



"We are called to be the hands and face of Jesus as we learn, love and grow together"

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Dear parents and carers

Return to school preparations

It is almost time to return to school from the Summer break. I do hope that you have all managed to enjoy a break and have been able to create some special memories during this period.

Staff have been busily preparing the school for the children's return. Teachers have also written to the children, preparing them for the return. These letters will have been received via ParentMail and are available on the school website.

I am writing today to confirm the logistics for our return next week and to assure you of the safety factors that remain in place whilst we relax some of the previous 'covid secure measures' in line with Government advice. You will find attached our latest Covid Risk Assessment which explains the protective factors in place. Whilst the guidance has relaxed, schools are permitted to put in place mitigations that relate to site specific issues and local circumstances. As such, the measures that I outline below allow us many freedoms but also take a cautionary approach given recent cases and aim to give us flexibility in our routine whilst protecting everyone, as far as reasonably possible, from the disruption of further outbreaks. As time progresses I hope to be able to relax other measures, local cases permitting.

Satisfying the needs of everyone (pupils, parents and staff) in relation to covid secure measures is a tricky balancing act. I am aware that some may feel that we have not gone far enough in implementing the guidance, whilst others may remain uneasy with the lifting of some measures. Over time, however, our aim is to get into a routine that allows pupils, parents and staff a sense of normality, the freedom to do what they need to do and the ability to remain safe. As we return, there is a sense of the unknown and some trepidation as well as much hope about the term ahead. These routines will be kept under regular review and I will notify you when other changes will be made.

Start and end of day procedures and timings

We will remove the extended staggered alphabetical start and end to the day and replace it with a 10 minute soft start and finish. As such, pupils will be able to arrive at class (Nursery to Year 6) anytime between 8.45 and 8.55am. The main gates will close at 9am. At the end of the day, pupils from Reception to Year 6 can be collected anytime between 3.05 and 3.15pm. Afternoon nursery finishes at 3.30pm and collections may occur anytime from 3.20pm. Please do ensure that you arrive during the permitted time. This is just as important at the end of the day, as staff regularly have meetings to go to and these are delayed for colleagues if supervising late pick-ups. If you are unavoidably delayed, please do contact the school office. In the previous academic year, Year 6 saw themselves into and out of school without parents. This has been a good preparation for the more independent routines required as the children prepare for secondary school. Many parents may wish for this routine to continue and, as such, Year 6 will be released from the classroom at 3.15pm ready for them to make their own way off the site or to be met on the playground by you, whatever you prefer. Please ensure that Y6 children are aware of your expectations in relation to pick up. Any children in Year 5 who also have written consent to travel home unaccompanied, will be released at 3.15pm.



One way system

As we are reducing the drop off / pick up 'window', the site will be busier during these 10 minute periods. As such, we will initially keep our one-way system in operation in order that there is less congestion. Entrance will continue to be through the front gate (Bedwell Crescent) and exit via the back gate (onto Fairlands Valley). This will be kept under regular review.

People on site

Although we are now permitted to have adults on site for key events, we will risk assess each event and will aim to minimise the number of people on site at any one time. As the office area can easily become congested at busy times, please continue to make contact via email and telephone wherever possible and kindly wait outside the office to be invited in. We continue to ask that parents do not linger on the site at the start or the end of the day. We hope that we will be able to initiate some on-site PSA events this term, enabling the community to gather together and we look forward to the Christmas celebrations that will be the climax of the term!

Mask wearing

We will, of course, continue to support individuals who wish to wear a face covering during the school run, but do not require their use when outside on the school premises. If you have been invited into the building for any reason, you will currently be required to wear a face covering, unless you are exempt. Staff who wish to wear masks at any point inside or outside are also supported to do so. Where larger gatherings are required indoors, or where close work with a child is necessary staff may be instructed to wear a face covering.

School Clubs

We look forward to re-launching after school clubs which will take place either outside or in adequately ventilated spaces and in accordance with our risk assessment. Watch out for further details! Parents will not be permitted to be inside the building whilst extra-curricular clubs are occurring; this include Mr Arnese's Choi Kwang Do lessons.

