

Shepherds Down School

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Headteacher: Mrs Debby Gooderham



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Dear Parents and Carers,

I am pleased to confirm that after the announcement on Monday evening, we will be stopping the rota system and encouraging all children to return to school full time from 8th March. I know for some of you, particularly those of you that have been keeping your child at home during lockdown, the prospect of sending your child back to school or even increased numbers in school might be a concern. So firstly, I want to reassure you that we will continue to do everything we can to keep everyone safe and minimise the risk of transmission of the virus. In order to do this we will continue to follow all of the precautions identified in the risk assessment. To remind you these are the main current precautions we have in place:

Face Coverings:

- All staff to wear face coverings at busy times of the day – can I remind all parents to also wear face coverings when they drop off and pick up their child
- Masks will not be worn within the classroom and during activities within the school day as it is important for children to see adults faces and feel able to interact as normal. We will not be asking children to wear masks.

Cleaning:

- Frequent hand washing, including at every transition, by all children and staff and sanitising of surfaces throughout the day
- Handles and frequently touched surfaces around school are cleaned regularly during the day and any resources that will be hard to keep clean are removed for the moment

Within classes:

- Children in their own class with a consistent staff team and as far as possible close contact limited to those children and staff within the class group.
- Classes part of a bigger social 'bubble' of 2 - 3 classes, depending on the cover arrangements needed. There will be some movement of staff between the classes in these 'bubbles' e.g. for PPA cover, covering part time staff, lunchtime cover and absence cover but not beyond these bubbles.
- Ventilation of all classrooms throughout the day. Public Health England are very clear in the role circulation of air plays in transmission of the virus. Whilst the weather still remains cold can I ask that you ensure that your child will be warm enough if the window is open in their classroom e.g. fleece, thermal under layer, extra jumper.
- Classes organised to provide as much space as possible and children sitting opposite each other will be avoided. The number of children in the dining hall reduced and most classes eat in their own class, again children positioned next to each other not sitting opposite each other
- Sharing of resources such as pencils is minimised – each child has their own labelled stationery resources

Mixing within school:

- Transitions around school are staggered to ensure there is not any mixing of classes apart from passing in the corridor
- Activities involving large groups, such as assemblies, and going off-site have been stopped



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- Use of inside communal spaces e.g. soft play, is timetabled to one class at a time and sanitised between each class group
- Playtime rotas are in place so that only 2 'bubbles' will be on the playground at the same time and equipment is wiped down before the next children use it.
- Staggered start and end times – please can those parents transporting their own children arrive between 9:10 and 9:20am in the morning and 3:10 and 3:20pm after school.
- Visitors to school limited to those necessary for children's education e.g. therapists

In the case of symptoms/positive case:

- Any child or staff member with possible symptoms will be immediately isolated, sent home and expected to get a test.
- The child or staff member and their household should remain at home until the outcome of the test. If the test is positive the child/staff member will need to remain at home for at least 10 days after the start of their symptoms, and the rest of their household will also need to isolate for 10 days.
- Public Health will be contacted if there is any suspected case and their advice will be followed – this is likely to be the isolation of the rest of the class first and larger 'bubbles' if there is more than one case.
- If a child on the bus was to test positive, then all the children on this bus would also need to isolate for 10 days

Testing:

- We will also be continuing with our twice weekly Lateral Flow testing for staff, which should detect any asymptomatic cases within the staff. There are no plans for testing for children at the moment.

We would also like to ask for your continued support as we increase the numbers in school, in particular can I ask that you:

- Remain vigilant to any symptoms of coronavirus with your child or anyone in your household and keep your child away from school and seek a test ASAP.
- Keep your child at home if anyone in the household is getting a test, until the result is known
- Keep school informed of any changes in your child or other members of the household health, especially in relation to coronavirus symptoms
- Keep your child at home for 10 days if you are informed by school that one of the adults or children in your child's class or 'bubble' (depending on the advice from public health) has tested positive for COVID 19
- Keep your child at home if they are unwell, even when it not in relation to COVID 19 – to limit spread of infections of any kind at this time, especially as we have limited cover options within 'bubbles'
- Ensure that your child is not having close contact with anyone outside of their household/childcare bubble, in accordance with the current government guidance to reduce the risk of transmission
- Arrive between 9:10 – 9:20pm and 3:10 – 3:20pm if you are transporting your child to and from school to minimise congestion and observe social distancing whilst waiting and when talking to staff.
- Please do not come into school when picking up or dropping off your child – this enables us to limit the visitors within school at this time.
- Wear a mask when you drop off and pick up your child
- Ensure your child has sufficient clothing to keep them warm in a ventilated classroom.
- Model good hand hygiene at home with your child

I want to provide the opportunity for any parents who have concerns about their child returning to school at this time, to discuss these with myself and so I will be in touch over the next few days, to provide the opportunity for this. However, if you would prefer, please discuss your child's return with your child's class teacher when they contact you this week.

The transport team have also confirmed that they are planning to provide their normal service from the 8th March. They do however, still have some escorts shielding so there will be some restriction to their capacity at the moment. They will be in touch with you directly if this affects transport for your child.

Whilst we are very happy to be able to fully re-open for all children, we will still face some challenges over the next few weeks. In particular, we still have some limitations in relation to staffing as we have restrictions on our cover options for absence whilst we avoid mixing beyond bubbles. If there is no alternative and the staffing levels are not safe we might have to close a class at short notice. Obviously we will try to avoid doing this but I can't rule it out as a possibility at this time.

Whilst all children are settling back into school and coming together again as a class we will follow the relevant aspects of the recovery curriculum, as we did in September. We intend for this to allow for routines and structures to be re-established and for children to settle back into learning as they get used to all being together again.

I am really pleased that we will be able to get back to some degree of normality for all children, however, I know for some parents and children this may also be unsettling and cause some anxiety. Please let me know if there is any help you need from school to support your child at this time and do not hesitate to contact me if you have any concerns about school at this time.

Debby