

Dear Parent/Carer

THE SPECIAL PARTNERSHIP TRUST COVID-19 AUTUMN TERM UPDATE

I wanted to take an opportunity to update you on the Trust's current position preparing for the Autumn term 2020. We are very much looking forward to welcoming back all pupils and staff this term, by working together we can create a safe learning environment. School staff will continue to keep in contact with you during the next few weeks. Headteachers will have also written to you outlining the plans for the start of term. Schools have planned based on the assumption that pupils and staff will be returning school in the Autumn term.

During the summer holiday period, each School and Area Resource Base (ARB) across the Trust received a thorough deep clean. There is Personal Protection Equipment available at each school and Area Resource Base.

The Trust is following Government advice with regard to implementing Covid-19 protective measures and the use of face coverings/masks in schools and ARBs. Where there is 'local lockdown' or high transmission rates the use of face coverings in school will become mandatory. Currently the use of face coverings in Trust Schools and ARBs for staff and pupils is optional. Schools have been asked to put in a system of controls which are shown to be effective in reducing risk of transmission;

- keeping unwell children (and staff) away from school
- social distancing (1m +) and consistent contact bubbles (quite often a year group now for secondary schools)
- good, effective and regular hand hygiene (washing for 20 seconds)
- respiratory hygiene – what to do if coughing or sneezing, and the disposal of tissues
- cleaning all frequently touched surfaces, regularly.

Our focus is on the measures outlined above. Should parents want their children to wear face coverings in communal areas this is permissible under the current guidance but we need to point out that it does not negate application of the other control measures and that there are additional hand hygiene measures that we would want pupils to undertake when taking off and storing their face coverings. However, I would like to highlight that;

- data suggests low transmission rates at the moment, in Cornwall & the Isles of Scilly.
- there is limited evidence on the effectiveness of the use of face coverings with children
- all children would need to have access to a face covering and be competent in its application and use should the conditions change, However, for many of our pupils this may not be possible and guidance regarding exemption may be followed, some individuals are exempt from wearing face coverings this applies to those who 'cannot put on, wear or remove a face covering because of a physical or mental illness or impairment or disability'.
- additional risks such as increased transmission due to contamination when putting on and taking off the face covering.

The Trust will continue to monitor the position closely and update protective measures, policy and practice should it be required. Could I encourage you to contact your school if you have questions, queries or concerns about pupil health, safety, well-being or if you would like further advice and guidance.

I have attached some useful information about Covid-19 symptoms and what to do. Traditionally, we experience an increase in cold, flu type symptoms during the Autumn Term and the Trust will always act with caution given the current Covid-19 context and follow national guidance on symptoms; if for example a pupil has a temperature of 38 or above, regardless of the possible cause we would have to follow guidance, send them home immediately and request a test. Therefore we ask that you are particularly vigilant to any symptoms which your child has and air on the side of caution before sending your child in school – if in doubt contact the school to discuss in the first instance. School staff will contact you with clear instructions should a pupil or member of staff test positive.

Open and honest communication is critical as we work together over the next few weeks. By working together, we can develop a carefully considered, planned approach that will ensure that we keep the risk of transmission to a minimum.

Yours sincerely

Guy Chappell
Director
Special Partnership Trust