Bubble system – breaks and lunchtimes

You will be pleased to hear that this arrangement has been removed, allowing for more natural mixing, including at breakfast and after school clubs. It will also allow year groups to gather and also some work between different classes. We will, however, initially limit the number of pupils that gather and, as such, breaktimes will continue to be staggered, making use of the full grounds; bubble fences have been removed. Although we will be eating in the dining room again, we are currently looking to stagger the lunchtime to reduce the numbers joining together and to enable effective cleaning as required.

Assemblies

For the first half term, whilst we evaluate the impact on cases, assemblies will continue to be virtual as gathering 200+ children and staff together in each hall for a Key Stage Assembly does not feel quite right yet. There will, however, be opportunities for the whole school or Key Stages to gather outside when the weather permits for key liturgies and celebrations. We hope to reintroduce our weekly rota for attending Friday Mass at St Joseph's after half term.

Hand hygiene & enhanced cleaning

Pupils will continue with their regular hand hygiene routines and will be encouraged to keep their work area and equipment clean. Enhanced cleaning routines will be continued throughout the school site.



Ventilation

This remains a crucial factor. All rooms will continue to be adequately ventilated. We have recently purchased portable CO2 monitors for each classroom which will enable us to monitor the air quality in each occupied space. I am hoping that this will help us to monitor the effect of opening and closing windows as we attempt to ensure a comfortable working temperature throughout the school. During the winter months ventilation will remain important and, therefore, layers will remain important just as they did last winter.

PE Kits

Initially children will continue to come into school dressed in their PE kit on PE days (you will be told which days at the start of term). Please ensure that PE kit is warm enough for them throughout the day (e.g. plain track suit bottoms and a school jumper). This will be reviewed as we approach half term.

Remaining vigilant to symptoms

It remains essential that if your child has **any** of the following symptoms that they isolate immediately and are tested using a PCR (lab processed) test **NOT** a Lateral Flow Test:

- A temperature;
- A persistent, new or changed cough; or
- A change to their sense of taste or smell

Pupils (and staff) with any of these symptoms will not be permitted in school until they have returned a negative PCR test result. Children displaying these symptoms in school will need to be collected as a matter of urgency. This is not negotiable, even if the symptoms may relate to something else.

Close contacts

Schools will no longer be responsible for tracking and tracing in the event of a positive test result. You will probably be aware that there are now a number of exemptions to isolation if you or your child is a close contact of someone who has tested positive. **However, any person identified as a close contact should still be tested using a PCR test.** Based upon current evidence of how the virus continues to spread, particularly through families, and how asymptomatic individuals and even those who are double jabbed can still pass the virus on, **we are keen to support families who wish to isolate, even if they are not all required to do so, following a positive PCR result in the household.** In such circumstances, we will of course ensure that pupils are able to access a full pattern of remote work. Such absences will be authorised. This aims to protect our community and help us to avoid an outbreak which could result in the introduction of a contingency plan which would include more restrictive measures. **If someone in your household does test positive and you plan for your child to attend school, as they are not required to isolate, I would welcome the opportunity to discuss this with you prior to return.** These procedures will be kept under regular review, based upon guidance from professionals and local contextual information.

Communication partnership

I aim to keep you informed of any changes in relation to procedures that are required and will communicate such decisions as soon as I am able to. Please do keep us in the loop in relation to symptoms and test results impacting upon your household. To make this easier a new Google Form will be shared to capture the required information. This information will be stored securely, accessed only by authorised personnel, and will be deleted when it is no longer needed.



Contingency Plans – Covid Outbreak Management Plan

As well as our Risk Assessment which is attached, schools are required to formulate a Covid Outbreak Management Plan ('Contingency Plan') should cases begin to escalate. This is also attached and is based upon the guidance of the Government, Public Health Herts and Hertfordshire County Council Health and Safety Officers. As you will read, we may be instructed to reintroduce certain protective measures if certain thresholds are met either in school or locally.

Welcome back

Most importantly, I look forward to welcoming pupils from Year 1 to Year 6 back to school on Thursday 2nd September from 8.45am and pupils in nursery and Reception according to their designated schedule. It will be an exciting year ahead full of much laughter, great learning opportunities and fellowship.

Have a wonderful bank holiday weekend.

May God bless you and those most dear to you.

Yours sincerely



Jon White
Headteacher

