

16th July 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

Re: Returning to school – Public Health Advice

As you are aware, Public Health England are advising all schools to return full time from the start of the autumn term. In line with this guidance and with health and safety law, we have assessed the risks and put in place proportionate control measures to minimise coronavirus (COVID-19) risks. More guidance on how the school will implement this will be given in a separate letter.

Public Health England have advised the following:

Prevention measures:

- If your son/daughter is ill, they must stay at home.
- Minimise contact with individuals who are unwell by ensuring that those who have coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms, or who have someone in their household who does, do not attend school.
- Wash hands or use hand sanitiser where possible. In addition to the availability of washbasins in school, we have added a large number of wall mounted hand sanitisers in every corridor and outside every classroom. Your son/daughter will be asked frequently, to use these throughout the day, especially when they arrive at school, when they return from breaks, when they change rooms and before eating.
- Social distancing continues to remain in place, however students will be asked to remain in 'year group bubbles'. Guidance on this will be provided shortly. Public Health England advises staff to maintain a 2m distance from students. This will mean that staff will stay at the front of the class when teaching and avoid movement around the classroom. Face-to-face contact will also be minimised.
- Public Health England does not (based on current evidence) recommend the use of face coverings in schools. We appreciate that current guidance does however state that face coverings are required on public transport. If this applies to your son/daughter, the guidance is clear that they must not touch the front of their face covering during use or when removing them. Your son/daughter must also remove this face covering at the school gate and place it in their own plastic bag, which they will take home with them. They must then use the hand sanitiser. To support with this, there are further hand sanitiser stations at the school gate.

If your child becomes unwell:

If your son/daughter becomes unwell with COVID symptoms, he/she will be sent home and advised to follow the 'stay at home' guidance for households. The symptoms are: a new, continuous cough or high temperature, or has a loss of or change in, their normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia). If the medical officer confirms that any of the above symptoms are displayed, your son/daughter will be asked to wear a PPE mask and be isolated from others within the school until they are collected. The school will not authorise a child to make their own way home if they display symptoms.

The 'stay at home guidance' states:

- Your son/daughter must remain at home and self-isolate for 7 days.
- Other members of the household, including siblings must then also self-isolate for 14 days from when the symptoms started.
- You must arrange a test for your son/daughter to see if they have coronavirus (COVID-19). Please see the link at the end of the letter for the nearest test centre.

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Response to any infection

The school will be expected to report any cases using the NHS Test and Trace process, and make contact with the local Public Health England protection team. In compliance with this, you will be asked and be willing to:

- Book a test.
- Provide details of anyone they have been in close contact with, (other than school, which we will provide), if they were to test positive for coronavirus.
- Self-isolate if you have been in close contact with someone who develops coronavirus symptoms, or someone who tests positive for coronavirus.
- Inform the school immediately of the results of the test, whether positive or negative.

Results of COVID test

Negative result

- If the test comes back negative and your son/daughter is no longer having symptoms, they can stop self-isolating.
- All other members of the household can also stop self-isolating.
- **You must inform the school through the absence line before returning to school.**

Positive result

- Public Health England will advise you on the next steps.
- This will be to provide contact details of everyone who has been in direct contact with, or close proximity to, your child.
- Public Health England will advise on who will need to then self-isolate.
- **You must inform the school immediately through the absence line of results of the test.**

Your son/daughter should only return to school if they do not have any symptoms other than a cough or loss of sense of smell/taste. This is because a cough or anosmia can last several weeks once the infection has gone. If a temperature persists, they should continue to self-isolate until it returns to normal.

Please be reassured that if a positive case is confirmed, the school will respond quickly and work in conjunction with the health protection team to carry out a 'rapid risk assessment'. As this is a sensitive health matter, we will not be discussing the names of any students involved.

I am sure you will agree with me, this is an unprecedented time. We must all support and work together to ensure that we educate your son/daughter with the correct attitude and supportive guidance to keep safe and minimise further risks. The school will be continuing to do this in September; however, we ask that you seriously discuss with your child the importance of going straight home after school to minimise further risks or outbreaks.

Please find below, links to DFE guidance:

Stay at home guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance>

Nearest COVID-19 test centre: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing-and-tracing/get-an-antigen-test-to-check-if-you-have-coronavirus/>

Yours faithfully



Mrs R McLaren
Senior Assistant Head Teacher