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Dear Parents,

Welcome back to the start of a new school year. I do hope that you were all able to enjoy a lovely summer with your children, even though the weather was not as good as we would have hoped!

Plans for Term 1 2021

As you know, at the end of last term, I shared with you the plan for our return to school. My intention behind this was to communicate with you all, clearly and at an early stage, in order to enable you to make arrangements for your children.

However, you will be aware that the position we are in with regard to COVID-19 is now very different to where we were in July. The guidance received by schools last Friday has also been updated to reflect the change in situation, as we are now at Stage 4 of the Government's roadmap in managing COVID-19. As a result of this, **we shall not be maintaining our system of staggered starts and finishes.** Instead, all classes will be returning to school between 8:40am and 8:50am tomorrow morning.

The one-way system through the school grounds will remain, both at drop off and collection time. This is not because of COVID-19, but rather because of the Health and Safety risks posed by such a narrow path. Before COVID-19 we had two accidents along the path and the one-way system is an important part of managing congestion in this area.

Mrs Miller (Family Liaison Officer) and I will be on the main playground gate between 8:40am and 8:50am each day. If parents wish to pass on a message to a member of staff, please do speak to one of us or make your way round to the school office, where a member of staff will be happy to help you.

At the end of the school day, the playground gates will be opened at 3:05pm, and locked at 3:30pm. Parents are asked to enter the school playground to wait for their children to be dismissed from class. I would ask that parents are respectful of each other at this time. This is a big change for many people, and I am aware that there will be parents feeling somewhat vulnerable and apprehensive about mixing with such large numbers of people again. Please do be sensitive to the concerns of others as we all adjust to this latest change in our working environment.

**We promote the learning and development of all children to achieve their full potential
in a caring, happy Christian environment**



Some people will no doubt wish to continue to wear face coverings for reassurance, and I fully support anyone who wishes to do so whilst on the school site.

We will continue to try to minimise the risk of infection as much as possible at school. Obviously good hygiene is key to this and we shall continue to encourage frequent hand washing and sanitising by children and adults throughout the course of the school day.

We will also remain vigilant when we see anyone with any possible symptoms of COVID-19, especially coughing. Pupils with a cough should not be sent to school. If a pupil coughs or sneezes during the day they will be monitored carefully, and parents may be asked to collect them. Pupils will be reminded of the need to “Catch it, Bin it, Kill it” and the use of tissues will be actively encouraged.

We are mindful of the Government guidance removing the requirement for schools to operate in “bubbles”. We are also aware that the measures we had in place last year to reduce close contacts were very successful in minimising the spread of the virus. Whilst it is now apparent from national studies that only a very small number of those deemed to be close contacts (less than 2%) went on to test positive for COVID-19, we do believe that it remains sensible to take some simple practical steps to manage the risk of transmission. Therefore, we will not be returning to whole school Worship in the hall at this point, and we will continue to have smaller groups of children in the hall together at lunchtime.

Please be vigilant! If your children exhibit any signs of infection (a new, continuous cough, a temperature, or a loss or change of sense of taste or smell), it is important that you do not send them to school, but instead arrange for a PCR test. In this instance, please do let us know as soon as possible.

PCR tests can be booked online through the [NHS Test & Trace website](#) or by calling 119.

Please be aware that you cannot use the LFD tests as these are not to be used for somebody with COVID-19 symptoms. Symptomatic testing involves using a lab-based Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) test to check if the virus is present. PCR test results will be recorded with NHS Test and Trace automatically, but you should also communicate the result to us at school.

If the PCR result is negative, they can stop self-isolating. If the PCR result is positive, they must self-isolate until 10 days after the onset of symptoms. The isolation period starts from when the symptoms started and the next 10 full days. E.g. if symptoms started at any time on the 15th of the month, the isolation period ends at 23:59hrs on the 25th – 10 full days, day 1 being the day after your symptoms/asymptomatic test.

Please note that if someone tests positive, the rest of the household will not need to self-isolate if they have received both vaccinations, are under the age of 18 years and 6 months, are taking part in a clinical trial for a COVID-19 vaccination, or are exempt from vaccination due to medical reasons.

If your child develops symptoms whilst in school, we will contact you immediately and ask you to collect them and take them for a PCR test. They will be supervised away from the rest of the class until they can be collected, so we do ask that you ensure your contact details are up to date, please.

If your child gets a positive PCR test result, NHS Test and Trace will contact you, using the details you registered when ordering the PCR test. You and/or your child will be asked a series of specific questions designed to identify who your child has been in close contact with. Being in a school with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 will not necessarily mean a person is identified as a close contact. You will be asked to provide the contact details, if you know them, of any of the individuals – or their parents or guardians – who have been identified as close contacts. NHS Test and Trace will then get in touch with these close contacts and provide appropriate instructions or advice. If someone tests positive for COVID-19, NHS Test and Trace will get in touch with all contacts via text message, phone, email or the NHS COVID-19 app to offer advice and provide further information.

I do hope that this letter explains the current situation in school, and the reasons for the decisions we have taken. I apologise for the change to our intended plan; however, we are keen to move towards normality in school as far as it is safe and practical to do so at this time. We have studied the guidance closely, and are committed to reducing the risks in school as far as possible, whilst ensuring the children benefit from the recent easing of restrictions. As always, please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

I am looking forward to seeing the children in school tomorrow, for what I am sure will be a very happy and successful year for all.

Kind regards

Tina Holditch