



Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> July 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

Firstly, I would like to thank everyone who has supported the school during the current academic year by following the rules and guidance I have set out. Without your support, I am sure there would have been much more disruption to the provision we have been able to offer. The purpose of this letter is to outline the current plan for the school's return in September 2021. It is my hope that you will find all of the information you need to ensure you are ready for the new academic year. As I am sure you can appreciate the information set out in this letter is subject to change if required.

As I stated in my previous letter, my team and I have recently completed a thorough review into the past year. Considering our findings and the new guidance set out by the Department of Education I have made the decisions below.

### **Changes we are keeping**

During the past 18 months, we have been forced to make many changes. After reviewing the impact of these, my team and I have decided that we would like to keep some of them despite the previous requirements being lifted. Firstly, we will continue to ask the children to come to school wearing active wear on their PE days. This has saved time during the PE sessions and has allowed the children to spend more time being active. We have decided that we will continue to stagger break times. During break times the children will be able to play with others from their year group regardless of class. At lunch time, the children will eat their dinner in the hall with the rest of their year group before heading out to the playground. We have seen a huge reduction in the number of accidents and behaviour issues whilst staggering break times this year which has resulted in sessions straight after breaks not being disrupted while incidents are dealt with. It is our hope that by continuing to complete breaks in this way the children will have a much more enjoyable break which will have less impact on learning time. Finally, we will also be continuing to complete a short-staggered start and end of the day. The timings of this can be found below –

	<b>Drop off time</b>	<b>Pick up time</b>
<b>Surnames beginning with A - M</b>	8:45am – 8:50am	3:00pm – 3:05pm
<b>Surnames beginning with N - Z</b>	8:50am – 8:55am	3:05pm – 3:10pm

We have found that the staggering the children has enabled them to settle much quicker when arriving and leaving the school. In addition, I feel that the shorter stagger will also promote a better flow of people around the school site as we return in September.

## **Changes to current practices**

As from September, the children will be able to bring in items such as birthday sweets and invitations. More than one adult will also be allowed on site during drop off and pick up time. Face coverings will no longer be required to be worn when dropping children off or collecting children in September; however, we would still ask parents, who are medically able, to wear a face covering when entering the indoor areas such as the main office. Obviously, if parents would feel more comfortable to wear a face covering when on the school site, please feel free to do so. All entrances and exits will be able to be used and no one-way system will be in place. It is our hope that we will be able to offer many more opportunities for the children to join and attend clubs. The school will be taking a hybrid approach to future face-to-face events such as Parents' Evening and Curriculum Meetings. Parents will have the opportunity to either attend these events in person or continue to complete them using online platforms such as Zoom or Teams. Booking places for events such as Parents' Evening will however remain on eSchools. There will be many changes made during the teaching day which will not directly impact you as parents but will hopefully ensure that we are able to provide the children with the best education possible.

## **Attendance**

In September, school attendance will continue to be mandatory for all pupils of compulsory school age. The children have missed so much face-to-face teaching over the past 18 months it is essential that as many children as possible regularly attend school. As always, we will be here to support children and families who are finding it difficult to attend school regularly. Where a child is required to self-isolate or quarantine because of COVID-19 in accordance with relevant legislation or guidance published by PHE or the DHSC they will be recorded as code X (not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus). The X code will not impact your child's overall attendance figure. Where they are unable to attend because they have a confirmed case of COVID-19 they will be recorded as code I (illness) which is an authorised absence.

## **Track, Trace and Isolate**

The school was only required to complete contact tracing activities up to and including 18 July 2021. Close contacts will now be identified via NHS Test and Trace and the school will no longer be expected to undertake contact tracing. From 16 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.

These changes will currently suggest that we will no longer need to isolate large numbers of children even if there has been a positive case within a class. It is my hope that this will mean that we will be able to have a much less disruptive year during 2021/2022. From the guidance I have been given, the only time a child will definitely require to isolate, after the 16<sup>th</sup> August, will be if they live in the same house as someone who has tested positive. Obviously, if I have learnt anything from the past 18 months is how quickly things can change. If the process or requirement for Track, Trace and Isolate changes, I will notify families as soon as possible.

## **Contingency for localised outbreaks**

Considering the new guidance and reduction of restrictions, schools have been asked to ensure that they have outbreak management plans outlining how we would operate if there were an outbreak in our school or local area. I am currently completing the final sections of the school Outbreak Management Plan which will need to be agreed by the school's Governors. This plan will be completed and ready to implement by Monday 7<sup>th</sup> September. If there is an outbreak in the school or if central government offers the area an enhanced response package, a director of public health may advise the school to temporarily reintroduce some additional control measures. The guidance clearly states that given the detrimental impact that restrictions have on the education of children and young people, any measures in schools should only ever be considered as a last resort and should only be implemented for the shortest amount of time possible. If this type of action is ever required in the new academic year, I will inform parents as soon as possible whilst clearly outlining what additional protective measures will be being introduced.

## **Control measures the school will use as of September**

Despite many of the control measures being reduced, the school is still expected to and will follow the four remaining measures below:

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

These control measures are all currently well embedded in our school daily life and will easily be incorporated into our practice next year. As I have stated in the section above, if we find ourselves in a situation where we are required to add to these measures we will.

## **Children displaying symptoms**

Currently, your child will still be required to have a PCR test if they display any of the three main symptoms when they return in September. A list of the three main symptoms can be found below.

- A high temperature – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature);
- A new, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual);
- A loss or change to your sense of smell or taste – this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal.

I am aware that there has been some confusion linked to checking symptoms with a Lateral Flow Test. We have been instructed to not allow children back into school if they are displaying any of the symptoms above without a negative PCR test result - a Lateral Flow Test result will not be accepted. Lateral Flow Tests should only be used for asymptomatic testing. I will continue to advertise the links for the NHS PCR booking website on every newsletter next year for your reference.

When the children arrive at school in September, the adult on the door will continue to ask you if your child or anyone in their household is currently displaying symptoms. If your child becomes unwell whilst at school, we will call you to collect them from the main office. If we are concerned about the symptoms your child is displaying, you may be advised to get your child a PCR test before returning.

### **Remote education**

My team and I, continue to review our quality of remote education and will ensure that if required it is accessible within 24 hours. All children who are off due to an isolation period will be provided with remote learning. The parents of any child who has tested positive with COVID-19, will be contacted and asked if they would like their child to be provided with work. Obviously, this will be a parental decision but from September every child absent due to COVID will have the opportunity to access remote education.

As I have stated throughout this letter, this plan is subject to change if deemed necessary. I would like to reassure parents that as a school we are in a strong position to complete the plan set out in this letter as well as enforce any contingency plans that may be required. Like many businesses across the country, we are now in a position where we can quickly and successfully change plans to ensure that we keep the children, staff and families as safe as possible whilst having a limited negative impact on the quality of education we are able to offer. I am excited by many of the changes and hope that they can be implemented fully. These changes will allow the staff at the school to focus on what we do best which is provide your child with the best education possible.

Finally, I wanted to thank everyone for their continued understanding and support. I hope you all enjoy the break and I will see everyone again in September.

Yours sincerely

Mr. S. Proctor