

# Otterham C P School

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6<sup>th</sup> September 2021

Dear Parents

I hope you have all managed to enjoy some quality family time together and maybe even catch up with friends and family further afield. Here we are at the beginning of the 2021 academic year and I would like to extend a very warm welcome to you all but especially those of you who are new to Otterham School. We are a very friendly bunch and I am sure you will feel at home in no time at all.

Well unfortunately, although all government regulations regarding COVID ended on 19<sup>th</sup> July 2021, numbers in the SW have risen to such an extent that we now top the list of UK areas with the highest rates and have awarded the status of an Enhanced Response Area. I am not entirely sure what that means at the time of writing this other than we will need to maintain additional measures to reduce the chance of an outbreak within the school. The rates (404 per 100,000 in SW but 2,000 per 100,000 in Newquay) are expected to rise as children return to school/college over the next couple of weeks.

So, whilst understanding the government in stating that they would like children to have a 'normal experience in school' but also being acutely aware that case numbers are the highest that they have ever been, we shall be operating as follows and reviewing on a regular basis.

## **Start and end of the School Day**

The staggered start and end to the school day helped the parking congestion on the road and improved the safety for our school community. Therefore, we will be continuing with the arrangements previously in place.

**Reception** – Please bring your child to school at 8:40am. You are able to bring them in through the main entrance of the Elliot building, hang up coats and bags, encourage use of toilet and spend 5 minutes with them before exiting through the decked area, out on to the playground. Please collect your child at 3:15pm from the main entrance to the Elliot building.

**Surname beginning with A – N** – Please arrive at school between 8:45am and 8:50am using your designated entrance (Class 3 - main Elliot, Class 2 – side entrance through EYFS play area, Class 1 – main school entrance). Your end of the school day will be 3:20pm and you will exit through the same doors as you arrived.

**Surname beginning with M – Z** – Please arrive at school between 8:50 am and 8:55am using your designated entrance (see above). Your end of the school day will be 3:25pm and you will exit through the same doors as you arrived.

**Apart from the parents of the new Reception intake, we ask that parents remain outside during drop off and pick up times. If you would like to speak to a member of staff, they will come outside to you to have a conversation or make arrangements for a suitable time for a phone call or a meeting before/after school.**

## **Clubs**

Please note that Breakfast Club will be starting on Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> September with prices and timings remaining as Summer '21 - £3.50 per child, 08:00 – 08:45, cereal, toast, fruit etc included.

After School Clubs will resume week beginning 13<sup>th</sup> September 2021 and are TBC.

## **Masks**

Although no longer a requirement, I recommend that when on site and in close proximity to others, all parents, staff and visitors should wear a mask. Children will never be asked to wear a mask but may wish to do so for their own personal circumstances.

### **Classes groups rather than 'Bubbles'**

We will be continuing to operate as we were by the end of the Summer Term. Children will be mixing outside at playtimes, and during before and after school clubs. We will be gathering on a weekly basis, hopefully outside (weather permitting) to hold a whole school celebration assembly. If this needs to take place inside it will do so in a well-ventilated hall with space between each class.

### **Track and Trace**

A major difference to the new term is that those who are fully vaccinated and children under 18 years and 6 months will no longer need to isolate if they have been in close contact with a positive case. NHS Test and Trace are now dealing with contact tracing. In the case of an outbreak, measures will be further enhanced but attendance restrictions will be a last resort.

### **Hand washing/sanitising**

This will be encouraged/offered as regularly as during the Summer Term, which was up to 6 times daily, usually on exit and entry to the classroom.

### **Equipment**

Although communal resources will be available to all children, older children are encouraged to use their own resources wherever possible (pencil case resources). Younger children (Rec/KS1) are not expected to bring in any of their own, as it is tricky to monitor what belongs to who.

All children should bring in a clearly labelled water bottle containing water. This can be refilled throughout the day.

### **PE Kits**

In order to keep the amount of belongings being transported to and from school to a minimum, could we please ask that your child wears their PE Kit on the days they have PE lessons. Your child's teacher will communicate this to you this week. This also allows for children to have a longer time being active, leaving you the parents to be in charge of the teaching of dressing and undressing.

Class 3 do not need to wear anything different for PE during the Autumn Term. If your child does not wear trainers to school, could you please provide a change of footwear for PE (trainers / plimsolls).

### **Enhanced cleaning**

As well as the daily thorough clean before/after school, each space has cleaning products available for staff to use on frequently touched surfaces such as tables and door handles, although most door are propped open to save touching.

### **Ventilation**

We will be continuing to ensure all used spaces within school are well ventilated. The government are issuing CO2 monitors so that we can ensure adequate ventilation. Please be aware that as we enter the Autumn /Winter months, this may mean an extra layer of clothing is needed for your child in the form of a vest/T-shirt or jumper.

### **Testing**

Staff will be encouraged to continue testing themselves using a LFD test twice weekly. You as parents have free access to these kits (usually from your local pharmacy) and so are able to test both yourselves and your children, if you wish to do so. This may be on a regular basis or if you suspect you/your child are suffering from symptoms.

### **Testing positive on a LFD Test**

Adults and pupils may test positive on a LFD Test without displaying any symptoms (asymptomatic). If this happens to you or your child, you should seek a PCR test as soon as possible and remain in isolation until the results of that test. If negative, return to school. If positive, remain in isolation for 10 days from showing a positive result on the LFD. Even if you have been vaccinated, you can catch and transmit COVID.

### **Adults or children displaying symptoms within school**

Obviously, if an adult or child develops any symptoms they should not come to school but should seek a PCR test. If they are at school when symptoms develop, they should go home/be collected as soon as possible and arrange a PCR test. You should remain in isolation until either the result comes back negative or you complete the 10 days of isolation from the onset of symptoms. Again, even if you have been vaccinated, you can catch and transmit COVID.

### **Staff Absence**

I hope that we remain COVID free and this scenario never comes to fruition but unfortunately, we do need to plan for it. If we have a number of staff become ill with COVID and are unable to cover the class(es) with the staff available within the school or by calling on supply staff (if available), we may need to close a class and move to remote learning for a week or so. If the teachers are ill, they will be unable to provide live, face-to-face lessons and so you would be signposted towards pre-loaded resources on Google Classrooms/school website. Alas, this situation may happen with very short notice for you as parents. It may be wise to have a contingency plan in place, just in case.

So...

Our 5 key principles to prevent the spread of infection at school are:

- 1) Stay at home if ill and get tested
- 2) Wash your hands, catch your coughs
- 3) Clean and ventilate
- 4) Promote routine asymptomatic testing (twice weekly, staff only)
- 5) Identification of close contacts (mainly NHS Test and Trace)

### **School Lunches**

Please remember to order via the Aspens app and notify the school if there are any allergies we need to be aware of.

I look forward to the start of a term when COVID is no longer a major theme of my welcome letter. However, despite all of the above, it must be noted that staff have been working hard during the holidays to prepare for the term ahead. Classroom environments and planning indicate an exciting term ahead for our school and all being well, that sense of normality will be evident with children accessing effective teaching that moves their learning forward.

Further communications will be sent during the coming days regarding clubs, curriculum advice for your child's Autumn learning and a response to any questions required as a result of this communication.

All of the staff here are looking forward to welcoming you and your children back on Wednesday, 8<sup>th</sup> September.

As always, any questions, do not hesitate to ask – there seems to be so much to remember!

Kindest regards

Helen Ward