

Corporate Services
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Dear Parents/Carers

Welcome back (further COVID-19 updates)

It was with great pleasure that we welcomed back pupils and staff after such a long period of uncertainty and change. Whilst we are aware that things probably will not be “back to normal” for the foreseeable future, we are keen to create a new normal that supports the complexities of our individual Centres, but most importantly supports us all to remain safe and healthy.

I will be outlining in this letter the most up to government guidance, and what our plans are to continue to support your child attending school safely.

The guidance was largely as anticipated and has not resulted in us taking a drastically different approach to any of the procedures that we had laid out prior to this. Since then, the Government has also released a supporting document for parents relating to children's return to school. The link is below:

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/what-parents-and-carers-need-to-know-about-early-years-providers-schools-and-colleges-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak?utm_source=2%20September%202020%20C19&utm_medium=Daily%20Email%20C19&utm_campaign=DfE%20C19

Furthermore, I was intending to send this letter to you on Friday, but delayed it till today due to news of Birmingham going into local lockdown. The DfE have since confirmed that all Birmingham schools will be moving to Tier 1 in their phased approach to managing the spread of COVID-19 in schools. The directive is that

Tier 1

There are no changes to childcare, and the only difference in education settings is that where pupils in year 7 and above are educated, face coverings should be worn by adults and pupils when moving around the premises, outside of classrooms, such as in corridors and communal areas where social distancing cannot easily be maintained.

All nurseries, childminders, schools, colleges and other educational establishments should remain open and continue to allow all their children and young people to attend, on site, with no other restrictions in place.

The expectation therefore will be that staff and pupils will wear face coverings in corridors and communal spaces. Wearing face coverings is not compulsory in classrooms, as there will be other measures in place to

reduce the risk of transmission, although staff and pupils are able to wear them if they choose to. We can provide face masks to any young people who need them.

I have also tried to answer any questions that you might have in the **Frequently Asked Questions** at the end of this letter.

School testing for coronavirus

Like many of you, over the past few weeks, I have received numerous chain mail type messages regarding “government guidance” around how schools will enforce mandatory tests on children and even more concerning, how children will be sent to test centres without their parents' consent. This is fake news which understandably has caused concern for many parents. I have provided a summary below of what the guidance is around school testing kits.

- We, like all other schools will receive a small number of self-testing kits in the post.
- Self-testing kits will only be given to pupils in exigent circumstances who are unable to attend test centres, order online or are at risk of not being tested. Individual circumstances will be reviewed, and your child's Centre Leader will come to this decision with you.
- Any pupils that become symptomatic on school site will be asked to be collected by a parent/carer and taken to the nearest test centre.
- Information from the test centre will not be shared with James Brindley regarding results. It is the pupils/parents/carers responsibility to liaise with your child's Centre regarding results.
- If a pupil receives a test kit from JBA, no testing will be conducted on site. All self-test kits should be completed at home.
- If parents/carers are struggling with the use of the kits, they are to contact the coronavirus testing centre on 119 for support.
- Instructions are included in the self-testing kit and all information must be checked and logged online before sending via the priority box with Royal Mail using the barcode provided.
- Test kits can only be given to pupils, no additional test kits to be given to family members even if symptomatic
- If a positive test result is received, pupils are to follow government guidelines at time of being symptomatic but as it stands, pupils are not to attend school for a minimum of 10 days or for as long as they are symptomatic. If anyone in the household is symptomatic then pupils are to self-isolate for 14 days before returning to school.
- If the test conducted comes back negative, then no additional time is required off school
- Pupils are free to retest if new symptoms develop, there are no restrictions concerning this.

School Transport

I am aware that a number of parents have directly raised complaints with their child's Centre Leader regarding transport. Some of you do not feel that social distancing is being adhered to effectively. This was an issue we raised with the Local Authority, before we broke up for the summer and their response (in line with govt guidance) was that,

“Pupils on dedicated school services do not mix with the general public on those journeys and tend to be consistent. The 2m rule applied to public transport will not apply from the autumn term on dedicated transport.”

Subsequently, all the Birmingham Special School Headteachers have written a letter to Birmingham City Council to address and express your concerns about the School Transport service. We will keep you informed on any updates. In the meantime, we are happy to provide PPE to any pupils for their taxi journeys.

