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Wednesday, 1st September 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

COVID-19 Update

As you will be aware, government guidance has changed significantly since we were last in school. However, as always the safety and care of our children, staff and school community is paramount. We would like to share with you our trust's approach to minimising the impact of COVID-19:

Our overall approach

As a trust, we are committed to minimising the impact of Covid within our school communities. We are therefore taking a cautious approach to the lifting of some measures which we have in place to reduce the risk from Covid, as we go into the new term. We appreciate how hard our staff work to reduce the risk of infection both to the children and to one another in our schools. Every PACE school has its own risk assessment, which sets out the detailed measures still in place to reduce the risk from Covid. This school risk assessment includes an 'outbreak management plan', which sets out how measures will be stepped up in the event of an outbreak.

There will be members of our school community who test positive over the next few weeks for COVID-19, but we are not going to be in a position to be able to inform you of these on a case by case basis anymore, as this is now in the hands of NHS track and trace. However, the guidance outlines key thresholds which we will keep a very close eye on and rest assured that we will be using it carefully to inform any decisions made as a school.

Schools COVID-19 Operational Guidance states:

'Individuals are not required to self-isolate if they live in the same household as someone with COVID-19, or are a close contact of someone with COVID-19, and any of the following apply:

- they are fully vaccinated*
 - they are below the age of 18 years and 6 months*
 - they have taken part in or are currently part of an approved COVID-19 vaccine trial*
- they are not able to get vaccinated for medical reasons*

In this situation individuals are asked to take a PCR test. Whilst government guidance currently says that these individuals do not need to self-isolate and can continue to attend

school as normal, in PACE schools **we will ask our staff not to attend school pending the outcome of the PCR test** in the event of living in the same household as someone with Covid-19 or as a close contact with someone with Covid-19. If the PCR test is negative we will ask our staff to return to work and **complete a daily lateral flow test for 10 days following the close contact** with someone who has tested positive.

If the parent or carer of a child in our schools decides to keep a child identified by NHS track and trace as a close contact of someone with Covid at home pending the result of a PCR test, **we will support this approach.**

A child or a member of staff who is symptomatic or who tests positive **must** remain at home and follow the self-isolation guidance.

In order to protect our school community, we ask that you carefully follow government guidance regarding testing as follows:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/self-isolation-and-treatment/when-to-self-isolate-and-what-to-do/>

Additional Key Information

- Parents will no longer be requested to wear face coverings for drop-off and collection of children on the school playgrounds. However, we would strongly recommend that you have one with you, in the event that an area is particularly crowded;
- Parents entering the school building will continue to be by appointment only for the time being;
- Parents will be asked to wear a face covering if they are coming to a meeting in the school building and we encourage staff to do the same in this context;
- Staff will continue to carry out lateral flow tests twice weekly and any necessary regular visitors to the school will also be asked to align with this;
- Schools are no longer carrying out 'contact tracing' – this will be done by NHS track and trace. Those contacted will be advised to carry out a PCR test;
- High-level cleaning protocols will continue to be in place throughout the school;
- Hand and respiratory hygiene remain important and are promoted within the school
- Ventilation will be a key part of daily activity throughout the school;
- The school will continue to make heavy use of outdoor spaces.

We will keep these measures under constant review, in line with government guidance and you will be updated of any necessary changes, as we move forward. As always, they are intended to minimise the risk of the virus spreading in our school.

By taking a more cautious approach in these next few weeks, we hope to minimise any further impact of the virus on learning, progress and the wellbeing of our staff, children and wider community.

Please refer to the newsletter 'Beecholme plans for September 2021' which can be found on the school website or in your parentmail for details of the return to school.

We thank you for your continued support and look forward to welcoming you back next week.

Kind regards

Phyllis Sternberg
Headteacher