at the time. Clubs led by external providers will commence next week and the office will be in touch about these.

We will be continuing to be vigilant in school, with increased handwashing, mask-wearing in communal areas for all adults, ventilation and enhanced cleaning. At the current time, we have not been advised to revert to bubbles and staggered timings. Cheshire East Public Health update me regularly on any changes to advice or guidelines and as always, I will continue to communicate these to you.

Cheshire East Public Health have notified me that the following rules for isolation now apply: The 10-day self-isolation period for those who record a positive PCR test result for Covid-19 has been reduced to seven days. Children may now take rapid lateral flow tests on day six and day seven of their self-isolation period. **If those test results are negative, they can return to school on Day 8, as long as they are well and symptom-free.** The following guidance is still in place; Children who are **household contacts of positive cases are advised not to attend the setting for 5 days** from the first symptom or positive case. They can return following a negative PCR.

I would like to thank you for your patience and understanding. Please bear with us through this difficult time. We are doing everything we can to keep Vernon as safe as possible whilst minimising disruption to education and maintaining a sense of enjoyment and love of learning.



*Nobody else is quite like me'*