There are many aspects of school life that may at times feel slightly different. However, most of our centres will feel comfortable and familiar. Our caring and supporting ethos will not change. Our pupils have returned to a school where staff are excited to see them and are eager to get them back into good learning habits and return to face to face teaching and learning.

We will continue to keep you informed regarding any changes and adaptations that we make and will be communicating in due course about how we intend to continue to deliver Parents Evenings and other events throughout the course of the term.

Thank you once again for your support and understanding in our preparations for a return to school.

Yours faithfully



Tosin Gabriel
Vice Principal – Head of Parkway, Northfield and Dovedale Centres

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What if my child is unwell?

This winter will pose challenges for determining what symptoms of Coronavirus are and what are symptoms of winter flu or a general cold.

Where a child has mild cold symptoms, they can continue to attend school.

The main symptoms of Coronavirus are:

- a high temperature – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature)
- a new, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual)
- a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste – this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal.

If your child presents with one or more of these symptoms, they must not attend school and should remain at home. We urge all parents to access a test as quickly as possible and to inform the school of the results.

How do I report Covid-19 related pupil absence?

A quick reference guide for parents and staff (September 2020)

What to do if...	Action Needed	Return to school when...
...my child has Covid-19 symptoms.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do not come to school - Contact school to inform us - Self-isolate the whole household - Get a test - Inform the school immediately about the test result 	...the test comes back negative or a period of 10 days has passed since the symptoms started, and the child feels well.
...my child tests positive for Covid-19.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do not come to school. - Contact school to inform us. - Agree an earliest date for possible return (minimum of 10 days). - Self-isolate the whole household. 	...10 days have passed since symptoms began, even if they still have a cough or loss of taste/smell. <i>(These symptoms can last for several weeks.)</i> AND the child feels well.
...my child tests negative.	- Contact school to inform us.	...the test comes back negative.

	- Discuss when your child can come back (same day/next day).	
...my child is ill with symptoms not linked to Covid-19.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do not come to school. - Contact school to inform us. - Ring on each day of illness. 	...after 48 hours following the last bout of sickness or diarrhoea (as per attendance policy)
...someone in my household has Covid-19 symptoms.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do not come to school. - Contact school to inform us. - Self-isolate the whole household. - Household member to get a test. - Inform school immediately about test result. 	...the test comes back negative.
...someone in my household tests positive for Covid-19.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do not come to school. - Contact school to inform us. - Agree an earliest date for possible return (minimum of 14 days). - Self-isolate the whole household. 	...the child has completed 14 days of isolation.
...NHS test and trace has identified my child as a close contact of somebody with symptoms or confirmed Covid-19.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do not come to school. - Contact school to inform us. - Agree an earliest date for possible return (minimum of 14 days). 	...the child has completed 14 days of isolation.
...NHS test and trace has identified a household member (other than my child) as a close contact of somebody with symptoms or confirmed Covid-19.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The household member must self-isolate for 14 days. - Child can continue to attend school. 	...child can continue to attend school
... a sibling attending another school has been sent home to self-isolate due to their being a positive case in their school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sibling must self-isolate for 14 days. - JBA child(ren) can continue to attend. 	...child can continue to attend school
... my child has travelled abroad from a country or	If returning from a destination where quarantine is needed*:	...the quarantine period of 14 days has been completed.

<p>territory that is NOT on the exempt list of countries.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - minimum of 14 days self-isolation for all those who travelled. - contact school to inform us you are back in the country and we will agree an earliest date for possible return to school. - Self-isolate the whole household. <p><u>*Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO)</u> – for up to date travel information</p>	
<p>... my child has travelled abroad from a country or territory that IS on the exempt list of countries.</p>	<p>If returning from a destination where quarantine is NOT needed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Check the current <u>Exempt countries and territories list</u> to confirm the country you have travelled from or through is on the exempt list. - Ring school to inform us you have returned to the UK and agree a return date to school. 	<p>... you have informed the office of your return to the UK (<i>the office will ask you a few questions about your travel</i>).</p>
<p>...I have travelled from a country that requires us to quarantine (but my child didn't travel).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - As long as you do not have / have not had symptoms in the last 14 days, your child can continue to attend school. - The person who has travelled MUST NOT leave the house, including to do pick-ups and drop offs (<i>please contact school if you need support getting your child to school</i>). 	<p>...child can continue to attend school</p>
<p>...we have received medical advice that my child must resume shielding.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do not come to school. - Contact school to inform us. - Shield until you are informed that restrictions are lifted and shielding is paused again. 	<p>...school inform you that restrictions have been lifted and your child can return to school again.</p> <p>...you receive medical advice that your child may return to school.</p>
<p>...my child's bubble is closed due to a Covid-19 outbreak in school.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Child must not come to school. - Support your child at home with remote education provided by your school. - Your child will need to self-isolate for 14 days. 	<p>...school inform you that the bubble will be reopened.</p>

