

Dear Parents and Carers,

### **Return to School September 2021**

Officially, the new term has not yet started but I thought you would appreciate some advance information about us reopening for learning on Monday 6th.

Below are the ways in which we will return to school in the context of the ongoing Coronavirus pandemic and in the light of reduced restrictions and changes in guidelines.

#### **Face Coverings**

No face coverings are now required for normal educational and will not be worn by staff or visitors. This means parents at the gate will not be required to wear a face covering, and thank you for your support with face coverings last year.

Public Health England (PHE) say that of course, PPE should still be worn in situations where it would have been a medical precaution before Covid. We will still use PPE if caring for a child with Covid symptoms whilst they are waiting to be collected.

If you, as parents, chose to wear a face covering at the gate or when visiting school, that is your right and we support that right, but it is no longer a requirement. I look forward to seeing all of your smiling faces again.

#### **Drop Off and Pick up**

There will be no more staggered starts to the day.

We start at 9.00am for everyone and you are welcome onto the playground as normal. Early Years and Key Stage 1 (Red and Yellow Class) finish at 3.20pm and Key Stage 2 (Blue, Orange and Green Classes) finish at 3.25pm.

#### **Social Distancing**

We no longer need to maintain any specific distance from parents, staff and children but understand that some parents may remain cautious and not want to mix; as a school we will respect this choice.

#### **Bubbles**

The government have confirmed that class bubbles no longer exist. Children and adults can mix and meet freely which means a return to assemblies, visitors, guests and visits to the church. Children may also learn in table grouping and move tables for project and team work.

This also means we can return to a hot lunch service in the hall. We show the Year 1 and new Reception children how we do this and support them initially; some older children will need a refresher, I am sure.

#### **Hygiene**

We are required to continue regular handwashing, especially at the start of the day and before eating. We will encourage a vigilance around potential transmission with sneezing and coughs with the "catch it, kill it, bin it" approach. We'll also take care to mitigate the effect this has on children's hands and maximise learning time.

We will no longer need children to come to school in PE kit on PE days, but to bring their *named* PE kit in a *named* bag for getting changed. We understand that some children will have had no

experience of this and others will be rusty so we will have patience as they adjust to this new routine. Teachers will let you know PE days shortly.

### **Cleaning**

We will continue to clean thoroughly, in addition to ordinary cleaning, especially in frequently visited places such as toilets and regularly touched surfaces such as bannisters and door handles.

### **Ventilation**

We will take steps to keep the air flowing whilst being mindful of a comfortable working temperature.

### **Regular Testing**

Staff will continue to lateral flow test twice a week and we will ask regular visitors and invited guests to do so. This way we can catch a large proportion of asymptomatic cases. We encourage parents and families to do the same. There are no plans currently to test primary age children in an organised way or on site.

### **Covid Symptoms**

Official guidance remains that the three symptoms are **any one of**:

- New continuous cough for over an hour or 3 times in 24 hours,
- A high temperature,
- Loss or change in sense of taste or smell.

If you have **any** of these, you personally must book a PCR test at a test site (not a Lateral Flow Home Test) and self-isolate until you get results.

Lateral flow Tests are only designed to catch asymptomatic cases not to establish symptomatic cases.

### **Isolation and absence**

We are informed by Department for Education that **children under 18yrs 6mths and adults who have had both vaccinations more than 14 days ago** (or are part of a trial, or medically cannot be vaccinated) no longer need to self-isolate when named as a contact with a positive case even if that case is in their household.

However, if you are named as a contact, you will be asked to take a PCR test at a test site. If a member of your household tests positive, household members will need to take a PCR to control the spread of infection. A negative result means that those members of the household may return to school or work and not self-isolate.

If a person tests positive for Covid they must still self-isolate for 10 days from. The 10 days begins either from the start of symptoms or from the date of the test (if you had no symptoms). After 10 days you can come out of isolation if you don't have symptoms.

We will still send home children with Covid symptoms and ask you to book a PCR test, as part of our systems to control infection. As the seasonal cold season approaches, we will take a common sense approach to this and continue to work with the guidance of Public Health England (PHE).

### **Outbreaks**

PHE can still close classes or schools if they consider there has been what they term an “outbreak”, as opposed to a couple of isolated cases. We must inform them if:

- 5 children, pupils, students or staff, who are likely to have mixed closely, test positive for COVID-19 within a 10-day period; or 10% of children, pupils, students or staff who are likely to have mixed closely test positive for COVID-19 within a 10-day period.
- Anyone from the school community is hospitalised with Covid.

### **Catching Up and Recovering the Curriculum.**

We are very mindful of what a disruptive eighteen months we have all lived through and how much learning, freedom and play children have missed out on. Even when children have not missed a day of school or have completed all work online, we know that the stress of the pandemic will mean much learning may be shallow or insecure and need consolidation.

We will be committed this term and this year to firstly welcoming and reassuring your children, identifying and swiftly addressing gaps in learning, challenging all learners at their point of need and running timely and effective interventions to strengthen knowledge and help children catch up. An engaging, effective curriculum will be in place to capture their imaginations and provide what they need to succeed.

### **Statutory Assessments**

The DfE have indicated that all end of year tests and assessments will go ahead this academic year. This means that Year 2 and Year 6 SATs will take place as normal and that the Year 1 phonics screening check will occur. This will happen in the Autumn Term for last Year's Y1 (this year's Y2) and as normal in June for this year's Year 1. We will give you plenty of information and support nearer the time.

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After a year of many disruptions and challenges, I sincerely hope this 21-22 academic year is filled with fun, joy, learning and nice surprises. We at the Wyche will do all we can to make it so. I look forward to greeting you all on the playground and welcoming you back through the doors to many events and gatherings. We will need to rebuild our school family and get to know one another once again as a community with children's welfare and education at its heart.

Don't forget to say "hi" to new members of staff: Mr Wilson, Mrs Charles and Mrs Sheppard (our new Green class TA).

See you on Monday,  
Stephen Murphy, Headteacher