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'Placing learning at the heart of everything we do'

RE: Returning to school in March 2021

25th February 2021

Dear Parents & Carers

Firstly, I would again like to thank you very much for your continued support and understanding during these incredibly challenging times.

As I have stated on previous occasions, planning for re-opening of a school in these circumstances is very complicated. Every school, depending on their situation, will be planning the return to school in a different way. As it always has been, the most important thing for us is that the decisions we make will ensure that Priestley children, staff and parents can be kept safe. Just as in September we have been tasked with thinking about how we will approach reopening to all our children (after the latest lockdown) referring to the latest guidance provided by the DfE. Continuing to get to grips with the coronavirus pandemic and what we should be doing to reduce the risk of spreading infection has been very stressful for everyone, especially for those who must continue working with those who may have been exposed to the virus. The vaccination program that is currently being rolled out would seem to offer some light at the end of the tunnel, however it is important to recognise that the vaccination does not make you immune from catching and transferring the virus to others. Therefore, the potential risks remain so we will need to continue to assess any potential risks that could be mitigated before reopening. These arrangements have been put into place following a robust risk assessment process.

During this letter, we will be sharing our plans for Priestley School with you, as decisions are made. Please read the letters emailed to you as they arrive and check our website for updates. The most important thing for us, is that the decisions we make will ensure that Priestley children, staff and parents are kept safe and it is to this purpose I now write to you.

- ✓ The children will **return to school on Monday 8th March** They will be in school all week.
- ✓ They will be working as best we can in class based 'bubbles' **within** location 'bubbles' – This will be based on the location of their classroom within the school. So that we can organise the day safely & efficiently.
- ✓ Although we are going to try our best to function in class 'bubbles' We will be within 4 location bubbles –
 - 1. EYFS – downstairs
 - 2. Yr.1 and Yr.2 - downstairs
 - 3. Yr. 2, 3 & 4 - new build
 - 4. Yr. 5 & 6 - upstairs
- ✓ Within the location 'bubbles' we will have class 'bubbles'. Ensuring children remain in consistent 'bubbles' wherever possible, thereby minimising the number of contacts between different people across the school).
- ✓ The start and end to the day will continue to be staggered for different groups.
- ✓ Lunchtimes and playtimes will also continue to be staggered to ensure the location 'bubbles' remain apart and thus minimise any chances of transmitting the virus.

- ✓ Each class/location 'bubble' will have different spaces to play at breaktime and lunchtime.
- ✓ The children in each class 'bubble' will be able to interact with each other and play together, we will be reminding the children of the need to give each other space where possible; they should not be touching or cuddling to help children understand the need to maintain a safe distance.
- ✓ They will have their own chair, share a table and working equipment.
- ✓ Water bottles - It is vital that children have their own water bottle in school. Water bottles must be taken home every day and washed, and then brought back to school the next day.
- ✓ There will be no whole school assemblies.

Sickness

As usual, children will not be able to attend school if they are ill. If anyone in your school develops a new and continuous cough or a high temperature, or has a loss of, or change in, their normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia), you:

- must send them home to begin isolation - the isolation period includes the day the symptoms started and the next 10 full days
- advise them to follow the guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus (Covid-19) infection
- advise them to arrange to have a test as soon as possible to see if they have coronavirus (Covid-19)

In addition to this, other members of their household (including any siblings and members of their support or childcare bubble if they have one) should self-isolate. Their isolation period includes the day symptoms started for the first person in their household, or the day their test was taken if they did not have symptoms, whether this was a Lateral Flow Device (LFD) or Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) test, and the next 10 full days. If a member of the household starts to display symptoms while self-isolating, they will need to restart the 10-day isolation period and book a test.

If anyone tests positive whilst not experiencing symptoms but develop symptoms during the isolation period, they must restart the 10-day isolation period from the day they developed symptoms.

