

3rd September 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope you and your families have had a restful and enjoyable summer break and that you feel energised and ready for the new school year. We are very much looking forward to welcoming all of our children and families back to our schools.

Over the summer Headteachers and school staff have been working hard to ensure schools are ready for the safe reopening for pupils. As well as the completion of comprehensive risk assessments at each school, staff have given considerable thought as to how they will support all pupils, in all year groups, to get back on track in terms of their learning, as well as taking the time to support children's wellbeing. I hope that the letters and communications you have received from your Headteachers will have reassured you that school is safe to reopen. Risk assessments will be published on the school website, after consultation with staff, and school staff will remain vigilant to ensure that they keep our school community as safe as possible. We cannot eliminate risk, but we will do whatever we can do to minimise it in schools, working with our parents and our communities. You will be aware that government guidance expects all pupils to return to school from September in order to minimise the negative impact on their education and wellbeing.

The Government guidance is continually being updated and we will continue to keep you informed of any changes to routines or requirements. Last week it was announced that secondary school staff and pupils could wear masks in communal areas and in any close contact activities, at the school's discretion. This guidance is not applicable to primary schools. We have, however, provided visors as an option for staff **if they choose** to wear them when working closely with children and in any communal areas. The wearing of visors is not mandatory and will vary from school to school.

As part of the re-opening of our schools, I would like to reinforce key public health guidance to reduce the risk of infection. Please see the flowchart attached to this letter. We want to work with you and your co-operation in informing the school of the outcomes of any tests completed is appreciated. Please note we will not be testing children in school.

When someone tests positive for COVID-19 they will be contacted by NHS Test and Trace – either online, by text or over the phone – and be asked to provide information on where they've been and who they have seen to inform what contact tracing is required. If the positive case works in or has visited a setting such as a school they will be referred to London Coronavirus Response Cell to ensure that the appropriate advice is given to prevent onward spread of the virus.

For situations that are particularly complex, for example an outbreak (defined as two or more linked cases in a setting) or where the setting poses challenges for contact tracing and isolation, the London Coronavirus Response Cell may hold an outbreak control meeting, inviting representatives from the school, other local stakeholders such as the Local Authority, local NHS and communications teams to agree what the response should be, to investigate the outbreak further and prevent onward spread. If schools are implementing suggested controls, addressing the risks identified and therefore reducing transmission risks, whole school closure will not generally be necessary. School closures can only occur if directed by the London Coronavirus Response Cell.

Most of the procedures and systems in place occur in the background, so the children will not be aware of them. Of course, schools will be different as staff focus on social distancing, good respiratory hygiene and handwashing, but hopefully will still feel like school.

Please be aware that our leaders are navigating and implementing significant, evolving Government guidance to ensure that all members of their community stay safe. I am extremely grateful for all the support we have received so far from our parents, carers and school communities and appreciate your patience and understanding as pupils to return to school.

Yours faithfully,

Paula Farrow
CEO

Flowchart for Parents/Carers

What to do if someone has symptoms of COVID-19

