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Dear Parents/Carers

9th July 2021

RE - Returning in the new academic year – an update

Following my letter last week, schools have now been provided with updated Covid 19 Operational Guidance, which will be effective for the start of the new academic year, should we move to Step 4 of the government's 'roadmap' on 19th July. This is subject to a final review of data next week. The statement below is taken from the DfE update:

We are changing the controls that apply in early years, schools, colleges and higher education institutions to maintain a baseline of protective measures while maximising attendance and minimising disruption to children and young people's education. We have published new guidance for arrangements in education settings from Step 4, covering both the summer period and the following term, when children will return to school.

The key changes are summarised below, with statements in italics taken directly from the operational guidance for clarity:

Risk Assessment

As you are aware, the school has a set of operational measures in place, following the current guidance – detailed within a Risk Assessment. This remains in place, until we reach 'Step 4'. We will review this before the children return to school on Wednesday 25th August, where proportionate control measures will be put in place, following the updated guidance.

Mixing and 'bubbles'

At Step 4, the 'bubbles' with which we have become familiar are no longer recommended. This means we will be able to resume assemblies in the hall. The children will also be able to mix at lunchtime and breaktime.

Tracing Close Contacts and Isolation

From Step 4, close contacts will be identified via the NHS Test and Trace. We will still need to issue the letter ahead of school holidays, detailing the school's track and trace system, for any cases identified up to the evening of Sunday 11th July.

From 16th August 2021, children under the age of 18 years old will no longer be required to self-isolate if they are contacted by NHS Test and Trace as a close contact of a positive COVID-19 case.

Instead, children will be contacted by NHS Test and Trace, informed they have been in close contact with a positive case and advised to take a PCR test. We would encourage all individuals to take a PCR test if advised to do so.

Face coverings

From Step 4, face coverings will no longer be advised for pupils, staff and visitors either in classrooms or in communal areas.

From Step 4, face coverings are also no longer recommended to be worn on dedicated transport to school or college and are no longer legally required on public transport.

Stepping Measures Up And Down

In the event of local outbreaks, guidance on the above measures may be subject to change within school. This would see a return to the measures with which we are all familiar and detailed within our current Risk Assessment. I have copied the specific information below from the guidance, as a timely reminder in anticipation of the expected lifting of restrictions:

Control measures - you (schools) should:

- 1. Ensure good hygiene for everyone.*
- 2. Maintain appropriate cleaning regimes.*
- 3. Keep occupied spaces well ventilated.*
- 4. Follow public health advice on testing, self-isolation and managing confirmed cases of COVID-19.*

When an individual develops COVID-19 symptoms or has a positive test

Pupils, staff and other adults should follow public health advice on when to self-isolate and what to do. They should not come into school if they have symptoms, have had a positive test result or other reasons requiring them to stay at home due to the risk of them passing on COVID-19 (for example, they are required to quarantine).

If anyone in your school develops COVID-19 symptoms, however mild, you should send them home and they should follow public health advice.

Admitting children into school

In most cases, parents and carers will agree that a pupil with symptoms should not attend the school, given the potential risk to others. If a parent or carer insists on a pupil attending your school, you can take the decision to refuse the pupil if, in your reasonable judgement, it is necessary to protect other pupils and staff from possible infection with COVID-19. Your decision would need to be carefully considered in light of all the circumstances and current public health advice.

Attendance

School attendance is mandatory for all pupils of compulsory school age and it is priority to ensure that as many children as possible regularly attend school.

Remote Education

As you are aware from our experiences of closure this year, using Google Classroom in Key Stage 2 and Tapestry in EYFS/Key Stage 1. This will be used to continue the education of any children who are self isolating or unable to travel from abroad, due to COVID-19. This will not be provided for other illnesses.

Education Recovery

Again, you will be aware, the school has organised additional sessions for some pupils using the COVID-19 Catch Up Premium during the Summer term. These will continue in the Autumn and may involve the same children, or others, following end of year assessments. Further information will be issued in the new academic year.

The DfE have provided a link for parents, with further information on the above:

<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>

School start/finish times – entrance gates

Should we move to Step 4, we will revert back to our traditional start and finish times of 8.45am and 3.15 pm.

However, we have taken the opportunity to reflect on our school day and will retain some of the revised organisation we have used during the pandemic. The gates will open at 8.40am and close at 8.50am, to allow children to line up and be accompanied into the playground. Parents of children in EYFS, will be allowed to accompany children to the classroom. Children will be dismissed either from their door, or for classes in Key Stage 2, from their allotted space along the wall of the Y3/4 classrooms – as not each classroom has an exit door.

We will continue to use both the main gate on Maxwell Drive and the pedestrian gate on Stonebow Close for entrance/exit as follows:

Stonebow Close Gate – Miss Logue, Mrs Pitchers and Miss Turner

Main Gate – Key Stage 2 classes and EYFS

PE kit

We would also like to continue with the children being dressed for PE sessions in curriculum time. This has enabled the children to maximise their time involved in activities during their PE lesson. We would kindly remind parents to dress children in the school PE kit, as detailed in the uniform policy – rather than football kits etc, which we will allow on special occasions.

Mr Martin will continue running before and after school clubs, which the children can get changed for (after school) and back into their uniform (from breakfast clubs).

Suggestions from parents

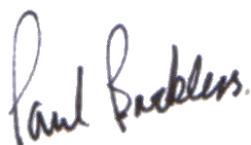
The above changes, will be subject to review. In the meantime, if parents have any of their own suggestions following the last 18 months, these are welcome via a Weduc form for our consideration. The link to the form on Weduc will be sent out to parents shortly.

Reports update

Thank you for your acknowledgement and feedback on the children's end of year reports via Weduc. We do value your comments – to clarify, a reminder that as all national curriculum assessments were cancelled for a second year, the reports do not reflect the descriptors for end of year assessments (Expected Standard, Working at Greater Depth). These have been replaced by the grades 'Towards, Within and Secure' to reflect pupil's attainment in Years 1-6. The Weduc form to acknowledge receipt of your report and add a comment if you wish, will remain open until Monday. This can be accessed in the form section on Weduc and a reminder will be sent to parents shortly.

If you require any further clarification on the above, please contact the school office. If there are any further updates across the summer, I will inform you on the two INSET days we have on Monday/Tuesday 23/24 August. I look forward to seeing the children return after a well deserved holiday, on Wednesday 25th August.

Yours sincerely



Paul Brockless Head Teacher