Self-isolation is not necessary if the child or family member who is ill is tested and the **result is negative**. The child may return to school if they are well enough.

If a child at school becomes unwell, they will be sent home. If a child is awaiting collection, they will be moved to our medical room where they can be isolated behind a closed door, with appropriate adult supervision. They will also use separate toilet facilities.

Rapid Testing for all staff

You will by now be aware that we have started the programme of **Rapid Testing of all Staff within the School Community for Covid-19**. This will continue when the children come back to school on Monday 8th March.

How will the testing work?

All school staff are supplied with at-home Lateral Flow Device (LFD) test kits which they are using twice weekly before coming into work. The LFDs supplied do not require laboratory processing and can provide a quick result in about 30 minutes.

At Priestley will conducting the LFD tests on a Sunday and Wednesday evenings.

What happens if a school adult tests positive for Covid-19?

- ✓ If a school adult tests positive for Covid-19 we will implement the 'Bubble' isolation system immediately and your child must self-isolate and follow the government guidance linked here: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/self-isolation-and-treatment/>.
- ✓ **As school staff are testing on Sunday and Wednesday evenings you may receive a text message during those evenings to make you aware of the situation. Your child must immediately self-isolate for 10 days and we will provide HLPs.**
- ✓ The member of staff will also be required to complete an **additional PCR test**. If the result of the **PCR test comes back negative, we can suspend the isolation and children can come back to school.**

Hygiene & Handwashing

- ✓ We still have displayed coronavirus infection control measures and information posters all around the school.
- ✓ **ALL** children and staff will be using alcohol-based hand sanitiser when they arrive and leave the school building.
- ✓ We will be ensuring good respiratory hygiene by promoting the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach. (We have tissues and lidded bins available all around the school)
- ✓ We will be encouraging good hygiene by promoting the importance of handwashing for at least 20 seconds with warm water and soap in the following circumstances:
 - Before leaving home
 - On arrival at school
 - After using the toilet
 - After breaks and sporting activities
 - Before eating any food, including snacks
 - Before leaving school
- ✓ The NHS's official guide on how to wash your hands can be accessed by clicking [here](#).

PPE

Staff will be wearing PPE if they choose to when in school. They will all be wearing PPE if they are dealing with a child who is taking ill or has an accident.

Safe wearing and removal of face coverings

Following Government guidelines face covering are not required in primary schools. However, if your child wears a face mask it is vital that face coverings are worn correctly and that clear instructions are provided on [how to put on, remove, store and dispose of face coverings](#) in all of the circumstances above, to avoid inadvertently increasing the risks of transmission. It is essential that you teach your child about the **safe wearing and removal of face coverings**. Safe wearing of face coverings requires:

- ✓ cleaning of hands before and after touching – including to remove or put them on
- ✓ the safe storage of them in individual, sealable plastic bags between use. **Please provide your child with a sealable plastic bag.**
- ✓ where a face covering becomes damp, it should not be worn, and the face covering should be replaced carefully.

Children must be instructed not to touch the front of their face covering during use or when removing it they must place reusable face coverings in a plastic bag they can take home with them, and then wash their hands again before heading to their classroom.

Cleaning

The school will be cleaned daily, as usual. Each classroom will also have cleaning equipment, spray and wipes available to them for cleaning as needed during the school day. We will also have a clean through every lunchtime using our cleaning company.

Lunches

Children bringing a packed lunch. Please remember:

- ✓ We ask that packed lunches are also healthy, balanced meals.
- ✓ The lunch should be packed in a sealed container clearly marked with the child's name.
- ✓ Drinks must be in a named leak-proof container (a flask with a flip-up mouthpiece is best).
- ✓ Water is always available to fill water bottles.
- ✓ A spoon is needed for yoghurt, etc. The school will currently be unable to provide any cutlery.
- ✓ **All left over food and wrappers must be taken home.**
- ✓ There will be no Breakfast Club as we are unable to safely provide this service.

