



Barnham Church of England V.C. Primary School

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26th February 2022

Dear parents and carers,

COVID Update

Firstly, I hope you have all enjoyed the half-term break. We are really looking forward to welcoming you all back to school and to the weeks and months ahead; with a face to face parents evening coming up in March (dates to follow next week), our first Year 6 residential since 2019, installation of a new Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 outdoor play area and new play equipment and opportunities for all children on our back field we are set for an exciting time!

As you know the Government announcement last Monday demonstrates that there is increasing confidence that the country is moving from a pandemic to living and dealing with COVID-19. Guidance for schools followed the next day, and was updated again on Thursday, which I have used to update our latest risk assessment, contingency plans and school protocols.

The [guidance](#) for parents and carers has also been updated for your reference. As the scientists acknowledge, the virus hasn't gone away, and I want to reassure you that your child's safety has been at the forefront of our decision making throughout this situation and will continue to be our primary consideration going forwards, along with our duty of care to them, the staff and the wider community.

The school's guidance, and other local authority documents, that inform our update, show a shift from the word **must** (legally binding) to **should** (strongly advised). Using that guidance, a number of operational changes in school will take place:

Attendance – staff and pupils

Attendance is mandatory for all and it is a priority. Critically Extremely Vulnerable (CEV) and vulnerable staff and children will attend school.

No need for limited mixing or bubbles

Children will be able to be grouped flexibly and mix freely.

Classrooms and resources

Children will share school resources, but must still have their own water bottle, brought in daily. Children will also continue to wear PE kit to school on PE days.

School Start and Finish times

The school day will continue to start at 8:45am, the gates will be open just before this time so please do not arrive at the school gates too early.

Please supervise your children when waiting outside the gates to ensure they are safe. The gates will be closed promptly at 8.55am so please make sure you arrive at school before this time.

We are seeing an increasing number of families arriving late which results in lost learning and disruption to the school office and classes when leading children to their classrooms. The day will continue to end at 3:15pm. **We will no longer use the one-way system across the playground.**

You do not need to continue wearing face coverings around the school grounds, unless you choose to do so for personal reasons. We would appreciate it if you could wear a face covering when in the reception area due to the confined space and lack of ventilation.

Safe Hygiene

Children will continue to sanitise their hands regularly throughout the day. Tissues and lidded bins are in each classroom so that children can 'catch it, bin it, kill it'. Please continue to encourage this at home.

Staff

Staff have been twice weekly testing since January 2021 as directed by the DfE but, moving forward, this has now stopped as the DfE has stopped sending LFD test kits into primary schools. They will test should they feel unwell, as a proactive measure if LFD tests continue to be readily available privately. Staff will not need to wear masks or visors in classrooms or corridors, but may choose to at other times, as a personal choice.

If your child is unwell

Please do not send your child to school if they have a temperature or are unwell at all. This is for the safety of everybody. If your child becomes ill whilst at school, you will be asked to collect them immediately.

Please ensure that contact details are up to date with the office of another person who can collect your child.

If your child display symptoms of COVID-19 they will be isolated until you arrive. You should then make arrangements for them to be tested, using a PCR or LFD. School should be informed of the result as soon as possible. A positive result will mean that the child will need to isolate for up to 10 days, following the latest NHS guidance and [Government self-isolation advice](#). Currently, if your child is unwell with other symptoms you can LFD test them and should this be positive you do not need to go for a PCR but may choose to. Your child should self-isolate in this case for up to 10 days, or in line with the guidance previously sent out.

The Government are keen that everybody continues to respond positively with the track and trace system. Schools are not legally bound to do this, but I will keep you informed of cases if they start to increase beyond a small number across the school. If the LFD is negative, we would ask that your child does not return until they are 'well'. I will monitor guidance, as we know that this will no doubt change in the coming weeks.

Know the symptoms of Covid-19

The main symptoms of COVID-19 are a recent onset of any of the following: a new continuous cough a high temperature a loss of, or change in, your normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia) Other symptoms linked with COVID-19 include shortness of breath, fatigue, loss of appetite, muscle ache, sore throat, headache, stuffy or runny nose, diarrhoea, nausea and vomiting. Any of these symptoms may also have another cause.

Isolation

The guidance indicates that whilst the law has changed, the directives for public safety remain. We will follow this guidance, so isolation continues to be up to 10 days, unless you have 2 negative tests on day 5 and 6, 24 hours apart. Isolation will finish **after day 5 at the earliest** if you test first thing in the morning on day 5 and 6.

'Children and young people with COVID-19 should not attend their education setting while they are infectious. They should take an LFD test from 5 days after their symptoms started (or the day their test was taken if they did not have symptoms) followed by another one the next day. If both these test results are negative, they should return to their educational setting if they normally attend one, as long as they feel well enough to do so and do not have a temperature'.

Please continue to liaise with the school office about your child's return date after testing positive, given our school protocols. We will review this as and when the guidance is further updated.

It is very important that these isolation procedures are followed by staff and children so that the risk of transmission is kept to a minimum. We have been very fortunate not to have many serious cases amongst staff and children, however, some of our staff who have tested positive have experienced severe enough symptoms to be unable to work for over a week. If we increase the risk of infection further by allowing children and staff into school whilst still possibly infectious, we increase the risk of further staff absences. The outcome could be not being able to teach classes or set remote learning effectively, cancellation of trips, clubs, residential etc as we would be unable to staff them.

Close contact changes

The new guidance has brought an end routine contact tracing. Close contacts will no longer be required to self isolate or advised to take daily LFD tests for 7 days. Staff, children and young people should attend their education settings as usual.

'Children and young people who usually attend an education or childcare setting and who live with someone who has COVID-19 should continue to attend the setting as normal'.

Possible further disruption to schooling

It is almost guaranteed now that schools will remain open, but there is the very real chance that there may be further disruption to 'schooling' for individual children who need to isolate or are unwell. **Please remember that remote learning will only be provided if your child tests positive for Covid-19 and is well enough to access work.** If this is the case, please contact your child's teacher who will endeavour to provide this at the earliest opportunity.

Any moves to remote learning for full classes will be communicated if this is directed by Public Health, however I think this is very unlikely.

If cases rise across the school additional measures may need to be reintroduced to reduce transmission including face coverings during drop off and pick up, reduced mixing of classes, suspension of collective worship and after school clubs for example. If these measures are needed I will inform you as soon as possible.

We thank you, as always, for the support you have given us whilst on this journey. Again, I assure you that whatever happens and wherever this journey continues to take us, we will always have our whole school community's very best interests at heart.

As always, if you have any questions or queries about any of the above please get in touch.

Warm regards



Amy Arnold
Headteacher