



Old Heath Community Primary School

Headteacher
Amanda Mitchelson

'Tell the truth & show respect.
Think of others & try our best'



25th August 2020

Dear Parents

I hope that you and your family are all well and are beginning to get ready for coming back to school! I know some of you will be unsure of the situation and for others especially those who returned to school as part of the priority groups or the key worker provision you will be familiar with what is being asked of you and how school is preparing to implement the system of controls the Government is asking us to put in place. Some of you will have widened your family social bubbles, attended small parties and possibly have been to restaurants, pubs etc. under the easing of lockdown as permitted by the Government and some of you will have stayed very close to home. As I write there is a debate starting about wearing masks in schools, currently there is no such guidance in place for UK schools, with the exception of staff when dealing closely with children in First Aid situations etc. Should anything change with this situation before we do return to school then I will ensure you are aware of the procedures for our school.

Practical things first!

- 1) Please arrive on time between 8.45am and 9am or pick up at 3pm to 3.15pm. If you arrive after 9am or 3.15pm you will have to wait whilst buggies and push chairs come back down the path.
- 2) Children will be in school uniform and school shoes
- 3) Children will need their PE kit including trainers/plimsolls
- 4) Children will need their own water bottle. We are unable to supply cups and we have had to turn water fountains etc. off. All classrooms have mains cold water supply so bottles can be refilled.
- 5) Please avoid using front office! We are trying very hard to limit the number of parents and children visiting the front office; it is a very small space and it is very hard to talk through the glass doors and not really advisable for office staff to be in such close proximity to the public. If you have something that you need to tell us urgently, please telephone in or if a longer message more complex issue, please send an email to admin@oldheath.essex.sch.uk. We will be providing details on how to pay school for school dinners etc. next week.



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Information on our GDPR procedures can be found on our website

- 6) Children do not need to bring their own pencil cases etc. All children in school have a stationery kit that has already been packed for them of brand new kit; pencils, felts, handwriting pens, scissors, glue stick as appropriate to year group. If you have been persuaded to buy a whole new set as part of the super markets' 'Back to School' campaigns, please leave them at home! Children have never actually needed to bring their own pencils, pens to school it is all provided for. Children should not be bringing any extra toys or fluffy items from home. We have had to remove soft furnishings and toys from classrooms.
- 7) Breakfast Club will be available on a pre booked basis. If you have not replied to the previous email re Breakfast Club please find it, read it and let the school know what days you need.
- 8) We will be running a dinner service. A menu for the first half term will be sent out via ParentMail. If you are able to print it off, there will be a box on a table in the playground for paperwork like dinner forms etc. to be returned. If you are unable to print off the form, there will be a supply of dinner menus for you to pick up on Friday when we return. If you wish you could email a list of days and dinners that we can print off at school. We have deliberately simplified menus so that dinners can be served to the children more efficiently sitting at their tables, as we have limited space in the hall and more cleaning between dinner sittings. On that first Friday back, the dinner available will be our traditional Friday fish fingers and chips, we will check in with each class/check number of lunch boxes and cook enough meals as necessary to ensure that every child eats at lunch time. If you know your child is not a fan of fish fingers and chips, please ensure that you provide a packed lunch!
- 9) At this current time, we will not be providing after school clubs due to the mixing of class bubbles.

Systems of Controls

The Government have outlined nine 'controls' where they expect schools to take action to either prevent or respond to any infection

PREVENTION

- 1) ***'minimise contact with individuals who are unwell by ensuring that those who have coronavirus COVID-19 symptoms, or who have someone in their household who does do not attend school'***

Our response is to say that children should not be brought to school if they show any of the symptoms; new continuous cough or high temperature or has had a loss or change in their sense of taste or smell. If a parent, sibling or another member of the family household is experiencing these symptoms then school aged children should not be attending school also, the family should follow Government guidance for self-isolating and arranging a COVID-19 test as soon as possible.

If a child starts to show any of these symptoms during the school day, parents will be phoned immediately and asked to collect their child. Whilst a child is waiting to be collected they will be moved to our First Aid room to be isolated and will be supervised by staff wearing appropriate PPE kit. Everyone must wash their hands thoroughly for 20 seconds with soap and running water or hand sanitiser after contact with anyone who is unwell. Children and staff who have been in contact with the child with symptoms do not have to isolate unless they themselves develop symptoms and then need to arrange a COVID-19 test.

- 2) ***'clean hands thoroughly more often than usual'***

Since the coronavirus outbreak we have made time to ensure children and staff are washing their hands or using hand sanitiser regularly throughout the day. Everybody is expected to wash their hands on entering school, when moving around school, going out to play coming in from play, dinner times, PE etc. It would helpful if children could be given their own little bottle

of hand sanitiser to keep on their desk so they have quick and easy access during their lessons. We have switched off our air hand dryers as recommended so all hand drying is via paper towels into lidded bins.

3) 'ensure good respiratory hygiene by promoting the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach.'

As part of our providing key working provision and the wider opening of school we purchased lidded bins, increased stock of tissues etc. in order to support this and we followed the 'quarantining' of rubbish, dating bin bags etc. Children will be reminded to 'catch it, bin it, kill it' as necessary.

4) 'Introduce enhanced cleaning, including cleaning frequently touched surfaces often using standard products, such as detergents and bleach.'

