

Shepherds Down School

Shepherds Lane, Compton, WINCHESTER. Hants. SO21 2AJ

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Headteacher: Mrs Debby Gooderham



17th December 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

We are nearly at the end of what has undoubtedly been a very challenging term for everyone. However, there have also been many positives over the term as well. Most noticeably is how quickly all the children have settled back into their learning in school and how happy they have seemed to be back in full time education. It has been great to be able to have all the children back for the term and to be able to provide the structure, routines and learning opportunities they need. The building work is also progressing well and whilst not without its own challenges, it will be very welcome when it is finished. We are also ending the term with only two positive cases of COVID -19 within the school community, which whilst I know is worrying for everyone, all the necessary actions were taken and both these cases have not caused any further transmission of the virus within the school, which was a relief.

You may well be aware, that there has been a reduction in the isolation time from 14 to 10 days, if anyone comes into direct contact with a positive COVID – 19 case. This will be the same in school, so if any member of the school community needs to isolate to prevent transmission, it will be for 10 days from now on.

You may also have heard mention in the news the plans for mass quick testing in schools from January. This will start with secondary schools so will not involve us yet, however I will keep you updated on how this is progressing and when I have more details about this I will let you know.

I hope that everyone remains well over Christmas, however, if any child should develop symptoms please get a test like you would normally and let us know the results via the school office email (admin@shepherdsdown.hants.sch.uk) as soon as possible. Even though it is the school holidays, if the test result is positive, we may well still need to contact close contacts. We will also contact you if any member of the school community tests positive if symptoms started within 48 hours of school closing. Even if the start of symptoms falls outside of this timescale, please still let us know, so we are kept informed of infections within the school.

Our guidance and risk assessment remains the same, however we will be reviewing this if there are any changes when we return to school in January. Unfortunately, I do not think the level of risk in January will be any less, and there is a risk the infection rates could be higher so it is a good time to remind you of some of the key aspects of the guidance.

We would ask that you:

- Remain vigilant to any symptoms of coronavirus with your child or anyone in your household and keep your child away from school and seek a test asap.
- Keep your child at home if anyone in the household is getting a test, until the result is know
- Keep school informed of any changes in your child or other members of the household health, especially in relation to coronavirus symptoms
- Keep your child at home for 10 days if you are informed by school that one of the adults or children in your child's class or 'bubble' (depending on the advice from public health) has tested positive for COVID 19



Hampshire
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- Keep your child at home if they are unwell, even when it not in relation to COVID 19 – to limit spread of infections of any kind at this time, especially as we have limited cover options within ‘bubbles’
- Ensure that your child is not having close contact with anyone outside of their household/social bubble, in accordance with the current government guidance, to reduce the risk of transmission
- If you are dropping or picking your child up please arrive after 9:10 and 3:10 to minimise congestion and observe social distancing whilst waiting and when talking to staff. Please do not come into school when picking up or dropping off your child – this enables us to limit the visitors within school at this time.
- Model good hand hygiene at home with your child

Thank you all for following this advice so far and enabling us to keep children and staff as safe as possible and minimising the need for anyone to isolate.

Goodbye & Welcome Back

Sadly, today after 12 years in school we are saying goodbye to Dinah, who is known to many of you, especially parents of Linnets & Nightingales. I’m sure you’ll join us all in wishing her well in her new adventures. We are also pleased to announce that after Rachel Vincent will be re-joining us after Christmas and will be taking over Dinah’s role in Nightingales.

Annual Reviews:

We are planning on holding EHCP reviews face to face, in a socially distanced situation. If you would prefer this virtually please let school know this when you receive the invite. Also, please bear in mind that we have to complete annual reviews for all 159 children, so we may not always be able to accommodate requests to reschedule appointments, or reschedule appointments if they are missed.

Christmas:

As you will be aware, Christmas festivities have had to be a bit different this year. However, classes have still had Christmas dinner, Christmas Parties and virtual visits from Santa, all within their own classrooms so they have not missed out.

Every class has also been working hard to produce a Christmas play, which has been filmed separately in classes. We are in the process of putting this all together and the link will be sent out by the end of the week. If you would like the link, but have not replied to the letter requesting a link then please let the office know as soon as possible. A respectful reminder that the link is not to be shared outside of your immediate family and definitely not on any form of social media.

Fundraising:

Ed has sent a letter home this week about Amazon Smile and the Christmas Balloon Race – if you need any more details or did not receive the letter please contact Ed.

Dates and INSET:

Return to school on Monday 4th January

Break up for half term – Friday 12th February

Return to school on Monday 22nd February.

Break up for Easter on Thursday 1st April

Return to school on Monday 19th April

We have 3 INSET days left for this year and have provisionally planned to have one on **Friday March 19th**, however we need to be able to carry out face to face training on this day so it could be postponed if the advice at that time does not allow this. We will make a final decision on this by February half term.

I know this has been a very difficult term for many of you for so many reasons but I really hope that you are able to enjoy Christmas and look forward to seeing all the children back in school on Monday 4th January 2021. As always, if you have any concerns or anything you want to discuss with me further do not hesitate to contact me, I am always available via email or in school during term time.

Happy Christmas, with best wishes

Debby