



SJF OMICRON VARIANT RESPONSE PLAN

DECEMBER 2021

INTRODUCTION & UPDATES

Dear Parents and Carers,

The purpose of this document is to set our response to the emerging threat posed by the new Omicron variant in the light of the Prime Minister's announcement on Saturday 27th November 2021.

The situation is as serious potentially as it is fast moving and so it is important that we remain alert and review our COVID plan as part of our response. It is believed that the new Omicron variant is more transmissible and investigations around the risk it poses to all, including the very young and those who have already received the COVID vaccine are ongoing.

We know that contacts of those infected with the Omicron variant must self-isolate for ten days, so it is right that we all take it seriously. Our priority must be to limit the risk of transmission as much as we can in order to protect our children, families and school staff.

Inevitably this means that some of our plans and routines will have to change. Our priority is to keep everyone safe, especially with Christmas coming up.

Our sincere hope is that we will be able to return to our SJM Reconnection Plan (September 2021) in time for our return to school on Monday 10th January 2022, if the guidance allows.

In the meantime, it is important that we continue to work together, and stick to the plan, just as we have at every stage throughout the pandemic so far. With your support and cooperation, we will hopefully be able to limit the transmission of the Omicron COVID variant (and all other variants) so that we will be able to stay open and ensure that our children continue receiving an education in school every day.

In sharing this revised plan it is important to remember that the situation is an evolving one. We will of course continue to adhere to the instructions and guidance issued by the government, Sheffield City Council and our local Public Health team. As the situation develops so our plan might need to change in order to keep up with the developments.

We all want school to operate as normally as possible, so if, at any point, it is safe to relax measures, then of course we will. However, our priority must be to limit the risk of transmission of COVID in all its various forms on school property to do as much as we can to protect everyone's health, safety and wellbeing.

Yours sincerely,



F Barratt
Headteacher



CURRENT GUIDANCE

On Saturday 27th November 2021, the Prime Minister sought to address concerns around the emerging Omicron COVID variant. He stated, "First, we need to slow down the seeding of this variant in our country. We need to buy time for our scientists to understand exactly what we are dealing with." The full text of the Prime Minister's press statement can be found by clicking [here](#).

Earlier today the government issued operational guidance for school settings. It states:

"The government continues to manage the risk of serious illness from the spread of the virus. The Prime Minister announced on 27 November the temporary introduction of new measures as a result of the Omicron variant. These measures are precautionary, while the variant is tracked and assessed.

As a result, we are reflecting these measures in this guidance for schools, most directly a temporary recommendation on the wearing of face coverings in schools and changes to isolation requirements for confirmed and suspected cases of the Omicron variant and their contacts. This advice remains subject to change as the situation develops.

COVID-19 continues to be a virus that we learn to live with and the imperative to reduce the disruption to children and young people's education remains. Our priority is for you to deliver face-to-face, high-quality education to all pupils. The evidence is clear that being out of education causes significant harm to educational attainment, life chances, mental and physical health."

Currently there is no specific requirement in the guidance for schools to operate in bubbles, however the guidance also states that I also have a duty to "...put in place proportionate control measures". The current guidance states that contacts of anyone suspected of contracting the Omicron COVID variant must self-isolate for ten days, even if they have received the vaccine.

Our priority would therefore be to limit the impact should any cases emerge in our wider community or in school. I have therefore decided to again limit contact between class groups until the end of term, whilst evidence around the incidence, transmissibility and impact of the new Omicron variant is being gathered by the authorities.

Sajid Javid, the Secretary of State for Health and Social Security, informed parliament today that "Scientists are working at speed at home and abroad in order to determine whether this variant is more dangerous... ...if it emerges that this variant is no more dangerous than the Delta variant then we won't keep measures in place for a day longer than necessary."



This is will be our approach. As soon as the evidence and the guidance enable us to relax our measures safely, we absolutely will do so. The important thing is that we all remain calm and work together to support the sensible measures being introduced as part of this plan. Hopefully these steps will safeguard all in our community and in the process limit the chance that anyone's Christmas will be spoiled.

