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Registered Charity no. 528910

Head Teacher: Shivaun Duffy Moriarty

26th February 2021

Dear Parents and families of Sherbourne,

I hope this letter finds you all well and feeling a little more positive about the year ahead. I am writing to you as I am sure that the Prime Minister's statement on Monday regarding opening of schools has raised a number of questions with you all, which I hope to answer in this letter.

As a special school we have prioritized our most vulnerable pupils and those of key workers coming into school since lockdown was announced in January. We are now looking forward to welcoming all of our pupils back into school on **Monday 8th March**, unless they are shielding and it has been agreed that they are safer to remain at home.

As a senior leadership team, we have spent the last few days having discussions with staff and the local authority around the latest government guidance - I want you to be reassured that we will continue to do our utmost to keep your children as safe as possible.

We feel that the procedures in school are working well, and our children in school are settled, happy and learning.

Public Health England continues to advise that the existing range of safety measures in place in education settings remains appropriate including bubble groups; staggering start and finish times; increasing ventilation and hygiene; regular testing and maintaining distance between adults where possible.

Face Coverings

All staff and secondary students are currently advised to wear face coverings in areas outside the classrooms where social distancing cannot easily be maintained (e.g. communal areas inside the school buildings). Extending the use of face coverings to classrooms has now been introduced as a temporary measure until Easter, and as with all measures, the government will keep it under review. We accept that the use of face coverings is impossible for some of our children.



Lateral Flow Tests

- School staff will continue to take 2 rapid COVID-19 tests each week in school, as we have been doing since January. We have been advised that in time staff will be provided with 2 tests to use each week at home.
- Secondary school students (who can **administer a test independently** and **have parental permission**) have been advised to take three COVID-19 tests from the 8 March at our existing school testing facilities.
- Schools have discretion on when to test pupils over that week. After the initial programme of three tests in school, the Government have said that pupils will be provided with 2 rapid tests to use each week at home. There are also local community testing facilities that we would also encourage you to use if this is appropriate for your child.

Arrival/Departure at School

We strongly encourage you to wear a face covering and adhere to the social distancing guidance at the school gates, both when dropping off and picking up your child. Due to the high numbers of parents dropping off and picking up their children we have had to lengthen the route to the drop off point to prevent vehicles from blocking the road leading into school. We understand this is causing some delays but at the moment this is the safest option for all.

Transport

We were advised yesterday that full transport provision will resume for our pupils on March 8th and all routes will be going back to how they were previously, however there is still pressure on the bus routes due to some drivers and escorts needing to continue to shield. Some parents may still wish to transport their child to school as this minimises the risk of infection spread and this can continue. Please remember that if you do transport your child and are ordinarily entitled to transport then you claim back costs through the personal transport budget (PTB).

Breakfast and After School Club

We have made the decision to not re open our Breakfast and After School Club provisions at the moment, but will review this at Easter. As this provision is staffed by our own Teaching Assistants there is risk involved with the mixing of bubbles, with both staff and pupils that usually attend from across the school.

Finally, I need to once again **THANKYOU** for your support at this challenging time. If you have any concerns or question please don't hesitate to contact me so we can all work together to support your amazing children to have a successful term. I hope you all enjoy the sunshine this weekend and if you are visiting your local parks then please scan the QR CODE on the GO PARKS CHALLENGE sign and follow the instructions to vote for Sherbourne Fields which may secure us a win and bring vital funds to the school for PE equipment.

Best Wishes and stay safe.



Shivaun Duffy Moriarty
Headteacher

