

WESTBURY-ON-SEVERN C of E PRIMARY SCHOOL

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**Westbury-on-Severn
CE Primary School**

Thursday 25th February 2021

Dear Parents/Carers,

I hope you are all well and had a good family time over the break last week, it certainly brought a bit of respite to the remote learning we have all been working through! My thanks again for all you have been, and are doing with this, but there is only one more week of it until we are all back together again on the 8th March. We are really looking forward to seeing all the children in school again as they reconnect to 'normal' school! Friday 5th March will be the last day of remote learning for pupils unless they are self-isolating.

Whilst there are still issues that are being finalised by the government and I am expecting more guidance out on Friday 26th February, I wanted to let you know about the things that will be happening from 8th March.

Attendance and expectations:

From March 8th it is expected that all children will return to school. The government have made it clear that, based on the scientific knowledge and data, that all primary children, unless they have a specific shielding letter, should be in school. If a member of your household has a shielding letter, then the children are still expected to return to school. However, you should notify us if someone in your household does have a shielding letter. Please read the following from the Government guidance:

School attendance will be mandatory for all pupils from 8 March. The usual rules on school attendance apply, including:

- *parents' duty to secure their child's regular attendance at school (where the child is a registered pupil at school and they are of compulsory school age)*
- *the ability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices in line with local authorities' codes of conduct*

As usual, you are responsible for recording attendance, following up absence and reporting children missing education to the local authority.

(Taken from 'Schools Coronavirus (COVID-19) Operational Guidance' Feb 2021)

As a school, I hope you know that we will always work as compassionately as we can to support you. However, from 8th March, all expectations for school attendance will be reinstated and therefore we will have to comply with that.

I am aware that as restrictions continue to ease and we are able to return to some normality, including visiting parents, and grandparents, there may be a desire to meet up during term-time. However, this will not be authorised by the school. These visits will need to be conducted, when it is legal and safe to do so, during weekends or school holidays as before. As the majority of children have been off school since 5th January, it is vital that they do not miss any more face-to-face teaching.



Of course, if your child is ill and can not attend school because of illness or because your household needs to self-isolate, then this will be authorised. As I have said before, COVID-19 is not the only illness that circulates in our community and other childhood illnesses may still cause absence.

If your child does need to stay at home, please inform the school each morning during their absence so we can accurately record it in our registration documents.

Drop off and pick up:

Despite the full return of pupils, we must still operate within the current guidelines around bubbles and avoid unnecessary gatherings. Therefore, from 8th March, children should be dropped off at school at the bottom of the lane – as they have been since last September, between 8.30am and 8.45 am. If they arrive after 8.45am, they will be marked as late in the register. Any child arriving without good reason after 8.55 will be coded in the register with an unauthorised absence. Children can then be picked up from school 2.45pm until 3pm at the bottom of the lane. This is to avoid large gatherings outside the school. The school bus will operate as usual and will arrive at 8.30am and leave school at 3pm.

Bubbles:

On full return to school, we will still be operating within our own risk assessment and COVID-19 secure procedures in order to maintain the level of safety we have worked within since the pandemic began. This means that when in school, the children will be kept in their own classroom bubbles, they will have separate and staggered lunchtimes and playtimes, ensuring social distancing is maintained as much as is practicably possible.

Risk assessment:

Throughout the whole of this pandemic, we have created and regularly updated our Coronavirus Risk Assessment in accordance with health and safety, local authority and government regulations. A copy of our risk assessment has always been available on our school website. The main purpose of the risk assessment is to ensure that we continually do all we can to minimise the risk of infection from, and transmission of the coronavirus within our school. I am pleased to say that this has been effective and we have not had a confirmed case of COVID-19 amongst staff or pupils since the Government put restrictions in place. We are committed to continually assessing the effectiveness of our risk assessment and operational procedures to ensure we are doing all we can to prevent an outbreak of COVID-19 in our school setting.

We would also like to say a big thank you for all you have done as parents and carers to support us in this, by maintaining your own distance when meeting outside the school and by not mixing your own households outside of school.

Cleaning:

Currently, as well as the daily cleaning regime undertaken after school by our cleaner, staff are continually cleaning and disinfecting surfaces and high-touch areas throughout the day, inside and outside of the classroom environment. Corridors and toilet facilities are also thoroughly cleaned throughout the day especially before, during and after lunch times. Children have been taught how to keep themselves clean and safe and wash their hands regularly between lessons and indoor and outdoor activities. There is a good supply of hand wash and hand-gel in each classroom. These systems will remain in place.

Lunches:

We expect to operate hot-school dinners as normal from 8th March, though this needs to be confirmed with the kitchen that supplies our meals. Free school meals and universal infant free school meals will still be provided for eligible pupils and your child may bring a packed lunch if you prefer. Please remember that we encourage fully



healthy lunchboxes so that the children are able to learn and concentrate better in class.

Work to come back from home:

We have been delighted at the amount of work that the children have been doing at home and for their engagement with our Google Classrooms platform. Everyone who has been learning remotely at home was given books to complete learning directly into, or to stick learning into if sheets were printed out. All pupils are to return to school on 8th March with all the paper-based learning they have completed during this national lockdown, unless it has been submitted electronically. As I have previously explained, this is important as the remote-learning will be required for assessment purposes and for enabling us to identify gaps in knowledge and understanding. We will then be able to use this assessment to provide specific catch-up support for children who require it.

Staff testing:

Currently, all staff are undertaking lateral flow tests for coronavirus twice a week. This is part of the Government's initiative to catch cases of COVID-19 quickly and efficiently trace and restrict the spread of this disease. This will continue for as long as the Government is able to supply us with those tests. I am extremely grateful and proud of the staff here for fully embracing this programme and helping to keep our school and wider communities safe.

Whilst you will have heard that secondary school pupils will be required to undergo these Lateral Flow tests, primary school children will not be required to do so.

Face-coverings:

Primary School children are not expected to wear face-coverings in school and we will not expect them to. Staff will wear them as required and certainly when collecting or returning children to you at the end of the day.

Term Dates 2021-2022:

I have attached the approved school term dates for September 2021 to August 2022 to this letter. A copy will be uploaded onto the school website. Please be advised that leave of absence requests will only be granted for exceptional reasons. Any family holidays or excursions must be taken during the holiday periods as set out in the term dates attached.

Thank you so much again for all you have been doing to support us and your children during this period of lockdown. We all hope that there will not be a return to lockdown in the future. Thank you too, for all the lovely emails and well-wishes, cakes and biscuits we have been receiving, we really have appreciated it and it has kept us all going.

With warmest wishes,



David Crunkhurn
Headteacher

