

24th September, 2020

Coronavirus - COVID-19 - Update

Dear Parents/Carers,

The children are back in school and we really want to keep it that way. Heads in schools have relayed stories of how lovely it is to hear the happy sound emanating from children in classrooms. We have nearly completed three weeks of the Autumn Term with the children, but government guidance is already changing. You may have seen the broadcast from the Prime Minister on Tuesday evening outlining the need for caution as the number of confirmed cases is rising nationally. Thankfully in the South West and more particularly in Cornwall they remain low, but we still need to be careful.

Keeping parent numbers on school sites as low as possible

Please continue to follow each school timetable with the times for drop off in the morning and pick up in the afternoon. Please be punctual to limit the number of adults on site at any one time. I realise parents will have missed some of the social aspects of seeing other parents, but this needs to be done off school sites please. As soon as children are with staff, please leave the school site. To keep the schools open we need to minimise gatherings of adults before and after school hence the introduction of staggered starts and drop off. Staff take the children through the ritual of handwashing before they come into school, at key points during the day and before they come home at night to minimise any potential cross contamination. Particularly in the larger schools where we manage bigger groups of parents, we would encourage you to wear a mask while you are walking to school and on school premises to reduce cross contamination. We only need one lapse to bring the virus into schools.

Suspected cases

If your child displays any of the symptoms outlined from government websites (repeated cough, high temperature, loss of taste or smell) please keep them at home and arrange a test if you think they are displaying the symptoms. As the weather cools and becomes wetter we will be indoors more, we do not want to spread other bugs and germs to children and adults in school. Several colds are beginning to make the rounds. If children are not well, please keep them at home.

Confirmed cases

If you as a parent, receive notification that you have a confirmed case in your family, please stay at home. Please ring the school as soon as you are able to. The news may come at any time of the day. This means the school day may have begun. It is important the school knows all the facts as soon as possible for us to contact our local Health Protection Team for advice on what to do next. We will manage the communications between departments and schools centrally via Executive Heads and myself. We have written protocols and shared these with all the schools. If it is an isolated case, currently schools are being asked to remain open, but the class bubble may close. We may need to send more class bubbles home if there are more cases, but this will only be after we have asked for advice from our local Health Protection Team. In line with government guidance, we will not be identifying any individual whether it is a member of staff, parent or child, you will simply be told which bubble needs to close and self-isolate.

We want to keep all our schools open for the sake of the children and their continuity of learning. Closures are disruptive to the children as well as being inconvenient for parents needing to get to work. The more we follow guidance, and everyone plays their part, the less likely it is that we will need to close at any point.

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Parent Survey Response

Thank you those of you who completed the parent surveys. We had a lower response rate but of those who did respond 89% said there was sufficient communication from the Trust and their school during lockdown. 94% said the communication received was helpful. 85% were satisfied with the measures their school took to make it safe and 92% confirmed they were able to access the home learning sufficiently either via the website or by accessing a printed pack from the school.

Distance Learning

Following the parent survey, we have learned that it was the 1:1 contact that you and children found most valuable. If we need to close a class bubble then we will continue learning for the children using distance learning packs. Teachers will ring to speak to you each week and check how children are progressing with their work. For Key Stage 2 children in Year 3 to Year 6 we are training staff and working through the administrative process to give them access to Microsoft Teams. Year 6 have had this access from the Summer Term. More news will follow in the next fortnight on how to access Microsoft Teams, provide guidance on its use and give you the logins and passwords unique to each child.

For Year Reception children staff will upload videos to keep the children's phonic learning going and put additional work on class pages on the school websites. For Year 1 and Year 2 children, there will be class learning packs available on class web pages. It will be important to do some learning at home each day, but as I have said before keep this manageable, home does not become a replacement for school.

We will continue to encounter changes to guidance I am sure but for now by following the procedures children, staff and parents are safe on school sites and for as long as we are able to do so, we will keep the schools open and keep providing the learning the children need. Let's all work together for the positive benefit of all our children.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely,

Adrian Massey and everyone at Bridge Schools