



My main reason for writing to you today is to update you on arrangements for our return to whole school full time attendance from Monday 8th March, however, I cannot do that before taking the time to thank you for all that you have done to support your child and Doubletrees School over these past few weeks. We do not underestimate the stress that working from home, home learning and government restrictions have put on families since December and we are truly grateful for all that you have done to continue working with us during these unprecedented times. We have loved seeing the work completed whilst at home. For those children that are already in school, it has been lovely to see their resilient attitude towards the changes in place and the resulting work has been fantastic too. We have experienced many positives through the development of our remote learning, such as giving parents more involvement and virtual contact with the classroom environment. We will be exploring ways of continuing this in the future.

We have now reviewed the procedures and arrangements that we have had in place since September and are happy that these continue to meet government guidance and advice. We have included a reminder below of the key information to ensure that everyone understands the requirements. We have also included information on how to access Lateral flow testing kits which can be administered at home.

If we are to keep our children safe and the school infection free, we cannot emphasize highly enough that this is an equally shared commitment between school and home. In the same way that the school shall be operating a 'new normal' and not 'business as usual', we must ask parents to be equally mindful of their responsibilities regarding their family's social interactions and preventative hygiene measures outside of school hours too. Without that, the strategies put into place in school will be undermined and the virus transmitted throughout the community.

Returning to school: Guidance for parents

Whilst many learners have been in school throughout this lockdown we also realise that some of you will be anxious about sending your child back to school following this lockdown for a variety of reasons. We are aware that much of the publicity and advice may seem confusing and, at times, overwhelming. We have prepared a simple guide to help you understand what school will look like for your child and what we are doing to keep everyone as safe and well as possible, as well as answer some of the questions you may have.

Does my child need to return to school?

Yes. The Government say that all children of compulsory school age need to return to school. If you feel your child will find a full time return difficult please speak to us to see what we can do to support. Those individuals who are clinically extremely vulnerable are not expected to return until after March the 31st when the currently shielding deadline is expected to end. You must have received medical advice to shield so we are able to authorise the absence. If you are wishing to return earlier than this we would advise parents to seek medical advice regarding any potential risks to their child returning to full time education. We will work with any families to allay any anxieties, support your child's return to education and discuss and adaptations to their educational provision.

- All children will return to school on Monday 8th March 2021
- The government has stated that attendance is once again statutory from the 8th March

What will my child be doing in school?

Your child will be taking part in education as normally as we can safely do so. They will resume lessons in their classes. Schools have been asked to ensure that they are offering a full, broad and balanced curriculum as soon as they are able. We will be running a curriculum to enable a catch up of any lost learning, alongside a wellbeing curriculum to address and anxieties regarding change and the reintegration back into school. We will identifying the areas most in need of catch up and intervention work and prioritise those areas first. This will include core curriculum areas. Our primary focus, where it is required, will be re-establishing routines and increasing the concentration and engagement in directed activities, alongside the integration of enhanced hygiene habits, such as regular hand washing and cleaning routines.

What will be different?

- We will be keeping classrooms well ventilated, so please ensure your learners are sent to school with suitable clothing.*
- There will be frequent reminders, opportunities and lessons regarding hygiene and handwashing. We will promote a 'catch it, bin it, kill it' culture within the classrooms.*
- The classes will continue to work in bubbles with a consistent staff team around them. They will have little or no contact with staff or learners from other bubbles.*
- Shared spaces will be carefully timetabled to allow time to thoroughly clean between uses.*
- Lunches will be eaten in classrooms. Learners will be asked to bring all that they need each day but to limit this to only necessary items.*
- Starts and end times to days will be slightly staggered to allow for social distancing as much as possible. However the school start time will revert back to 9:30am and the end of the day is 3:30pm.*
- Some staff will be wearing PPE for some or all of the time. This may be related to specific tasks, such as close contact feeding or intimate care. PPE will be worn by all adults in all shared spaces and whilst we hand young people back over at the beginning and end of each day*
- Movement around the schools will be minimised. There will be no large gatherings such as assemblies. These will remain in class groups and online.*
- Resources will be adapted or selected to ensure that they are easy to clean. Learners will have their own set of resources, where possible, to reduce cross contamination. If this is not possible they will be thoroughly disinfected/decontaminated before being used by others.*

We are aware that many of our children are unsettled by change, so we aim to keep school feeling as 'normal' as possible and aim to establish these changes into a new classroom routine. Much of the risk management, such as enhanced cleaning schedules, resource management will occur behind the scenes so your child will not be aware of this.

How will the school support my child back into school following prolonged absence?

Our broad and balanced curriculum, includes wellbeing and PSHE curriculum. We will continue with a Trauma Informed Schools approach, allowing us to assess anxieties and develop individual and class based strategies to address these. The school has working closely with CAMHS to address how environments and sensory approaches can support learners with the increased demands of school and decrease any potential anxieties.

What additional safety measures will be undertaken by the school?

We have conducted a thorough risk assessment of any hazards and the full version of this can be found on our website. We have recently reviewed this.

