



Headteacher: Mr D. Williams
Burton Wood • Weobley
Hereford • HR4 8ST

Tel: 01544 318159 • Fax: 01544 312900
admin@weobleyhigh.hereford.sch.uk

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Dear parent / carer,

As we approach the end of term I just wanted to write to update you with the latest COVID guidance, particularly in the light of the end of testing and changes to self-isolation advice. As you are no doubt aware, this has been an incredibly challenging term. Although pupil attendance has improved somewhat, staff absence has been very high with up to a quarter of our teachers off on some days as well as multiple support staff. This has inevitably been disruptive and has created a great deal of cover; consequently pupils have regularly been taught by somebody other than their usual teacher. We have managed to avoid full or partial closure however this has only been possible by occasionally doubling or even trebling groups, increasing our budget for supply staff ten-fold (when we can source them!) and asking teachers to regularly cover other teachers' lessons.

That said, the pupils have been amazing and the staff have worked incredibly hard to keep things as 'normal' as possible. Very recently, things have improved and hopefully this will continue. I am extremely grateful for the team we have working here; never more so than at this time. I can assure you that the Easter break will be very welcome!

Today I received further guidance from the Department for Education which I can now share with you. Most of the other COVID-19 guidance for education will be withdrawn from 1st April.

- **Free COVID tests will now only be available for specific groups including eligible patients and NHS staff. Schools are no longer able to order test kits and have been instructed to return any surplus stock.**
- **Adults with the symptoms of a respiratory infection, and who have a high temperature or feel unwell, should try to stay at home and avoid contact with other people until they feel well enough to resume normal activities and they no longer have a temperature.**
- **Children who are unwell and have a high temperature should stay at home and avoid contact with other people. They can return to school when they no longer have a high temperature, and they are well enough to attend.**
- **Adults with a positive COVID-19 test result (assuming through purchase or as an eligible patient) should try to stay at home and avoid contact with other people for 5 days, which is when they are most infectious. For children, the advice is 3 days.**

The guidance goes on to explain that this is now possible as the population now has much stronger protection against COVID-19 than at any other point in the pandemic. This means we can begin to manage the virus like other respiratory infections.

Once again I have simply copied the relevant sections of the guidance for your convenience; hopefully this will be of some help. Thank you, as always, for your ongoing support.

Have a fantastic Easter!

Yours sincerely,

Dean Williams