Our priority therefore remains to:

- ✓ meet the expectations of government and public health authorities
- ✓ ensure that the safety of everyone remains paramount in all our decisions and actions
- ✓ ensure that the wellbeing and mental health of all our pupils remains a priority throughout this pandemic and beyond
- ✓ continue to provide a high quality and well-balanced curriculum to support our pupils and enable them to keep on track
- ✓ ensure that all vulnerable children and families are looked after

KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE

All schools must comply with health and safety law, which requires us to assess risks fully (based on the best advice and guidance available) and then to put in place proportionate control measures. In order to be a COVID-secure school our control measures include:

- ✓ a requirement that people who are ill stay at home and those displaying COVID symptoms have a PCR test
- ✓ robust hand and respiratory hygiene
- ✓ enhanced cleaning arrangements
- ✓ active engagement with NHS Test and Trace
- ✓ active engagement with the local authority and local public health services
- ✓ formal consideration of how to limit unnecessary contacts and maximise social distancing where appropriate between those in school, and minimise potential for contamination so far as is reasonably practicable

Actions under the headings of '**Prevention**' and '**Response to Infection**' are summarised:

Prevention:

- minimise contact with individuals who are unwell
- clean hands thoroughly and more often than usual
- ensure good respiratory hygiene - 'catch it, bin it, kill it'
- enhanced cleaning of school and resources
- minimised contact between individuals with social distancing wherever possible
- the wearing of appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) when necessary





Respond to infection:

- engage with the NHS Test and Trace process
- liaise with Sheffield public health services
- manage confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) amongst members of the school community
- contain any outbreak by following local health protection team advice

BUBBLES & STAFFING

We will operate seven class bubbles, which will be kept separate in school. Staff members will be allocated to specific bubbles. For those members of staff who need to work across bubbles (because of their roles), additional precautions, including social distancing, good ventilation and the wearing of PPE, are in place to protect everyone.

FS2	Year 1	Year 2	Head & Administration
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mrs Darken • Mrs Morris • Mrs Prentice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mrs Golland • Mrs Hadfield • Mrs Sambrook 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mrs Broadhead • Miss D'Roza • Mr Johnson 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr Barratt • Mrs Ramdsen • Mrs Birch
Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Miss Brownbill • Mrs Steenson 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr Broadhead • Miss Birch • Mr Smith 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mrs Barrett • Mrs Holloway • Mrs Raynes • Mr Smith 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr MacInnes • Mrs Holloway • Mrs Walton

Our visiting teachers for French and Music as well as supply teachers and SJF staff covering staff absence can work with children in different bubbles with PPE and social distancing. However, the usual practice at SJF will be that contact between children in different bubbles will be kept to a minimum for the time being.

Break Times

In school the children will remain with just their classmates, teacher(s) and support staff. At break-times staff will supervise them so that they are able mix safely with children in their own class bubble.

No Mixing

Pupils in one class will not have close contact with children in other bubbles whilst in school, even those living in the same household. This will be the case both during the school day and at our JPAC-run before and after school clubs.



Though regulations allow for children from different classes/bubbles to mix within a wrap-around care provision in schools we have decided to maximise the integrity of bubbles in school by keeping them separate.

ATTENDANCE

Attendance is mandatory. Children in all year groups, are expected to attend school all day, every day if they are well.

The government position is this:

- parents have a duty to ensure that their children attend school regularly at the school where their children are registered as a pupil at school and they are of compulsory school age;
- Schools have the responsibility to record attendance and follow up all absences;
- Schools must take appropriate steps where attendance is an issue, including reporting families and using the available sanctions, including fixed penalty notices, in line with the local authority's Codes of Conduct



HM Government

If you are feeling anxious please contact us so that we can listen to your concerns and hopefully answer your questions and provide the reassurance that you seek.

BEFORE LEAVING HOME IN THE MORNING

Please check for any of the following symptoms:

- ✓ a high temperature
- ✓ a new, continuous cough
- ✓ a loss of, or change to the sense of smell or taste

If any of these symptoms are evident, **do not** send your children to school. It is possible that these are symptoms of the COVID-19 virus.

Please call us **0114 2485009** or email enquiries@st-johnfisher.org so that we can advise.