These items must not be brought to school:

- ✓ Book Bags – there will be no books moving between home and school.
- ✓ Toys, including cuddly toys & pencil cases.
- ✓ No mobile phones will be permitted in school.
- ✓ PE Kits must be brought in on the day and taken home that day to be washed.

Outdoor P.E. Kits

Participation in P.E. is hugely important for the development of health, fitness, and wider skills for learning such as resilience and collaboration. Due to the current circumstances, P.E. kits will be brought into school on P.E. days and then taken home. Please check your child's P.E. kit and that all clothing and shoes still fit. Following guidelines ALL P.E. sessions are being practiced outside. So, a dark pair of jogging/long trousers, jumper or hooded top and trainers are necessary as the weather remains cold.

Social distancing when on the school grounds,



We would like to take the opportunity to remind parents, grandparents and carers to be mindful of the importance of social distancing when you are on the school grounds. COVID-19 is circulating in our community and we all need to continue to work together to reduce the transmission of the virus. I would urge parents to be mindful of the coronavirus guidance and work together to keep everyone safe by keeping more than 2 metres apart, wherever possible, from people outside your household, to prevent the spread of COVID-19. To that aim, we will be asking that you **continue the wearing of a face covering on school grounds from Monday 8th March.**

We are working hard to make sure that children are safe in school and that the risk of the virus spreading is minimised. We all have a responsibility to keep our community safe and we need the support of parents, grandparents and carers when they are on the school grounds. Please keep your distance, please do not gather in groups. Together we can make a difference if we all play our part to keep each other safe. We appreciate your ongoing support which is helping to keep our school open. Please see our school COVID-19 safety rules below. Thank you for supporting and respecting these. We ask kindly that you please remember:

- ✓ Please wear a face covering when entering the school grounds. Unless medically exempt.
- ✓ Keep your children close to you in the playground both at the start and the end of the day- this is not a time where the children should play with each other.

- ✓ Keep the children off any play equipment and away from any outside learning resources.
- ✓ Please socially distance from anyone who is not in your bubble.
- ✓ Please ensure you use your allocated entrances and exits at the correct time.
- ✓ If possible, only one adult per family on the playground to collect the children. This will help with keeping the number of people congregating to a minimum.
- ✓ Please arrive on time and **not too early** so we can try and avoid any unnecessary gatherings.
- ✓ Once you have collected your child please leave the playground as promptly as possible.

The beginning and end of the school day are the busiest times for children and adults, congregating together in one place and maintaining safe distances within normal arrangements can be a challenge. We are following strict government guidelines to keep both children, parents, and staff safe. Therefore, we need to continue to stagger arrival times at school for different groups of children. These times will need to be strictly adhered to in order to keep arrival and departure from school safe for everyone. **No parents will be allowed into the school building.**

We have implemented the following measures for when pupils return to school:

We would prefer that all children, including those who would normally make their own way to school, are brought by an adult from your household if possible. If this is not possible, please make sure that your child leaves home at a time that means they will not be waiting at the gate or playground, where they may find it difficult to social distance without support from an adult. The children will be met by school adult. We respectfully require that **no adults enter the school building.**

