



10<sup>th</sup> July 2020

## Dear Parents/Carers

I hope you are all well and adjusting nicely to the gradual ease of lockdown.

The reported number of falling cases of Covid-19 is encouraging and I am very hopeful that if the situation continues to improve, we will be in a strong position to open our schools to all of our children in September for the new academic year of 2020/2021. We are very much looking forward to welcoming back all of our children and families.

You may be aware that last week, the Government released official guidance on the re-opening of schools in September, and I would like to take this opportunity to highlight some of the key areas covered which apply to all of our schools. (Please see the link to the full guidance below)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools>

As always, the safety of our pupils, families and staff members remains to be our number one priority and we are working hard behind the scenes to put measures in place in line with the latest Government guidance.

As the situation continues to evolve, the official Government guidance will be adapted to reflect this and as a Trust we will endeavour to follow this closely and make changes where necessary.

As it stands, the following key points apply to all of our schools:

### Infection Control

All of our risk assessments are being reviewed again and will be shared with you by your individual schools before the end of the Summer term.

To minimise the risk of infection, all schools have been asked to take the following actions:

### Prevention

The following is to be in place in all schools all of the time:

- 1) *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:*
  - **Pupils, family members, staff and others adults should not attend school if they have COVID symptoms or have tested positive in the past 7 days.**
  - Anyone developing such symptoms during the school day will be sent home, must isolate for 7 days and should arrange a test. Other members of the household (including siblings) should self-isolate for 14 days from when the symptomatic person first had symptoms.

- If anyone becomes unwell with a new continuous cough or high temperature, or has a loss of or change in their normal sense of taste or smell will be sent home and advised to follow Government 'Stay at home' guidance.
  - Children unwell with symptoms in school awaiting collection should be moved, if possible to a room where they can be isolated behind a closed door, depending on the age and needs of the child, with appropriate adult supervision. If this is not possible, they will be moved to an area which is at least 2 metres away from other people.
  - Any member of staff who has helped someone with symptoms and any pupils who have been in close contact with them do not need to go home unless they develop symptoms themselves.
  - Routinely taking the temperature of pupils is not recommended by Public Health England as this is an unreliable method for identifying Covid-19.
- 2) *Clean hands thoroughly and more often than usual:*
- Staff and pupils must clean their hands regularly, including when they arrive at school, then they return from breaks, when they change rooms and before and after eating.
  - Regular and thorough hand cleaning is going to be needed for the foreseeable future.
- 3) *Ensure good respiratory hygiene by promoting the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach:*
- Public Health currently does not recommend the use of face coverings in schools, although this evidence will be kept under review.
  - Face coverings are required at all times on public transport or when attending the hospital as a visitor or an outpatient.
- 4) *Introduce enhanced cleaning, including cleaning frequently touched surfaces often, using standard products such as detergents and bleach:*
- There will be more frequent cleaning of rooms and shared areas used by different groups and regularly touched surfaces.

The following will be considered and measures applied to suit the needs of individual schools. You will be informed by your schools regarding the exact arrangements for your school.

- 5) *Minimise contact between individuals and maintain social distancing wherever possible:*
- To reduce the number of contacts between children and staff by keeping groups separate in bubbles and through maintaining distance between individuals – ideally 2 metres distance from other adults.
  - Children who have complex or close contact needs will receive education care and support as normal.
  - Large gatherings such as assemblies will be avoided.
  - Use of staffrooms and shared areas will be minimised.
  - Face coverings should be removed by pupils and staff wearing them on arrival to school.
  - Specialists, clinicians, therapists and other support staff for pupils with SEND will be able to provide interventions as usual.
  - Frequently used equipment such as pencils and pens - staff and pupils will have their own items and they are not to be shared.
  - Classroom based resources such as books and games can be used and shared within bubbles or classes.
  - Sports, art and science equipment should be cleaned frequently and meticulously and always in between bubbles or to be rotated to allow them to be left unused for 48 hours (72 for plastics) between use by different bubbles.

