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September 2021 Guidance for Parents

Dear Parents,

After a tricky end of term for many pupils who had to isolate (thank you for your co-operation) and a period of rest and relaxation for at least the children and hopefully yourselves, I trust that the children are ready to return to school and you will be ready to put them in our care. We also look forward to welcoming 60 new pupils who have only had a brief chance to see their classroom and meet their teachers, last July.

I imagine parents are curious to know how school will operate after 18 months of change. The Department for Education published Schools Covid -19 Operational Guidance on August 17th and I summarise it below. In a nutshell, the guidance tells schools that most restrictions imposed during Covid are no longer necessary although schools themselves should continue to risk assess and respond when there are changes to case numbers. As advised in the guidance, I consulted with staff about the new arrangements on September 2nd. We have determined to stay cautious and maintain some of the internal separation of groups of children which we can relax when we feel secure in doing so.

From September 6th:

- We return to Pre-Covid Beginning and End of the Day routines (outlined below –including no staggered start and end times and the Huntley Close gate no longer being used.)
- Day to day, face coverings on site are optional, however, parents and visitors are asked to respect the safety of others and maintain social distance; and wear a face covering if asked.
- We will see how things go before we re-introduce before and after school extra-curricular activities (clubs) but Sunrise and Sunset Clubs will continue to operate and year groups will no longer need to be separated. Bookings will continue to require 72 hours notice.
- Internally we return to lunch eaten in the dining hall and some mixed year group playtimes.
- We will hold back on whole school assemblies in the hall. If the weather allows, we will hold them outside; otherwise, we will have some children in the hall and others joining virtually through the use of the large screens and cameras in classrooms.

The impact of this mixing will be carefully monitored. We also look forward to the delivery of promised carbon monoxide monitors to check ventilation. We are hopeful that we will be able to lift limits on internal mixing and we won't have to re-introduce any restrictions but will respond as the situation emerges.

The following is a summary of the government's guidance which essentially, we will follow:

As COVID-19 becomes a virus that we learn to live with, there is now an imperative to reduce the disruption to children's education - particularly given that the direct clinical risks to children are extremely low, and every adult has been offered a first vaccine and the opportunity for 2 doses by mid-September.

Schools must review and update risk assessments - treating them as 'living documents', as the circumstances in your school and the public health advice changes.

We no longer recommend that it is necessary to keep children in consistent groups ('bubbles'). Assemblies can resume, and you no longer need to make alternative arrangements to avoid mixing at lunch.

Close contacts will now be identified via NHS Test and Trace and education settings will no longer be expected to undertake contact tracing. NHS Test and Trace will work with the positive case and/or their parent to identify close contacts.

Those below the age of 18 years and 6 months are not required to self-isolate if they live in the same household as someone with COVID-19, or are a close contact of someone with COVID-19.

Schools will continue to work with health protection teams in the case of a local outbreak. If there is a substantial increase in the number of positive cases in a setting or if central government offers the area an enhanced response package, a director of public health might advise a school to temporarily reintroduce some control measures.

Face coverings are no longer advised for pupils, staff and visitors either in classrooms or in communal areas. The government expects and recommends that face coverings are worn in enclosed and crowded spaces where you may come into contact with people you don't normally meet.

Schools should have outbreak management plans outlining what to do if children, pupils, students or staff test positive for COVID-19, or how to operate if advised to take extra measures to help break chains of transmission. Any measures in schools should only ever be considered as a last resort, kept to the minimum number of groups possible, and for the shortest amount of time possible.

Ensure everyone cleans their hands regularly with soap and water or hand sanitiser.

Encourage the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach for respiratory hygiene

Regularly clean areas and equipment (for example, twice per day), with a particular focus on frequently touched surfaces.

Ensure: spaces are well-ventilated, a comfortable teaching environment is maintained and poorly ventilated spaces are identified and addressed.

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 or have had a positive test result.

If anyone in school develops [COVID-19 symptoms](#), however mild, you should send them home and they should follow public health advice. (likely to be get a PCR test)

Staff should undertake twice weekly home tests until the end of September, when this will be reviewed.