All classes to function within small teams, minimising social contact with others. Classrooms have been set up to facilitate social distancing where possible.

- *Consistent class teams around learners with separate entrances and exits, careful timetabling of shared spaces including thorough cleaning of these between uses, to reduce social contact and increase social distancing opportunities.*
- *Minimising use of shared resources and enhanced cleaning of spaces and resources throughout the school day.*
- *Protocols for suspected cases are in place, including isolation and collection of learners with symptoms. Emergency PPE kits are available in a variety of places within the school.*
- *All staff routinely carry out lateral flow tests twice a week. Home testing is being offered and rolled out to secondary students from next week. Track and trace records will be kept by the school*
- *Enhanced cleaning facilities have been put into place across the school.*
- *Only essential visitors will be admitted to school, via prior appointment. They will be asked to wear face coverings whilst in school. All visitors integral to your child's care and learning are fully welcome, for example therapy services and social care.*

Where necessary, individuals have a personalised risk assessment around their specific needs. This will have been developed and shared with families.

What if there is a suspected case within school?

Nothing has changed here. Individuals who present as unwell will be isolated immediately in a designated space. The staff supervising will don PPE to supervise the individual. The families will be contacted to arrange immediate collection. Following collection, there will be a thorough cleaning of the isolation space, plus any other spaces that the individual has occupied. Please ensure plans are in place to be able to promptly collect your child.

What if there is a confirmed case?

If there is a confirmed case, then the individual and all contacts will be required to undertake a 10 day quarantine period. The school will provide remote learning provision for learners within the class. The school will provide records and assistance to the Track and Trace programme.

If there are any additional cases confirmed, then the school will seek advice from Public Health England to contain any further outbreaks.

Under what circumstances will there be a closure of a class or the school?

Advice on closing classes or the school concerning a COVID outbreak will always be sought from Public Health England, following any confirmed cases. Classes will not be closed following a suspected case, unless this has been confirmed through testing. The school will then follow any Track and Trace protocols and inform parents accordingly.

An additional reason to cause a class closure would be staffing and supervision levels. If we cannot ensure that the appropriate training and expertise within a class team is available to support our learners, then we will temporarily suspend in school provision and offer remote learning to a class, until the appropriate staff support is available.

In all cases of school or class closures, remote learning will be offered as an alternative to on site learning.

Will meetings and therapies around my child still be able to happen?

- *Any adult to adult meeting will be held virtually where possible. We are aiming to reduce the number of visitors into school to those who need to visit children only.*
- *The school nurse service is running as normal.*

- *The therapy teams are welcome on site. This can include face-to-face contact with your child. They will follow their employer's advice regarding the use of PPE and risk management. We have been working with the various therapy teams on best safe working practice and will continue to do so. Meetings between adults will be virtual where possible. Please contact them if you have any concerns.*
- *Annual reviews will be held but virtually.*
- *We have appreciated the enhanced contact we have had with parents over the past few months and aim to continue this, either virtually or through telephone contact. Visits by parents to school will be by appointment only and only if a virtual or telephone meeting is not a viable alternative.*
- *Only essential visitors will be admitted to school, via prior appointment. They will be asked to wear face coverings whilst in school.*

What about lunches and tuck?

School lunches are fully available as normal. Your child/young person will be eating their lunch in the classroom. If your child/young person is entitled to a free school meal, this will be provided.

We would ask that you send your child in with a snack for the foreseeable future. We will not be providing any tuck for learners during the school day. We will continue to use tuck time as a valuable life skill and communication opportunity, but need to reduce the number of individuals handling food, so we would ask to you provide a suitable snack.

Will my child need to wear their uniform?

Yes. Your child will wear their uniform as they did before, with any reasonable adjustments they need to meet their needs. We will now be asking learners to be changing from PE. We will send out reminders on our expectations from our PE lead shortly. Please note there will be no swimming until the national guidance says pools are safe to reopen. This is looking like it will be in April – fingers crossed!

What will happen at morning drop-off /collection time and am I allowed on site?

Morning drop-off, afternoon collection time, entrance gates, playtimes and lunchtimes will all be continue to be slightly staggered to ease congestion. We ask that only one adult drops children off/collects children at the start and end of the day to limit the number of people on the school site. All adults (unless medically exempt) to wear masks when on the school site. It is essential that parents and children do use the required entry/exit doors as they have been designated to minimise the flow and congestion. Parents will not be allowed to enter the school. A member of staff will collect your child from the front of the school and return them to you at their collection time. If you need to speak to someone in the office, we would ask that where possible you phone them as they can deal with all enquiries over the phone, however, if you absolutely need a face to face conversation, please make an appointment. Please be aware that we operate a strict one person at a time policy in the reception area– you will need to queue outside until the foyer is empty.

The only exception to parents entering the site will be for meetings that have been planned and agreed in advance. Then there are specific guidelines that we must follow. Where possible all parental meetings will take place via teams or over the phone.

