20th July 2021

**Covid-19 Guidance and School Procedures for September**

Dear Parents / Carers,

DfE guidance for schools was updated earlier last week, outlining recommended actions for schools to reduce the risk of transmission of coronavirus. Although existing measures remain in place until the end of our school year, a number of changes will come into effect as we move into Step 4 of the government plans. This will affect our plans for September 2021. From 8th September 2021 the following procedures apply.

1. Children will no longer need to be kept in consistent groups/bubbles meaning:

* Staggered start and finish times will no longer be necessary. We will return to ‘normal’ timings when arriving and leaving school. Children in Reception, Year 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, &, 6 will start their school day at 8:45am and finish at 3.15pm. Nursery sessions will remain at 8.45am-11.45am.
* Assemblies can resume.
* We will not be required to keep year groups separate at playtimes/lunchtimes.
* We will continue to avoid congestion in our classrooms at the start of each day by asking parents to leave their child at the classroom door once the teacher has opened up.
* As part of our outbreak management, it may be necessary to reintroduce bubbles/ staggered starts and finishes etc. for a temporary period to reduce mixing between bubbles. This may be necessary if there are several positive cases confirmed in school. This decision will not be taken lightly and advice will be sought before taking this action.

1. Staff and visitors will no longer be asked to wear face coverings in communal areas or when they are arriving on the school site. If there is an outbreak, staff/visitors may be advised to wear face coverings temporarily.
2. Close contacts will be identified via NHS Test and Trace; school will no longer be expected to undertake contact tracing. Guidance states that:

* Contacts in school will only be traced by NHS Test and Trace where the positive case specifically identifies an individual as a close contact. School may be contacted to help confirm who is most at risk.
* Children will no longer need to self-isolate if they are contacted by NHS Test and Trace as a close contact. Instead, children who have been in close contact with a positive case will be advised to take a PCR test. [Please note, these are not the same as the lateral flow tests you can do at home to test for asymptomatic cases.]

1. Children, staff and household members should continue to follow public health advise on when to isolate.

* They should not come into school if they have symptoms, have had a positive test result or for other reasons that may require them to stay at home to prevent passing on Covid-19 (e.g. required to quarantine).
* The household (including siblings) should follow PHE guidance.

1. Primary aged children are not required to undertake twice weekly asymptomatic home tests. Staff are able to undertake twice weekly asymptomatic LFD testing until the end of September 2021, when this will be reviewed. If staff receive a positive LFD test result, they will need to self-isolate while waiting for the results of a PCR.
2. Attendance is mandatory for all children of compulsory school age and it is a priority to ensure as many children as possible attend regularly. However, children should not attend if they have symptoms and if necessary, school is able to refuse to admit a child in order to protect other children and staff from possible infection with COVID-19. If children develop symptoms when at school, staff will contact parents/carers and ask them to collect their child and arrange a PCR test. Children will be kept in a separate ventilated room while they wait to be collected.
3. School will continue to offer remote learning opportunities to children who need to self-isolate.
4. Good hygiene will continue to be important. Children and staff will wash their hands regularly or use hand sanitiser. The ‘catch it, kill it, bin it’ advice will be followed. Cleaning regimes will remain vigilant and windows will be open, where possible, to improve good ventilation.
5. Educational visits can resume but will be thoroughly risk assessed.

**Of course, we need to bear in mind that these plans could be forced to change at short notice, either in response to changing advice from the government or as a result of outbreaks in the school community or local authority. We thank you in advance for your patience and co-operation with this.**

As always, if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us. I hope you all have a lovely summer and we look forward to welcoming the children into school on Wednesday 8th September.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs J Elliott