Please note that you should also contact us if anyone else in your household is displaying symptoms and your children appear to be well because children can be infectious without displaying symptoms. Government advice must be followed, it can be [found here](#).



ROUTINES

Though the risk to children and staff *in* school is low because of all the measures that are in place, the risk is reported to be much higher when adults gather on to the school grounds and mix with one another at the beginning and end of the school day.

To keep limit the risk of transmission at these times we will again need to make sure that:

- ✓ only **ONE** adult enters school to drop off and pick up children
- ✓ staggered start and finish times to keep numbers on the school premises low
- ✓ everyone sticks to the stated entry and 'clear by' times
- ✓ adults maintain social distancing whilst lining up and waiting to enter school grounds
- ✓ adults maintain social distancing at all times whilst on school premises
- ✓ adults keep their children next to them when waiting on the playground
- ✓ adults wear face coverings whilst on the school grounds
- ✓ adults maintain social distancing as they clear the school grounds promptly
- ✓ adults do not delay class teachers by trying to speak to them at the start/end of the day
- ✓ adults do not congregate with others either on the school grounds or just outside school

New Staggered Start & Finish Times

	Entry Time	Start Time	Entry from	Finish Time
FS2	8.40am	8.45am	3.15pm	3.20pm
Y1	8.40am	8.45am	3.15pm	3.20pm
Y2	8.40am	8.45am	3.15pm	3.20pm
Y3	8.50am	8.55am	3.25pm	3.30pm
Y4	8.50am	8.55am	3.25pm	3.30pm
Y5	8.50am	8.55am	3.25pm	3.30pm
Y6	8.50am	8.55am	3.25pm	3.30pm

Parking Safely

Please help us keep all our children and families safe at the beginning and end of the school day (and our neighbours happy) by remembering to park safely, considerately and legally.

Do **NOT** park on the zigzag lines, double yellow lines, pavements and grass verges. Thank you.

To avoid congestion (caused by parked cars) we encourage everyone to either walk from home or to park safely, legally and slightly away from school and to walk in with their children ('park and stride'). No one will be allowed to park in the church car park as it remains part of our one-way system in and out of school and we want to avoid accidents.



Children continue to be encouraged to bring a scooter or bicycle to school. This can be taken home straightaway by the adult accompanying the child or it can be left in our shelter *at the owners' own risk*. If left in the shelter it is important that children only handle their own bicycle or scooter.

Start of the Day

- ✓ entry to school will again be via the parish car park
- ✓ please note your entry time (see previous page)
- ✓ on arrival please line up outside school with your child(ren) ensuring that you are socially distanced from others in the line (there are 2m markings on the school fence)
- ✓ please follow the arrows and maintain social distancing as you enter and leave school, keeping your children with you and **not** letting them mix with other family groups
- ✓ adults with children in both the younger and older classes can send older siblings to class

Please do not enter the school grounds before it is your designated time as we are trying to limit numbers on site in order keep everyone safe. Also, please do not congregate on the pavement outside school, especially as other children and family groups might well be lining up. A reminder that our entry and start times in the morning are:

	Entry	Start		Entry	Start
FS2	8.40am	8.45am	Y3	8.50am	8.55am
Y1	8.40am	8.45am	Y4	8.50am	8.55am
Y2	8.40am	8.45am	Y5	8.50am	8.55am
			Y6	8.50am	8.55am



