

Dear Parents/Carers

## COVID-19 UPDATE

I would like to express my thanks for the messages of support/recognition of school staff going above and beyond. Your kind words and gifts have been appreciated during what has been a very busy half term. Welcoming children back in September post Covid restrictions was a wonderful sight, but inevitably both families and schools have had to manage ongoing Covid infection. For this reason, it is important that you are kept informed of Covid measures that Arbour Vale have in place and continue to regularly review.

Infection levels in schools have noticeably increased over the last two weeks. This situation is unlikely to improve with the onset of common winter infections. Nobody wants to see further 'lockdown' restrictions as previously experienced and it is essential that disruption to a child's education is minimised. Unfortunately, this week I have had to temporarily close 2 classrooms for 'operational' reasons, as the safety and well-being of children and staff is of paramount importance. Both classes had a high level of Covid infection and to contain the potential spread of infection, it was necessary to close. All pupils will have access to the 'Virtual Learning Environment' or receive learning resource packs appropriate to the pupil's learning needs.

In the meantime, I have re-instated infection barriers in school. Regrettably, I have had to postpone meetings, assemblies and training and I apologise for any inconvenience caused by this necessary action. Visitors into the school this side of half term are limited to emergencies only – something that greatly saddens me – as it has been so long since we were able to welcome you on mass to whole school events. This action will hopefully be short term and by acting now we can avoid more serious disruption later on.

Your continued help in monitoring your child(ren)'s health for Covid symptoms is important. Covid testing for young people with special needs is not an easy task and will not be undertaken in school, so please do not send a child to school if they are showing Covid related symptoms.

On a more positive note, school staff have been prioritised for the Covid booster vaccination and although this does not provide total immunity, it reportedly minimises the risk of serious infection with additional complications.

I am immensely proud of the Arbour Vale staff team, who have and continue to be in the front line of Covid. Knowing that we have your continued support is very much appreciated, 'Thank you'.

**NEIL SYKES**  
Principal