Arrangements for the start and end of the school day

Entrances/Exits & Time of Day		
Year Group	Entrance & Exit	Times
EYFS Ducklings - Mrs Grostate	Duckling Classroom Door	9:00a.m. - 3:00p.m.
EYFS Goslings- Miss Boniface	Top Playground Entrance TPE	9:00a.m. - 3:00p.m.
Yr.1 Puffling - Miss Swann	Puffling Classroom Door	9:00a.m.- 3:00p.m.
Yr.1/2 Cygnet- Miss Lawrance	Cygnet Classroom Door	9:00a.m.- 3:00p.m.
Yr.2 Teal- Mrs Marsh-Ballard	Hall Door	9:00a.m.- 3:00p.m.
Yr.3 Sandpiper - Mrs Myers/Mrs Faulkner	Top Playground Entrance TPE	8:45a.m – 3:10p.m.
Yr.3/4 Kingfisher Mrs Joyce	Back Playground Entrance BPE	8:45a.m – 3:10p.m.
Yr.4 Eider- Mrs Swanson	Hall Door	8:45a.m – 3:10p.m.
Yr.5/6 Mallard- Mr Gibbens	Top Playground Entrance TPE	8:30a.m.-3:20pm.
Yr.5/6 Harlequin – Mrs James	Top Playground Entrance TPE	8:30a.m.-3:20p.m.
Yr.5/6 Avocet -Miss Ward	Front Entrance	8:30a.m.-3:20pm.
Yr.5/6 Curlew - Miss Morgan	Hall Door	8:30a.m.-3:20pm.

In an emergency, if you need to collect your child during the school day, you must ring the school office in advance, and we will bring your child to you.

Attendance expectations

It is vital for all children to return to school to minimise as far as possible the longer-term impact of the pandemic on children's education, wellbeing and wider development.

School attendance will therefore be mandatory again from Monday 8th March. This means from this date, the usual rules on school attendance will apply, including:

- parents' duty to secure that their child attends regularly at school where the child is a registered pupil at school, and they are of compulsory school age.
- schools' responsibilities to follow up absence.
- the availability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices in line with local authorities' codes of conduct.

Engagement with the NHS Test and Trace process

According to new Government Guidance and in order to try to reduce infection rates within our community, it is advisable that all that staff members and parents/carers understand that they will need to be ready and willing to:

- [book a test](#) if they are displaying symptoms. Staff and pupils must not come into the school if they have symptoms and must be sent home to self-isolate if they develop them in school. All children can be tested, including children under 5, but children aged 11 and under will need to be helped by their parents/carers if using a home testing kit
- provide details of anyone they have been in close contact with if they were to test positive for coronavirus (Covid-19) or if asked by NHS Test & Trace
- [self-isolate](#) if they have been in close contact with someone who develops coronavirus (Covid-19) symptoms or someone who tests positive for coronavirus (Covid-19)

Finally, ...

We know that we are giving you a lot of information to read, but it is all extremely important and please keep referring to this information as you prepare for your child's return to school.

If your child has not been attending school during the closure period, it would support your child's wellbeing, if you talked through the arrangements and the information sent. This will help them be prepared for their return. We have provided a 'Spikey' social story to help with transition back to school. Please share the story with your children.

You may know of other schools that are taking a different approach for children returning to school. Both the Government and Local Authority acknowledge that each setting is unique and that schools have been planning based on their individual circumstances. So, although I appreciate that there will be a wide range of different views about how we should be responding and what action we should take, I hope you will continue to appreciate the complexities involved, and that the school will have taken as many remedial actions as possible to reduce the potential risks of catching or transferring the Covid--19 Virus.

Please keep checking your emails and website for further information and announcements.

We hope that these arrangements provide you with the information you need to support your child to return to school. We would like to take the opportunity again to thank you for supporting the school over recent months and supporting your child with their home learning.

School contact clarification

Currently the school continues to run two email addresses admin@priestley.wilts.sch.uk and ask@priestley.wilts.sch.uk. The admin email is manned by the school office whereas the ask email is manned by the school's senior members of staff. If you require administration information, returning

leave of absence forms, clarification of term dates, school dinners etc then please use the admin email address. If your query is around your child, their learning etc then please direct your email to the ask@ email address. Queries sent to the wrong address will be responded to, although it might just take a little longer.

I am sure there will be questions that we have not managed to answer in this letter. If you have a query, please do not hesitate to contact us via ask@priestley.wilts.sch.uk

I continue to appreciate both your patience and your support in trying to manage this continued extremely difficult situation but above all we are looking forward to welcoming all the children back to school.

Keep safe and well.

Mr Marsh-Ballard