Start of the Day

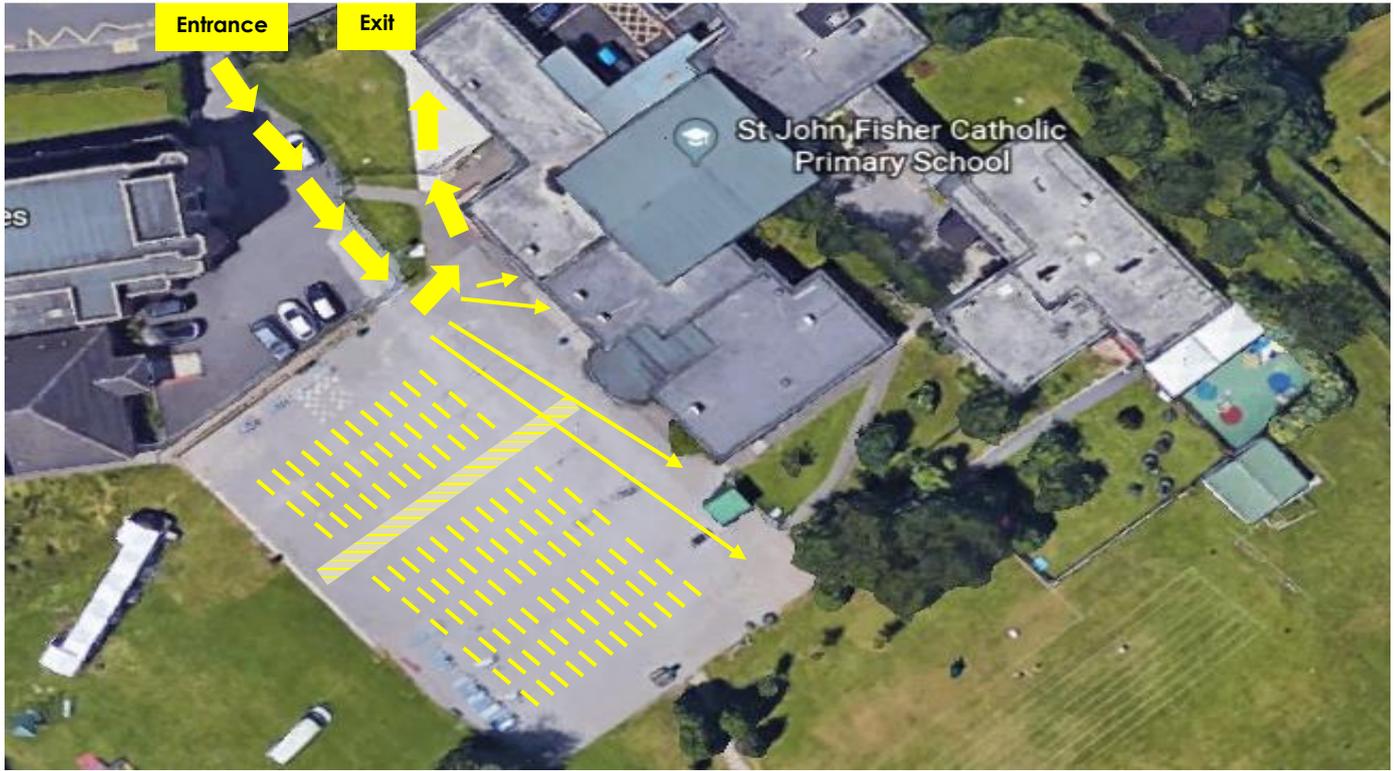
Parents and carers will be encouraged to leave their children at the top gate.

They can choose to escort their children down to the second gate where Mrs Barrett will be, but they will not be permitted to go any further.

There will be no lining up and staff on the playground will help direct the children to their classrooms.

Parents/carers of our FS2 children can walk over the playground to where a member of our FS2 will be waiting to welcome the children and guide them up to class safely.

Our One Way System at the Start of the Day



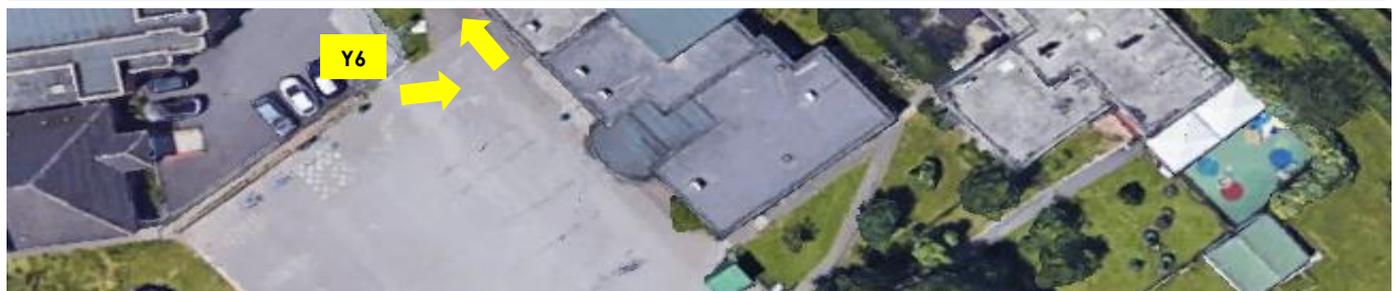
FS2 Years 1 and 2 parents/carers (3.20pm)