Each class has its own box of cleaning materials ~ anti-viral spray and cloths, gloves, surface wipes, tissues etc. Desks will be cleaned during the school day; toilet doors will be cleaned regularly. At lunch time tables and chairs will be cleaned in between sittings. After school the cleaning team will be providing a comprehensive cleaning as we had through lockdown.

5) 'Minimise contact between individuals and maintaining social distancing wherever possible.'

Minimising contacts and mixing people reduces transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19). Schools must do everything possible to minimise contacts and mixing while delivering a broad and balanced curriculum.

The set up in classrooms will be for Y2 to Y6 formal rows of tables, sitting side by side, facing forward. We feel that this is not really suitable for Early Years or Year 1 children, so they will be listening to whole class teacher led learning from the carpet and then using outside spaces, table top activities, small group adult led learning at tables etc.

For Old Heath given the size of our classrooms, the building & grounds themselves and the logistics of classes moving, how to work lunchtimes and break times etc.; we are proposing that each class remains together as their 'own class bubble', so social distancing between themselves is not required. Each class bubble however does not mix with any other class i.e. separate area to play in at playtime and lunchtime, sectioning the hall for dinner, cleaning after each service, timetabled slots for the main toilets and copious cleaning between class visits. This is all very similar to how the school has operated for the priority groups (except we were attempting children to 2m social distancing as well) but we will need to allow extra time as it will take longer to get more children through the process of having lunch plus the whole going to the loo and washing hands!

From the guidance it would seem that staff can move between 'bubbles', something we haven't officially been able to do this term, as long as we are all keeping at a 2m social distance. At the moment we will try to limit movement of staff between classes. It is expected that all adults, including parents on school grounds will be keeping at 2m social distance. Our Office staff and Catering staff will also be their own bubbles.

Breakfast Club will be running in the hall but parents must book places so that we can plan table lay outs. Children will need to social distance from other children not in their class. Each class will be allocated specific tables to have breakfast at and to play at. Outside play can only happen if children manage to keep to 2m social distance from children not in their class. They will of course be able to play with their siblings normally but sitting to eat breakfast will depend on who else is in that morning and table space allocation.

We will not be running after school clubs in the first instance.

Entering school: The school will be open as normal from 8.45am to 9.00am, the expectation is that parents bringing children to school or older children coming into school independently will take responsibility for keeping 2m social distance from other family groups. Parents must ensure that younger brothers and sisters stay with them at all times as they walk up on to the school playground.

Once on the playground children will then need to go directly to their classrooms. School staff for September are still being advised to keep socially distanced so we should not be physically taking children from parents even if a child is having difficulty separating from a parent. Parents without buggies/pushchairs who can manage the steps must then leave through the secret garden and out onto the driveway and then Abbot's Road. Only parents or carers with mobility issues and buggies/pushchairs can then wait in a socially distanced way until 9am when we will stop incoming via the front gate and reverse the pedestrian flow so parents with buggies/prams can exit the school grounds via the front gate in a socially distanced way. We will organise the same for the afternoon going home.

If your child is wearing a mask on the way into school, you need to ensure that you take their mask home with you. Masks can become a source of infection themselves. At the moment we are being advised that masks are not necessary to be worn in school except for adults in cases of illness, first aid and some catering situations. This of course may change by September 4th looking at the media hype at the moment.

PLEASE REMEMBER THAT DESPITE THE RELAXING OF LOCKDOWN IN SOME AREAS IE PUBS ETC SCHOOLS ARE STILL EXPECTED TO FOLLOW 2M SOCIAL DISTANCING GUIDANCE.

Should circumstances remain steady we may extend 'class bubbles' to incorporate two or three classes to ease the situation of staffing and spaces at lunch times and playtimes. Larger schools are able to group classes of the same year group together so they may have bubbles of 90+ children. The issue is that if we do have a confirmed COVID-19 it means closing the entire bubble. Keeping the bubbles as smaller class bubbles will ensure as we start back that if an 'isolation' needs to take place it will effect smaller groups in the first instance.

Parents will be informed if we decide to take this route.

6) 'Where necessary, wear appropriate personal protective equipment.'

This is specific to staff looking after children who are showing symptoms, staff providing first aid, intimate care and catering as needed.

RESPONSE TO ANY INFECTION

7) Engage with the NHS Test and Trace process

Schools must ensure that they understand the NHS Test and Trace process and how to contact their local Public Health England health protection team (or whatever takes its place!). Schools must ensure that staff members and parents/carers understand that they will need to be ready and willing to book a test, self-isolate as necessary, provide details of contacts.

8) Manage confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) amongst the school community.

Schools must take swift action when they become aware that someone who has attended has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19). Schools should contact the local health protection team. The health protection team will work with schools to guide them through the actions they need to take.

9) Contain any outbreak by following local health protection team advice.

If schools have two or more confirmed cases within 14 days, or an overall rise in sickness absence where coronavirus (COVID-19) is suspected they may have an outbreak, and must continue to work with their local health protection team who will be able to advise if additional action is required.

I understand that I have just given you quite a lot of information but by using the Government's system of controls you can see clearly why certain things are in place. If you have any specific issues that are not answered here and are specific to the COVID situation please contact the school via email admin@oldheath.essex.sch.uk and I'll try and answer them!

Yours sincerely

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Headteacher