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Children and Young People's Services

Dear Families

I am writing to inform you about the arrangements for your child's return to school in light of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the recent Government announcement that schools would be allowed to open to more children.

We are living in unprecedented and very challenging times and I am sure, like many other parents, both you and your child will have some anxiety about returning to school which is completely understandable in the current situation. However, please be assured that as a school we are following the Government's guidance and have received advice from the Council to ensure your child will be as safe as possible upon their return. It is important to put everything into perspective and reassure your child that they will be safe upon their return. Only 3 of the people who have died from COVID-19 in England and Wales were children of primary school age.

It is important to be aware that some children may transmit the virus to others, even without symptoms. It is therefore important that you understand the symptoms of coronavirus, your own personal risk and what to do if you or a family member gets symptoms or is advised to self-isolate.

The symptoms of COVID-19 are continuous cough, fever and loss or change in sense of smell or taste. If anyone in your household has symptoms of COVID-19 you should all stay at home and immediately arrange for the person to be tested. Visit www.nhs.uk/coronavirus/ to arrange a test. If you are contacted by NHS Test and Trace service and told you or your household member has been in contact with someone with COVID-19, you should follow their advice to self-isolate to protect yourself and others. Please let school know if your child is staying at home because someone in your household has symptoms or they are identified as a contact.

The people at risk from being more seriously affected from COVID-19 are older people, those with underlying health condition and pregnant women. People aged 70 and over account for 83% of deaths from COVID-19 and 90% of people who have died had an underlying health condition. People from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Groups and those living in deprived areas are also at increased risk of being more seriously affected by COVID-19. This is likely to be due to higher rates of underlying health problems in these groups and social and economic factors that increase risk such as housing, low income and working in roles that carry a higher risk. The link below gives more information about who is at higher risk. <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/people-at-higher-risk-from-coronavirus/whos-at-higher-risk-from-coronavirus/>

The Local Authority has a statutory duty under the Health and Safety at Work Act (1974) for the safety of staff and for your child and we have completed risk assessments and followed all the Government advice for the school environment. However if you have not done so already please can you also ensure that the school is made aware of any significant underlying health condition(s) that your child may have as I will need to discuss those risks with you and take any necessary advice accordingly.



I also have moral duty to ensure your safety as a parent as well as those in your most immediate household who may become inadvertently affected. In light of this, I have provided this information from the Local Authority in order for you to assess your own personal risks before you send your child back to school and decide on what, if any, safety precautions you need to take.

Clearly it is your responsibility to decide whether it is appropriate to send your child back to school and unfortunately this is not something I can be involved with or direct you on any further as it is a personal decision. However, if you, your family or a member of your household is in a particular risk group, I would ask that you look very carefully at the Government information online and the statistical information available which shows which groups are at an increased risk and this should allow you to make a balanced judgement. I have attached a flow chart that sets out the guidance and which you may find helpful.

As I am sure you understand, the school will do everything it can to maintain a safe environment, however I cannot guarantee that your child or one of their friends will not come within the 'social distancing' guideline of 2 metre separation or maintain the necessary hand and respiratory hygiene whatever Government advice we follow. We are dealing with young children who will be so happy to see their friends and who will naturally want to play in the normal way. I would always advise you to ensure that your child washes their hands and face as soon as they return from school and ideally has a bath or a shower. If clothes can be washed immediately on return home then obviously this will also help to mitigate any potential risk.

Obviously if your child is unwell please keep them off school and please inform the school if they are displaying any COVID-19 symptoms of: high temperature *or* new, continuous cough *or* loss or change to sense of smell or taste.

Whatever your decision, there is no problem if you decide not to send your child to school at the moment. The Government is clear that no sanction will be taken against a parent who does not send their child to school at this time.

To conclude, I would suggest that if you are not in the risk groups above; you and your child have no underlying health problems; you have no one else within the family home in the risk groups or with underlying health problems, the risks to you and your child are minimal and you should not be concerned about sending your child to school at this current time. Please be assured that your child's safety is my priority, what I am asking you to do is to consider your personal family risk and that of the wider community.

As restrictions are lifted there could be changes in the level of COVID-19 in the community so it will be important to keep the situation under review.

Please be aware if a teacher or child in your child's class contracts the virus the Test and Trace programme will assess whether your child is classed as a contact and they may be asked to isolate for 14 days.

Finally, may I take this opportunity to wish you and your family my best wishes at this difficult time and as always we look forward to seeing you and your child in the not so distant future.

If you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Lisa Hoyle
Headteacher