Years 3, 4 and 5 parents/carers (3.30pm)



Year 6 (3.30pm) line up in the parish car park and then exit via the one-way system



End of the Day

- ✓ entry to school will be via the parish car park
- ✓ please note the time school finishes for your child(ren)
- ✓ on arrival, please line up outside school ensuring that you all maintain socially distanced from others in the line (there are 2m markings on the school fence)
- ✓ only **one** adult to enter the playground in order to collect
- ✓ adults collecting should follow the arrows and one way system to the appropriate line and line up on a marker to maintain social distancing from others in the queue
- ✓ children will be brought out to meet their 'collectors' at the designated times
- ✓ once you have your child(ren), please leave the line immediately and follow the arrows of our one-way system to the exit, maintaining social distancing
- ✓ if you have to wait for a child in another bubble, please move to that child's line and wait (they cannot be collected earlier at the end of the day)
- ✓ if you are meeting your older child outside school please wait across or down the road

Speaking to Staff

A reminder that non-urgent messages should be emailed directly to the class teachers. Here is a reminder of the class email addresses. Teachers will answer these within 24 hours however they will not respond after 5.00pm, at weekends or during holidays/Bank Holidays.

- FS2 FS@st-johnfisher.org
- Y1 Year1@st-johnfisher.org
- Y2 Year2@st-johnfisher.org
- Y3 Year3@st-johnfisher.org
- Y4 Year4@st-johnfisher.org
- Y5 Year5@st-johnfisher.org
- Y6 Year6@st-johnfisher.org

For urgent enquiries requiring a rapid response please either call school (**0114 2485009**) or email us via our main school email address (enquiries@st-johnfisher.org). You can also speak to a member of staff on duty, but please do not wait in the foyer to speak to administrative staff as it is a relatively confined area and staff will be busy supervising the one-way system at the beginning and end of the school day. It will be permissible to drop items off in the post box in the foyer and then leave immediately.

Activity Clubs

For the time being we will continue to operate after-school clubs, in line with guidance.

Educational Visits

Educational visits will go ahead, in line with guidance. This includes the forthcoming pantomime. We have had discussions with the theatre and our risk assessment for the visit will take account of the latest guidance.





Assemblies & Liturgies

For the remainder of the term school assemblies and liturgies will be delivered over Zoom, so that the children do not have to gather in the School Hall. Singing in class groups is permitted currently.

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Statement of Belief Citizen Assembly (Headteacher)	SJF Virtues Assembly (Class-Based)	Themed Assembly (Staff-Led)	Weekly Liturgy of the Word (Class-Led)	Celebration Assembly (All Staff)

As family and friends cannot attend, we will continue to film liturgies and make them available by clicking [here](#).

KS2 Carol Concert

Unfortunately, this will have to be cancelled this year as we cannot bring the children together in order to practise.

'ParentMail'

Please ensure that we have your most up-to-date contact information so that we are able to contact you quickly if we need to. Thank you.

PTFA

The PTFA remains a huge part of school life and we will work with them to ensure that this week's Santa in School event can take place safely, by keeping class groups separate.



ENHANCED CLEANING

We have increased the number of cleaners and adapted ways of working to ensure that there is more cleaning during the school day, with particular attention paid to those surfaces that are frequently touched like switches, bannister rails and door handles. Even school staff not normally involved in these duties e.g. teachers and support staff have been helping to keep their classrooms and resources clean throughout the day.

Extra materials have been provided for this purpose including hand sanitiser towers in every classroom and the library. The children will wash their hands throughout the day. We anticipate these arrangements remaining in place for the foreseeable future. Non-cleaning staff will vacate the school earlier so that the cleaning team can get into every room as soon as the children leave at the end of the day, undisturbed.