Only applies in specific circumstances:

- 6) *Where necessary, wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE)*

## **Response to any infection**

Measures that be followed in every case where relevant:

7) *Engage with the NHS Test and Trace process. All families must:*

- Be ready and willing to book a test if displaying symptoms. (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-getting-tested>).
- Provide details of anyone you have been in close contact with if you are tested positive with Covid-19 or if asked by Test and Trace.
- Self isolate if you have been in contact with someone who develops symptoms or has tested positive for Covid-19.

8) *Manage confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) amongst the school community:*

- Schools will contact the local health protection team if aware that someone has attended school and has tested positive for Covid-19.

9) *Contain any outbreak by following local health protection team advice:*

- If schools have two or more confirmed cases within 14 days, or an overall rise in sickness where Covid-19 is suspected, they may have an outbreak and must continue to work with their local health protection team who will be able to advise if additional action is required.

## **Attendance**

School attendance will be mandatory again from the beginning of the Autumn term. This means that from that point, the usual rules on school attendance will apply, including:

- Parents' duty to secure that their child attends regularly at school where the child is a registered pupil at school and they are of compulsory school age;
- Schools' will be recording attendances as normal and follow up absences;
- The availability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices in line with local authorities' codes of conduct.

## **Travelling to School**

All families are encouraged to walk or cycle to school if at all possible. Those using public transport should refer to (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-travel-guidance-for-passengers>).

## **Guidance for those who are Shielding**

Shielding advice for all adults and children will pause on the 1<sup>st</sup> of August, subject to a continued decline in the rates of community transmission of Covid-19. Read current advice on shielding here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19>

## **Mental Health Support**

We understand this has been a very difficult period for a number of reasons and some of our pupils and families may require some additional support as they re-adjust to school life. There will be a number of measures put into place to support the emotional needs of our children and our families. The first part of the half term will be devoted to supporting the well-being of our children and your school will be able to provide you with more detail on the support offered to your child.

## Taking Holidays

We understand that some families may have plans to take holidays overseas during the Summer holiday period. Please ensure you read the following Government guidance before travelling abroad: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-how-to-self-isolate-when-you-travel-to-the-uk/coronavirus-covid-19-how-to-self-isolate-when-you-travel-to-the-uk>. It is of the expectation that all children are required to be available for school at the start of the Autumn term.

## Catering

We expect that school kitchens will be fully open from the start of Autumn term. All school kitchens will comply with Government guidance for food businesses on coronavirus.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-food-businesses/guidance-for-food-businesses-on-coronavirus-covid-19>. For those families who have been eligible for the Free School Meal vouchers through the Edenred portal since April, please note that the final weekly vouchers will be distributed on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> July. You will have no doubt seen in the news that the COVID Summer Food Voucher Scheme will also provide vouchers over the Summer holiday period. These vouchers which will cover a six week period will be distributed a day later on Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> July. **Please can you ensure that you redeem your vouchers as soon as possible - by Friday 17<sup>th</sup> July at the very latest as there is now a shorter voucher expiry date, and with schools closed staff will not be available to assist with individual queries.**

## Educational Visits

Current Government advice is against domestic UK overnight and overseas educational visits at this stage, however it states that in the Autumn term, schools can resume non-overnight domestic educational visits for pupils. The official guidelines for this will continue to be updated and all of our schools will respond accordingly and families will be kept updated on this matter.

## Remote Education

All of our schools now have a Microsoft Office 365 Pupil Platform and training has taken place. This is an online classroom environment where staff are able to set and mark work for their classes. This will continue to run as an essential component in the delivery of our curriculum.

## Uniform

All schools are encouraged to return to our usual uniform policies for September. Individual uniform requirements are detailed on our school websites. Uniforms do not need to be cleaned any more frequently than usual, nor do they need to be cleaned using methods which are different from normal.

It is important to note that if the current situation alters and there are any significant changes to the official guidance, we will ensure our families are updated accordingly. Please make sure that you check your school websites regularly and you notify our school offices immediately if there are any changes to your contact details to ensure we can get any important updates to you in a timely manner.

Unfortunately we still remain in uncertain times and it is impossible to predict the future, however I am very hopeful that if the infection rate continues to drop as it has been doing and we can look forward to opening our doors once again to all children within our schools.

The support we have received from our families, has been nothing short of amazing and has been very much appreciated at this time. Thank you.

Yours sincerely



**Amarjit Cheema OBE**  
Chief Executive Officer