There is no need for primary age pupils (those in year 6 and below) to test.

Staff and pupils with a positive LFD test result should self-isolate. They will also need to [get a free PCR test to check if they have COVID-19](#). Whilst awaiting the PCR result, the individual should continue to self-isolate. If the PCR test is taken within 2 days of the positive lateral flow test, and is negative, it overrides the self-test LFD test and the pupil can return to school, as long as the individual doesn't have COVID-19 symptoms.

All clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV) children should attend their education setting unless advised by their clinician or other specialist not to attend.

School 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.

School attendance is mandatory for all pupils of compulsory school age

Parents travelling abroad should bear in mind the impact on their child's education which may result from any requirement to quarantine or isolate upon return.

School must support those who need to self-isolate because they have tested positive to work or learn from home if they are well enough to do so.

School must continue to provide free school meal support to any pupils who are eligible for benefits-related free school meals and who are learning at home during term time.

The guidance in full can be found at https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/schools-covid-19-operational-guidance?utm_source=18%20August%202021%20C19&utm_medium=Daily%20Email%20C19&utm_campaign=DfE%20C19

Over the past 18 months, letters to parents have ended, "This too will pass." Hopefully, we are now entering a period where good hygiene, national vaccine and test & trace programmes enable schools to put the focus on Covid-19 in the past; we truly hope so. The children, staff and parents have worked hard to maintain learning and a sense of normality, and staff will continue to provide extra support in the coming

months. We have four new teaching assistants and a new bursar this September but no new teachers. I predict a smooth start to the year. For your convenience I have attached the Preparing for 21.22 letter sent out to parents on July 16th. We look forward to welcoming the children on Monday.

Warm regards,

John Ross, Headteacher

Routines for the Beginning and End of the School Day (from the Parent Handbook)

Infant children are registered at 8:55am and the doors open at 8:45am for parents to drop them off directly in the classrooms. Year 2 children are dropped off at the link corridor entrance where they will walk to their classrooms.

The junior playground is open and supervised from 8:45am. Children should not be dropped off too early and early unsupervised children may be taken to Sunrise Club and invoiced. Children are expected to be on the playground at 8:50am ready to enter school for an 8:55am start.

Children can hang their belongings up and are free to play. Parents are asked to wait in the area near the road leaving the playground area free for children to play. Just before 8:55am a whistle is blown for the children to go into school.

Parents talking with teachers is a good thing, however, first thing in the morning is a busy time for teachers, therefore parents are asked to either write down messages or keep morning conversations short. At the end of the day, please wait until the teacher has dismissed the class before starting a conversation; we encourage parents to let teachers know they would like to talk.

- The play equipment is off limits to children before school. After school, children who are supervised may play on the equipment but do not have access to the school field.
- Scooters and bikes are dismantled when in the playground.
- Parents peering through windows of a class in session can be distracting and is discouraged.

At the end of the day infant children are dismissed from the classroom and corridor doors when they let the teacher know they have spotted their parent. Therefore, it is helpful to your child to stand in a similar area each day. Parents of reception children collect children outside reception (Parents give a list of people to whom we may release reception children.)

Parents meet junior children: near the road in the junior playground; outside the gates; a distance from the school; and some children walk home alone or with friends. It helps school if we are aware of the routine and are notified of any changes. Children need to know their routine and that if there is no one to meet them as usual they must go to the school office to wait and not walk home alone.

Being on time for the school day is important to us and we keep careful records of those who have difficulty managing this. Children arriving late must enter through the front door and register their reason for being late. Y4 and older can do this independently but adults must do it for younger children.

If travelling to school by car we expect parents to support ALL children's safety by driving within the 20mph speed limit near school, ensuring pupils get in and out of vehicles safely, and parking safely and in an appropriate place complying with parking restrictions. In the morning, the bus stop operates a one-way (from Bare Lane) drop-off only system and is not to be used for parking. Parking tickets have been issued to cars parked in the bus stop. Please help your child develop road safety awareness when walking as accidents near school are mainly due to children crossing the road without due care or support.