- *School drop of times - 9:15-9:25am*
- *School day starts for learners - 9:30am*
- *School day end - 3:30pm with a staggered release of learners.*

For the first few days we will monitor the efficiency and safety of this, with SLT providing support outside. You may need to be patient, in particular at the end of the day. We will review and refine anything we feel is necessary.

What about transport?

If the Local Authority transports your child to school, this will resume as normal. The transport team should communicate with you directly, regarding this and any proposed changes. We have been informed that they will aim to keep as much consistency as possible with the transport your child receives. Any queries regarding transport and the safety measures should be directed to the transport team within the local council.

What is a Lateral Flow Test?

This is a test that can be completed in 30 minutes and can sometimes detect the virus in people who are not showing any symptoms. It does not replace any of the control measures that we have been using. Most school children show no symptoms and so, to break the asymptomatic transmission, we are keen to identify these individuals through testing, so that we can ask them to self-isolate and reduce the risk of further transmission across the community.

The test process is in three parts:

- Part 1 is to take a swab of the back of the throat and/or just the nose. A parent carer would need to support or carry out this part.*
- Part 2 is to put the swab in a test tube containing liquid – then put a couple of drops of this liquid onto a test strip and wait to see the result.*
- Part 3 is to register the test and the result online with NHS Test and Trace and to let the school know immediately if any positive results.*

If your child takes a lateral flow test and it shows a positive result, they and your household or household bubble will then need to isolate.

If your child takes a lateral flow test and it shows a negative result, then this may just mean it failed to pick up an infection this time. It doesn't mean they are free of infection. If your child has any symptoms they would still be required to access test site or postal PCR test and isolate until the result is known. If the result is positive then isolation is required from the test date for 10 days. A lateral flow test only picks up 'some' asymptomatic cases.

Will my child have to have a lateral flow test?

No, although we strongly encourage participation in the home testing programme, there is no obligation for your child to take part. They must be year 7 (11years old or above) to access these tests, if required.

Safety remains our number one concern. We now have an excellent new tool at our disposal for keeping our community safe during this pandemic in the form of a rapid Lateral Flow Test, which many students and staff attending the site over the past few weeks have already accessed.

Do I need to give consent to receive a home testing 'lateral flow' kit?

Yes, we will not be allocating home testing kits unless you give permission to say you want to carry out the testing. Please remember that there is no requirement for your child to take part in these tests if either of you don't consent to it. This is a purely voluntary programme.

If you do wish for your child to take part, then please complete the enclosed consent form and return it to school as soon as possible and then we will send home the test kits with your child.

With effect from next week we will not be carrying out any lateral flow tests for students on site.

Please note: Mainstream secondary schools are carry out some onsite testing next week to 'teach' children to carry out testing at home. This is not applicable for our setting so we are moving straight to home testing. If any parent/ carer would like support with carrying out testing please speak to our nursing team who are more than happy to offer guidance and talk you through the process.

Can our wider household now have access to Lateral Flow testing?

Yes, to provide families with additional reassurance, the government is introducing twice-weekly lateral flow testing for households with students of school ages, starting 8 March 2021. We support this initiative and encourage all members of your household bubble to access this testing. This is especially useful where your child may not tolerate the test. These will not be issued by the school and but can be obtained:

- at a local test site / by collecting a home test kit from a test site / by ordering a home test kit online /via employers if they offer testing to employees

The following people are eligible:

- households, childcare and support bubbles of primary and secondary-age pupils and staff

Primary school pupils will not be asked to test at this time.

Further information can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/rapid-lateral-flow-testing-for-households-and-bubbles-of-school-pupils-and-staff>

Can I send my child to school if they are unwell?

No, please keep your child at home if they are **in any way** unwell. We will ring you and ask you to collect them and take them home. As you are well aware, anyone experiencing [Coronavirus symptoms](#), or anyone who lives with someone who is displaying symptoms, should follow [government guidelines to isolate](#), even if they have had a recent negative lateral flow test. Please do not send them if they 'were unwell' and after administering medication such as paracetamol now appear well. The medication may be 'masking' their illness. We need to work together to keep our community as safe as possible. We will be acting on the side of caution – we ask you to do the same.

In addition, following a recent study by Imperial College London, and in the knowledge that many young people can have different symptoms we are also asking you, to be vigilant with any sign of any new, undiagnosed illness and to not attend the school while their new symptoms persist until they are feeling well again.

What can I do to support the school?

Please read and adhere to the home school agreement that we put into place. This still applies.

Please make sure all contact details are up to date and we are able to contact you whether at work or home. Please do not send your child to school if you suspect that they may not be well.

We **MUST** be cautious with any suspected illnesses, whether they may be caused by medication your child is on, intolerances or allergies and we will ask for any child who presents as unwell to be collected and tested. We would appreciate your support in this to help us keep all learners and staff safe.

Please return the attached consent forms if you would like your child to access lateral flow testing kits at home.

What should I do if I have more questions, or specific concerns regarding my child?

Please contact the school for a discussion with either the class teacher, or a member of the senior leadership team.