

# Shepherds Down School

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12<sup>th</sup> May 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

It is a relief that school is beginning to feel more 'business as usual' every day. The children all seemed to have settled back into full time schooling well and are working hard and enjoying being back at school.

## Continued Precautions:

The COVID-19 infection levels seem to have significantly reduced and the government has confirmed the next step in the 'Roadmap', however we remain cautious within school. The vast majority of the precautions outlined in the risk assessment remain in place including:

- Wearing masks/face coverings during busy transitions e.g. beginning and end of the day
- Frequent sanitising of hands and surfaces throughout the day
- Ventilation of all classrooms and communal spaces
- Avoiding contact within two metres of adults and children outside of their class
- Reducing mixing between classes through timetabling and spreading out of groups e.g. lunchtimes
- Being vigilant to any symptoms of the virus and ensuring isolating guidance is followed by everyone as necessary.
- Only essential visitors e.g. therapists and no offsite visits.

We also ask that you continue to support us with these precautions, as you have throughout. In particular, we ask that you:

- Remain vigilant to any symptoms of COVID-19 with your child or any member of your household, isolate and book a test as soon as possible if necessary
- Wear a mask if you pick up and drop off your child and arrive after the buses e.g. 9:10am or 3:10pm (unless this isn't possible).

Whilst, it is really positive to know things are beginning to open up we do not want to be complacent and underestimate the potential risk of transmission within the school, so we are only intending to reduce a small number of precautions as the term progresses. In particular:

- An adult moving between another class when it is necessary to provide cover if there are not any other options
- Recommencing some essential training face to face,
- Short classroom observations by one member of the Leadership team
- The option of face to face meetings for staff e.g. teachers meetings.

We are also going to prioritise our Year 6 families, and are very much hoping to host an 'in person' leavers service for them. However, other end of term celebrations we are postponing, in the hope that we can get back on track with our community events from September 2021.

## Testing for households:

Do not forget that all adults without symptoms can now access twice weekly rapid coronavirus testing. These tests are designed to detect the virus when there are no symptoms present. The tests are voluntary but we would ask that you consider using them as we believe it will help us to further reduce the transmission of the virus within the school community.

They can be collected or ordered online by the following methods:



Hampshire  
County Council



- through your employer, if they offer testing to employees
- collecting a home test kit from a local test site - anyone aged 18 or over can collect 2 packs of 7 tests
- ordering a home test kit online

If you do decide to use them please let us know asap if you have a positive result and ensure all your household isolates, just like you would with a positive PCR (normal) result.

Please also be aware that if you or someone in your household has a possible symptom of COVID you should still get a PCR test as a lateral flow test is only designed to detect asymptomatic cases of the virus - you could still have the virus even if you had a negative lateral flow test.

Feedback on recent lockdown provision:

Thank you to all the parents who completed the recent brief survey about the period of restricted attendance between 7<sup>th</sup> January - 8<sup>th</sup> March. 54 parents responded and the results revealed that

- 98.2% feel that the school did its best
- 96.3% feel that their child has been well supported during this period
- 98% of parents felt informed and that the communication was regular and useful
- 96.3% (5.7% didn't know) felt the school was flexible and responsive to their family's needs.
- 91% (of the 32 parents this was applicable to) felt the remote learning provided was appropriate, individualised and accessible as far as possible.

This was very positive feedback. We will review what else we could provide or how we could further support remote learning if this situation should occur again, which it hopefully won't. However, I think the result also confirms the challenges we know there are for our children to learn remotely, which is why we prioritised providing face to face education as much as possible.

Parents Evening:

Parent's evenings will be held during the week of 24<sup>th</sup> May. Unfortunately, it is still not possible for teachers to meet with parents face to face and so this will need to be via a phone call. You should have received a letter with dates and times so you can arrange a convenient time for a phone call. Teachers will be using their own mobiles due to the demand there will be on school phones during this week, so please answer if it is an unknown number at the agreed time.

If you have recently had your child's annual review and do not feel you need to speak to the teacher please let them know that.

New Building and Extension:

The building work continues to progress well. The extension to the dining hall has now been completed and is back in use by a limited number of classes over lunchtime. I think it will make a significant difference when all classes are eating in the hall again in September.

The classroom, OT and quiet room extension will be completed at the beginning of June, however we will not be moving into it completely until September as we have no plans to move classes at this time. However, we may well start to use some of the other rooms for the last few weeks of term.

Classes for next year:

We are at the early stages of thinking about classes for children for next year. We are waiting on confirmation of new children for September and considering the needs of all the children across the school. If you have any particular thoughts or concerns in relation to your child next year please contact me so that we can discuss this further. We aim to have classes for next year confirmed by the beginning of July so that we can provide opportunities for transition and ensure opportunities for staff to share information during the INSET on 9<sup>th</sup> July.

### Annual Questionnaire:

Even though it has not been a 'normal' year we have still been trying to continue with the planned school improvements, particularly in relation to our new assessment system, which we hope to open up to parents next year. It is now coming to the time of year when we need to identify priorities for improvement for the coming year and to do this it is important to gather your views. I would be very grateful if you complete the parent questionnaire at the following link [https://s.surveyplanet.com/QsyiXe-\\_v](https://s.surveyplanet.com/QsyiXe-_v) A paper copy is available on request. The questionnaire is anonymous and will help us to review this year and gain useful feedback on priorities for future developments. Please complete the questionnaire by Monday 7<sup>th</sup> June.

### INSET Days:

Don't forget we have 3 INSET days this term, they are:

**Friday 28<sup>th</sup> May**

**Monday 21<sup>st</sup> June**

**Friday 9<sup>th</sup> July**

I am always happy to discuss any concerns, worries or questions you might have about the current situation or plans for next year. I am contactable either by phone during the school day or email at anytime.

Take care

Debby