

28th September 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

I would like to start this letter with a huge thank you to everyone who has made the return to school so successful. We delighted to have our children back in our schools again; they have been working hard and have adapted to the new routines exceptionally well. I would like to extend my thanks to you, our parents and carers, for your positivity and support of the new routines and making sure we have high levels of attendance across our schools. Opening schools has not been without its challenges, but staff across the Trust have worked hard to ensure that children are happy, settled and enjoying being back.

As we expected when our children returned to school after being isolated in a bubble at home for so long, many of them have developed sniffles and a cold. I understand that you will be anxious about your child being unwell, especially with infection rates going up nationally. I also understand how difficult it can be to determine the difference between a cold and the virus, without a test. Just a reminder that 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
- Most people with coronavirus have **at least 1 of these symptoms**

Parents and carers are requested to get their child tested **only** if they are experiencing the symptoms outlined above. If they have cold or cough without the symptoms above, they should be in school when they feel well enough to attend. The following NHS symptom checker is also helpful and can be used with adults and children <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/symptoms/>

I would like to reiterate that our Headteachers are following Public Health England guidance and seeking out expert advice when necessary. They have been managing a number of complex scenarios and are working really hard to ensure that they keep their community safe and well. Please be patient. Bubble closure is determined by the Department of Education and Public Health. Public Health England (PHE) guidance also states that where there are siblings attending in other classes, they may still attend school unless they have symptoms. If you have a child at home who is isolating, and need to collect siblings, please liaise with the school to ensure safe drop off and pick up.

Nobody wants children to be out of school longer than is necessary, nor do we want a COVID outbreak which results in bubbles being sent home, teaching staff not being available or whole school closure. It is really important that we all work together on this for the good of our communities and to ensure that schools remain open with continued high levels of attendance. In rapidly changing times we will work to keep you clearly informed, thank you again for working with our school communities.

Yours faithfully,

Paula Farrow
CEO