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Dear Parents and Carers

We are coming once again to the end of another year that has seen turmoil for all our children and young people. We know that many of them and indeed you their parents and carers, have been impacted one way or another throughout the COVID pandemic.

We are pleased that our attendance records show that the majority of our children and young people are attending school. We know it has not been an easy time especially with not only COVID 19 but many other illness and viruses spreading.

We know that the safest place for our children and young people is in school so that they can continue to learn and catch up on the lessons they have missed. Our local schools are doing an amazing job supporting their pupils to catch up and ensuring that they can learn from home when it is required.

All our schools are striving to provide the very best opportunities for the pupils in their care. We would ask that you remember that all schools are unique communities working in different ways and that procedures may be different due to local circumstances. We would like to remind you that it is important that your child attends school up to the last day of term. We appreciate your concerns about the Christmas break and the implications if your child is positive.

The government guidelines are very clear on the expectation that children and young people attend school every day, right to the end of term and the guidance for parents and carers on attendance can be found on the link below.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/what-parents-and-carers-need-to-know-about-early-years-providers-schools-and-colleges-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak/step-4-update-what-parents-and-carers-need-to-know-about-early-years-providers-schools-and-colleges>

As you will be aware, we are seeing high rates of COVID-19 infection and an increasing number of these are related to the Omicron variant. The public health team at Sefton Council continues to work closely with educational settings when there are COVID cases within the setting. We would like to thank-you for your continued support and ask you to continue to follow any recommended public health measures, as directed by your school, to help keep everyone safe and well.

We also ask that you continue to look out for COVID -19 symptoms, and self-isolate and access COVID-19 testing when symptomatic. As well as supporting good hand and respiratory hygiene (Catch-it, Bin-it, Kill-it regular lateral flow testing of secondary aged pupils and household members should continue and anyone who tests positive on a lateral flow test should seek a confirmatory PCR test and self-isolate. Please see the national guidance here for further information about symptoms, testing and self-isolation.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-list-of-guidance>

Additionally, Daily Testing of Contacts of Covid (DTCC) will be offered to pupils aged over 5 who are a contact of a case. Please note that there are some new types of lateral flow kit being supplied, so please check the instructions carefully as they may differ from previous tests used.

We would also like to thank you once again for the tremendous support in ensuring your child attends which is greatly appreciated by both Sefton Council and the schools.

We hope that you have a wonderful Christmas with your families and that 2022 is a more stable year for all.

Regards

Lisa Lyons
Interim Director of Children's services and Education

Tricia Davies
Head of Education Excellence

