



Monday 7th September 2020

Re. Welcome Back: COVID-19 Guidance for Parents and Carers

Dear Parents and Carers,

Welcome back to the formal start of the new term. It has been a pleasure receiving all of your children this morning. They have arrived looking fresh in their new uniforms, have smiley faces, along with a genuine keenness to get back into the swing of things. Thank you for your support in ensuring this important readiness for the start of term, and indeed the readiness for learning.

We are mindful that there is always much information to digest at the beginning of a new year, and so our aim is to communicate all you need to know in a timely, concise and clear manner. Last week, prior to our formal re-opening, we communicated the measures we have taken to minimise risk for children, staff and yourselves, to ensure a safe reopening. As always, you can find any letters emailed to you via the Communications page on our website. Today, we would like to talk you through the steps we need to take in the event that there should be a case of COVID-19 in school. We recommend that you keep this information somewhere handy for a quick reference point:

Step 1 - Identify:

- If a child, or a staff member (or a member of their household) is displaying symptoms of COVID-19 – a new, persistent cough, or a high temperature, or has a loss of, or change in, their normal sense of taste or smell, they must **NOT** come to school and remain at home. You must inform the school office as per the reason for the absence from school (normal procedure)
- If your child becomes unwell during the school day, we will call you immediately to come and collect them. While your child is awaiting collection, they will be kept separate from others with adult supervision.
- When you collect your child, you should take them straight home, do not:
 - Use public transport
 - Visit the GP
 - Visit the pharmacy
 - Visit the urgent care centre
 - Visit the hospital (unless your child is seriously unwell – in which case, call 999)

For the individual

- From the **onset of symptoms**, however mild, the child/staff member should **self-isolate for at least 10 days, and should arrange to have a test as soon as possible** – we ask that you inform school of the outcome as this informs our attendance register
- At this point, there is no requirement for other children/staff members to self-isolate
- If the **test returns negative**, then as long as the child feels well, they can stop isolating and **return to school as normal**

- If the **test returns positive**, the child should **continue to isolate, completing at least their 10 days from the onset of symptoms**. They should only return to school if they do not have symptoms other than a cough or loss of sense of smell/taste.

For the family

- If someone in your household has symptoms, the **household should self-isolate for 14 days**, and the member of the household should get a test
- If the **test returns negative**, the child can **return to school**
- If the **test returns positive**, all family members must **continue the 14 day self-isolation period**
- If a **child in a self-isolating household** then **develops COVID-19 symptoms during this period**, they must take a test, and a **new period of self-isolation for 10 days starts from the onset of symptoms**. They can return to school after 10 days, as long as they are well enough to do so
- Please keep school informed of the reason for absence and any test results that may follow

Step 2 - Report:

- If the school is informed of a possible, or confirmed case of COVID-19 by NHS Test & Trace, staff, or a parent or carer, we will immediately contact our local Public Health England Health Protection Team (PHE HPT)
- Everyone of us plays a vital role in stopping the spread of COVID-19, and engagement with our local PHE HPT is key. We will provide them with information that they request, such as the contact details of those affected, when they were last present at school, details of our control measures etc...
- The local PHE HPT will provide advice if we are to partially/fully close the school

Step 3 - Respond:

- The PHE HPT will work with the school to assess the risks and advise us of what actions to take
- As advised by the PHE HPT, we will communicate any information as appropriate to parents/carers at the earliest opportunity
- Depending on the outcome, the PHE HPT and Local Authority may establish an Outbreak Control Team to help support us and manage the situation

We appreciate that this all sounds rather formal, but felt it was important that you should have a clear picture of what could happen/the steps we need to take should we find ourselves with a positive case at school. Let's hope not!

We encourage you to visit www.gov.uk/backtoschool for information and practical guidance for parents and carers. We also include the **'Returning to primary school: what parents need to know'** leaflet provided by the Government for your interest, please see below.

Next week we will write to you to begin establishing details for Key Worker School/Home Learning Plan, should we need to make the switch at any time.

Thank you for your support and cooperation. Along with our return to school safety measures, it is only by all of us collectively following these steps, that we can collaboratively keep our school community as safe as we practically can.

Yours sincerely,

C.L. Purcell 

Claire Purcell
Head of School


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The Core Leadership Team



Why are children going back to school now?

School is the best place for children to learn and for their overall wellbeing. It gives them a routine and helps them develop their social skills. They also get to see their friends and teachers. It is vital that all children return to school in the autumn. Attendance will be mandatory again from the beginning of the new term. The prevalence of coronavirus (COVID-19) has decreased since schools and colleges restricted their opening to most pupils in March.

Is it safe for my child to return to school?

Public Health England (PHE) is clear that the risk of catching coronavirus (COVID-19) is low if schools apply a system of stringent controls to reduce the risk of spreading the virus. This includes regular handwashing and cleaning measures.

We are advising schools and parents to make sure that anyone with symptoms does not attend. The chance of children becoming severely ill from the virus is also very low.

Do children transmit coronavirus (COVID-19) more than adults?

No. Children are no more likely to transmit the virus than adults. In fact, there is reasonable evidence that primary school age children have a significantly lower rate of infection than adults, although this is not yet conclusive.

Will my child be expected to socially distance in primary school?

We understand that young children find it hard to socially distance. To reduce risk, we are currently advising primary schools to create small groups, or 'bubbles', of children, with no mixing between bubbles. We realise some siblings are likely to be in different bubbles. However, we know that it still helps to reduce risk by keeping groups as separate as possible in school.

What should I do if my child or someone in my household has symptoms?

It's important that if your child (or anyone in their household) has any coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms, they do not attend school and stay at home. You should arrange for them

to get a test and tell your school the test results. This will help the NHS Test and Trace process. If you have a positive test result, your household should remain at home and follow the Test and Trace self-isolation guidance.

What happens if there is an outbreak in my child's school or my local area?

If there is an outbreak at the school, local health protection teams will work with the school to agree what action is needed. Usually, the school will not need to close fully, but in case it does need to close for some children, it will have a contingency plan in place so that your child's education can continue. If your local area sees a spike in infection rates that is resulting in localised community spread, the government will decide what actions need to be taken.

Is there different advice for children who are clinically extremely vulnerable?

Shielding advice for all adults and children paused on 1 August. This means that even the small number of pupils who are still on the shielded patient list and those who have family members who are shielding can return to their school.

Visit www.gov.uk/backtoschool for more information on returning to school safely. Your child's school will have more information about the changes they have made ahead of your child's return in the autumn term.

Viv Bennett,
Public Health England's
Chief Nurse, has said:

“Parents can be reassured that to maximise safety in schools, an extremely stringent system of controls has been advised by PHE and is published in DfE guidance.

Evidence so far indicates that schools do not appear to be a primary driver of coronavirus infections in the community.

Globally children and young people have been found to experience coronavirus asymptotically or as a minor illness.”

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