

5 November 2020

Dear Parents / Carers

UPDATE

You could all be forgiven for being a little 'fed up' of these regular updates! I am always sorry to bombard you with information, or fill your email inboxes. We will continue to try to strike a balance between information overload and keeping you fully up-to-date with ever-changing guidance and the ongoing complex situation. As ever, thank you for your patience and understanding!

Since Saturday's announcement by the Prime Minister we have been awaiting revised guidance from the Department for Education with regard to the new national restrictions which begin today and last until Wednesday 2 December. This guidance arrived late yesterday, and we are likely to receive further guidance from the Local Authority in due course.

As a school we continue to apply all the control measures, which we have outlined to you previously, and which have been scrutinised externally. I have been delighted with the positive feedback we have had from officials within Environmental Health and the Health Protection Team regarding our efforts in limiting transmission and keeping our community safe.

CLINICALLY EXTREMELY VULNERABLE

The only significant change, which has implications for our school, relates to those who are deemed **clinically extremely vulnerable**. Most children originally identified as clinically extremely vulnerable no longer need to follow original shielding advice. Parents are advised to speak to their child's GP or specialist clinician if they have not already done so, to understand whether their child should still be classed as clinically extremely vulnerable.

Those children whose medical professionals have confirmed they are still clinically extremely vulnerable are advised not to attend education whilst the national restrictions are in place. It is essential that you inform school immediately if this is the case, and share the letter or communication you received. In such cases, remote learning will be provided.

Please note that the guidance states that children who live with someone who is clinically extremely vulnerable, but who are not clinically extremely vulnerable themselves, should still attend education.

SELF-ISOLATION INSTRUCTIONS

For the protection of all members of our school community can we remind all families that children should not come to school if:

- They or another member of the household are displaying symptoms. Please seek a COVID test as soon as possible. The household must all self-isolate pending the result of the test.
- They or another member of the household are awaiting the result of a COVID test. The household must all self-isolate pending the result of the test. Please let us know the test result as soon as possible.
- They or another member of the household have received a positive test result. The individual with the positive test must self-isolate for 10 days from the start of their symptoms. All other members of the household must self-isolate for 14 days.

In the event of a confirmed case within our school community we will continue to identify who has been in close contact and send them home to self-isolate. **Given this can happen at very short notice it is important that you have plans in place to manage this scenario if your child is required to self-isolate.** Changing our timetable model back in September to reduce the number of lessons in a day has meant that we need to ask fewer individuals to self-isolate. It is essential though that **all** families follow the self-isolation instructions to minimise the disruption and risk to others.

Once again, I wanted to share that we completely understand the impact that self-isolation can have on our families. We will only ask a child to self-isolate where, in line with the guidance, this is necessary and in the interests of curtailing the spread of the virus and keeping our community safe.

Unlike many other secondary schools across the country we have so far avoided the need to close a full year group bubble for more than a day (which only occurred at the outset when we were awaiting guidance from the Public Health authorities). Despite facing significant challenges, we are working incredibly hard with our staff, and investing heavily in supply costs, to try to avoid this scenario.

FACE COVERINGS

The rules around face coverings in school remain **unchanged** from those which were introduced a few weeks ago due to the local restrictions in Leeds. This means that they are compulsory for all pupils (unless a medical exemption) except when:

- Inside the classroom
- Eating or drinking, but it should be put back on immediately when finished

Face coverings are **not** to be worn in classrooms in line with Department for Education guidance.

It is essential that your child brings a clean face covering to school each day. The local authority recommend they bring two in case one gets dirty or damp. To ensure safe use:

- The face covering must cover both the nose and mouth at all times.
- Face coverings are removed immediately on entry to a classroom.
- The front of the face covering is not touched during use or when removing it.
- The face covering is stored in an individual, sealable plastic bag between uses.
- Hands are washed or sanitised before and after touching the face covering, including to remove or put it on.
- Reusable face coverings should be washed regularly, but must not be worn when damp. Temporary face covering must be disposed of in the general waste (not recycling).

We once again appreciate that there will be a wide variety of views amongst our school community about the nature, content and timing of the new restrictions and the government guidance for schools.

Please remember that, as a state-maintained school, we are duty bound to follow this guidance. We would respectfully request that any issues you might have about this guidance would be better directed at elected officials rather than school staff whose duty it is to apply the guidance received.

Finally, I would like to thank you all for your messages of support. In line with all schools, our staff are working incredibly hard to deliver a huge number of control measures and maintain a happy, purposeful environment in school, despite the significant capacity issues that we face. We will continue to work hard through the lockdown period because we all believe in the huge benefits of our pupils being in school. Your positive comments and feedback have been very much appreciated.

This has, once again, highlighted what a brilliant community we have.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Partington'.

Matthew Partington
Headteacher