	- Other siblings may continue to attend school.	
... I am unable to get a test for someone in the household who has symptoms	<i>If you are not able to get a test in the first 5 days of having symptoms, your child and anyone they live with must stay at home and self-isolate for 14 days. Anyone in your support bubble must also stay at home.</i>	...the child has completed 14 days of isolation.

What if another child is unwell? How will I know?

In this scenario we will work with our local Public Health Office and act upon their guidance. We will only contact you regarding the ill health of another child if we are made aware that a child, that your child has been in close contact with, has tested positive for Covid-19. In this case we will contact you and ask you to follow Government guidance which is to send home those people who have been in close contact with the person who has tested positive, advising them to self-isolate for 14 days since they were last in close contact with that person when they were infectious. Close contact means:

- direct close contact - face to face contact with an infected individual for any length of time, within 1 metre, including being coughed on, a face to face conversation, or unprotected physical contact (skin-to-skin)
- proximity contact - extended close contact (within 1 to 2 metres for more than 15 minutes) with an infected individual
- travelling in a small vehicle, like a car, with an infected person

What happens if there is a case of COVID-19 at my child’s Centre?

As above, we will work with our local Public Health Office and be guided in our response by them. Our priority will be identifying any other pupils and staff that the child or staff member has been in close contact with.

Will my child's attendance be affected if they have to self-isolate?

No, pupils who are asked to self-isolate are marked differently on our registration system and their attendance will not be affected. This will apply until the point when a pupil receives a negative test result and can return to school or they end their period of 10 or 14 day self-isolation.

My child is still worried about returning to school, how will they be supported?

We are mindful that some pupils will have a mixture of emotions regarding being at school with the ongoing situation. All our staff are particularly mindful of this. We have worked hard in preparation for the return of pupils in terms of our use of language for learning and ensuring that we provide a supportive and considerate environment for our pupils to return to. Those pupils who require further support will be supported via our

pastoral teams. In the event that your child is feeling particularly concerned please make your child's Centre Leader aware.

What are the different sites doing to reduce the risk of transmission?

Each Centre has several different processes and procedures to reduce the risk of transmission. Please see the academy risk assessment here <https://www.jamesbrindley.org.uk/attachments/download.asp?file=632&type=pdf>. As a brief summary, each Centre will ensure that:

- Reduce congregation in corridors or any other communal spaces
- Introduce hand sanitising points in each classroom and across communal spaces
- Provide anti-bacterial wipes to enable students to wipe down their workspace / desk as they arrive and leave their lesson
- Maintain ventilation by keeping windows open
- Promote good respiratory hygiene
- Promote good hand hygiene
- Promote social distancing
- Reinforce all the points above through thorough signage and continual education through assemblies and form activities.

Are visitors allowed at my child's Centre?

We are continuing, certainly in the first instance, to restrict the number of visitors and parents/carers on our sites. We would, therefore, please request that you do not come to reception unless you have a pre-arranged invitation. If you have need to speak to a member of staff or have a question that you would like answered, please continue to access the main reception at your child's Centre.

Will my child be doing PE?

Yes, we will continue to offer PE; some activities continue to be restricted so your child's curriculum in PE may be different to normal.

Will children use and share equipment in school such as computers and practical equipment?

Yes. We have carried out robust risk assessments and have made sensible decisions regarding what equipment can be safely used. Where we feel equipment cannot be sanitised effectively between use, we will not use it. Equipment such as computers will be used by enabling pupils to wipe down the keyboard, mouse and workstation with anti-bacterial wipes prior to them beginning their lessons.

What if my child's Centre must close because of a confirmed COVID-19 case?

In this instance, we would be delivering learning remotely to your child. You should have received a survey about your child's access to technology. Can you please complete that as soon as possible so we can ensure your child is equipped with the technology they need to access learning from home.