FRESH AIR

The evidence shows that good ventilation and being outside can limit the risk of COVID spread. Therefore, windows and doors will be left open as much as possible during the day to aid ventilation. There are carbon dioxide monitors in all areas to help staff monitor air quality and ensure that ventilation is sufficient to keep everyone safe.

Staff will also ensure that, where possible (and appropriate) learning will be taken outside so it is essential that the children come to school suitably dressed in **full uniform** with appropriate coats, hats and gloves so that they are ready to go outside.

SCHOOL OFFICE

The School Office is open between 8.30am and 4.30am each day. You can leave us a message on the telephone answerphone (**0114 2485009**) or email us (enquiries@st-johnfisher.org) at any time. However, if you want to speak to someone please do not call until after 8.30am. There is no one in the School Office until 8.30am and so the phone will not be answered until then. If you need to speak to someone in the School Office, please wear a face mask and ensure that only person is in the foyer at a time.

LUNCHTIME

Lunches must be booked in the usual by Thursday of each week – for the following week. You can book for more than one week at a time. Please remember that there is no charge for school lunches children in FS2 and Years 1 and 2 as the government covers the costs.

The cost of a school lunch for children in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 is £2.00 per meal unless a child is entitled to income-based free school meals, in which case there is also no charge. If you feel that your child is entitled please contact us so that we can follow it up. A reminder that our email address is enquiries@st-johnfisher.org. All lunches that have to be paid for will be added to the relevant **ParentPay** accounts manually by school administration staff for payment to be made through the system.

Staggered Lunchtimes

The children in each bubble will have staggered lunchtimes.

FS2, Y1 and Y2	Y3 and Y4	Y5 and Y6
11.30am – 12.30pm in the school Hall	12.00pm – 1.00pm in the Y3/Y4 classrooms	12.30pm – 1.30pm in the school hall
Children will be supported by the same staff every day	Children will be supported by the same staff every day	Children will be supported by the same staff every day





Packed Lunches

Please ensure your child has all the cutlery they need and their meal is easy for them to manage on their own e.g. opening packets etc.

Water

The drinking of plain water is encouraged. All pupils should have their own school water bottle that is untouched by other children or staff. There can be no sharing. Water is readily available in every classroom and the school hall so children can refill their water bottles.

Playtime After Lunch

FS2, Y1 and Y2	Y3 and Y4	Y5 and Y6
11.30am – 12.30pm	12.00pm – 1.00pm	12.30pm – 1.30pm
After lunch the FS2 children will play in FS2 outdoor area	Y3/Y4 children will go to the playground between 12.30pm and 1.00pm	Y5/Y6 children will go to the playground between 1.00pm and 1.30pm
After lunch Y1/Y2 children will go to the playground		

A COVID-19 Case in School

When a case is suspected in school the child will be immediately isolated from other pupils and staff. Staff supervising these children will ensure that they remain 2m away whilst still aiming to provide the reassurance and care particularly young children will need.

Enhanced PPE will be made available for these staff and older children may be offered a mask to wear whilst waiting for their parents/carers to collect them.

The school will contact parents/carers and request that they collect their child and any siblings from school. A PCR test will confirm whether a child has COVID and indeed whether it is the Omicron variant or not. A home LFT test will not reveal the variant.

WRAP-AROUND CARE

Our partners from JPAC will continue to provide excellent wrap-around care.

The children will be kept in class groups whilst in the club and many sessions will be staffed by people who already work in school in other roles.



JPAC LTD
your out of school service



Please note that parents/carers will not be able to enter school, whilst dropping children off or picking them up. Only one adult at a time will be allowed to wait in the foyer. If someone is already in the foyer please queue up outside at 2m intervals.

Please note that the door will only be answered by JPAC staff and not school staff.

For more information, please check out the website or contact JPAC directly. Thank you.

- ✓ Website: www.jpacschoolclubs.co.uk
- ✓ Telephone: 07971957839 (Ryan)

REVIEW

Please note that these arrangements remain under constant review in order to pick up on issues or external advice and instruction quickly, so the plan might be subject to change.

