

Larchwood Gardens
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10th December 2020

Important Information

Dear Parent / Carer

Friday 18th December

You may be aware that the DfE have said that schools that were due to break up on 18th December are now able to close a day earlier for children.

I have previously said that we will be open until the 18th December. However, due to a number of factors including the rising number of COVID-19 cases in Brentwood, the Track and Trace implications (see below) and the risk to all children and families we have taken the decision to make Friday 18th December a remote education day and children will not be expected in school.

Instead, all children will be given work to do on Thursday that they can take home with them and do on Friday. This will probably have a Christmas theme and will be similar to what they would have done in school on the last day of term. Completed work can then be sent to teachers via the children's Microsoft Teams accounts, Tapestry for Reception children or shared via Twitter. Teachers will be in school and will be working so can interact via Teams with the class when needed.

Monday 4th January

As there will be increased household mixing over the festive period it is possible that there will be cases within the school community, despite everyone continuing to take precautions. In order to respond to any information that has come in over the holiday period, undertake planning and make appropriate arrangements, the Local Authority are supporting schools to move to a remote education day on Monday 4th January. Teachers will be setting work for this day via Tapestry for Reception children and Microsoft Teams which we expect them to be doing in preparation for children being back on Tuesday 5th January.

If your child is not going to be able to return to school on Tuesday 5th January due to self-isolation, please contact the school office on Monday 4th January so we can plan home learning for them.

Reporting COVID-19 cases after the end of term and contact tracing

As you know schools have played a vital role in reducing the spread of COVID-19 over the last 9 months. One way in which they have done this is by undertaking contact tracing on behalf of the Essex Contact Tracing team. They identify any individuals who have been in close contact at school with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, during the time that is considered the contagious period. This is from 2 days before the person's symptoms are displayed. Those individuals are then required to self-isolate for 14 days because they are at risk of having contracted COVID-19 and being contagious themselves.

This contact tracing will not be taking place in the usual way during the Christmas break when schools are closed and there is less chance of school-based contacts existing.

Please follow the guidance below if your child begins to show symptoms of COVID-19 during the Christmas break.



If your child develops symptoms of COVID-19 within 48 hours of being in school

You must seek a test for your child and the household must isolate at home until the test result is returned. You should let your school know that this has occurred.

The quickest way to obtain a test is to book a test at your local testing centre via <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>. Please do not use postal tests unless absolutely necessary as these take longer.

Please also inform the school so we know if we may have to contact trace in a positive case.

If the test result is positive for COVID-19, you must inform your school, who will identify if there are any other individuals within the school community who are impacted by this.

If the test result is negative, you should inform the school and you do not need to take any further action. You should contact the school on 01277 372450 on Friday 18th December between 8:00am and 4:00pm. From Saturday 19th December until Wednesday 23rd January you can contact the school via the school email address office@larchwood.essex.sch.uk. This will be checked at set times during the day from 9am until 7pm. You must provide the following: name, date of symptoms starting, details of testing and the result when it comes through.

We will then contact any families by text and email if your child is a close contact of anyone who has tested positive. If you are contacted by the school because your child is identified as a close contact of someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, they must self-isolate for 14 days from that contact.

If your child develops symptoms of COVID-19 more than 48 hours after their last day in school

You must seek a test for your child and the household must isolate at home until the test result is returned. If the test result is positive for COVID-19, having developed symptoms more than 48 hours since being in school, (Sunday 20th December onwards) you must contact NHS Test and Trace and follow the advice given by them: www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-COVID-19-19/testing-and-tracing/. You should contact the school if your child will be absent, in time for the first day of the new term on Tuesday 5th January.

If your child has no symptoms of COVID-19 but tests positive within 48 hours of being in school

It is important to follow the guidance around accessing a test only when the individual is showing signs of COVID-19. However, if your child is asymptomatic and returns a positive test result within 48 hours of last being in school, please let the school know straight away as above.

I would encourage you to adhere to social distancing and all COVID-19 social mixing guidance for the remainder of term to reduce the risk of transmission of the virus as the last thing we want is anyone being unwell or required to self-isolate over the holiday period.

I appreciate that these changes, which are happening across the Academy Trust, have come at late notice. The situation is continually changing and by taking these measures we hope it keeps our children and families safe. Thank you for your co-operation and ongoing support.



Mr S Bowsher
Headteacher

