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1<sup>st</sup> August 2021

Dear parent/carers,

We just wanted to touch base with you regarding the updates we have had since the end of the academic year and the lifting of restrictions. As you may recall in December, things could change overnight but this is the current state of play.

The government's priority is for all schools to deliver face-to-face, high quality education to all children to ensure that their educational attainment is not harmed significantly, their life chances are not disadvantaged and their mental and physical health improves.

The latest operational guidance states that we do not need to maintain class bubbles any longer and we can sensibly start to resume assemblies in the school hall. We are sure that this will have a significant impact on the children as we can come together as a family again and also children will not be restricted as to who they play with and where they choose to play.

Yet, we cannot ignore that the virus is still around us and so there are things that must be considered. This correspondence aims to provide some answers to any questions you should have about the return to school in September.

### **Will my child need to isolate if there is a positive case of COVID at Newchurch?**

Up until 18<sup>th</sup> July 2021, schools supported NHS Test and Trace by identifying close contacts. However, from 19<sup>th</sup> July, close contacts will now be identified via NHS Test and Trace and schools will no longer be expected to undertake contact tracing. As with positive cases in any other setting, NHS Test and Trace will work with the positive case to identify close contacts. Contacts from a school setting will only be traced by NHS Test and Trace where the positive case specifically identifies the individual as being a close contact. This is likely to be a small number of individuals who would be most at risk of contracting COVID-19 due to the nature of the close contact. Schools may be contacted in exceptional cases to help with identifying close contacts, as currently happens in managing other infectious diseases.



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We are sure that in partnership with us, you are delighted to hear that the current guidance states that from 16<sup>th</sup> August 2021, children under the age of 18 years old will no longer be required to self-isolate if they are contacted by NHS Test and Trace as a close contact of a positive COVID-19 case. Instead, children will be contacted by NHS Test and Trace, informed they have been in close contact with a positive case and advised to take a PCR test. We would therefore encourage all individuals to take a PCR test if advised to do so.

As a school, we will continue to have a role in working with health protection teams in the case of a local outbreak and the school will have a comprehensive Outbreak Management Plan which will be implemented if there is an outbreak in Newchurch. An outbreak would be defined as the school having several positive cases of COVID-19 within a period of 14 days. We will share the Outbreak Management Plan with you in due course alongside our revised risk assessment for the return to school in September.

### Do I still need to wear a face covering when dropping off and collecting my child?

After the recent heatwave, we are sure many of you are pleased to hear that the guidance states that face covering are no longer advised. Therefore, you will no longer be required to wear them when dropping your child off at school and collecting them at the end of the day. We would however, ask that you continue to maintain social distancing a little longer.

Although the government has removed the requirement to wear a face covering, it does expect and recommend that they are worn in enclosed and crowded spaces where you may come into contact with people who you would not normally meet. Next academic year, we are hoping to be able to schedule some of the wonderful events which bring our Newchurch Family together whilst understandably exercising some caution. Therefore, if we are to have any events in school such as the Reading Picnic or the Harvest Assembly, we may ask you to wear a face covering as this will mitigate any risk to the children, our families and staff. We are sure you understand and support the reasoning behind this.

### What control measures will Newchurch put in place?

As we have done since the start the pandemic, we will keep abreast of the current guidance and follow the guidance from the Local Authority which can often be different to the wider public guidance we hear through the media. We will continue to ensure the following control measures as detailed in our risk assessment:

#### Good hygiene for everyone

- **Hand hygiene:** frequent and thorough hand cleaning will continue to be regular practice with children cleaning their hands regularly using soap and water or hand sanitiser.
- **Respiratory hygiene:** the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach will continue to be a very important part of the message to the children.
- **Use of personal protective equipment (PPE):** the use of PPE when needed as detailed in the school's risk assessment.

#### Maintaining appropriate cleaning regimes



The school will maintain its cleaning schedule detailed in the risk assessment which details the cleaning of classrooms, shared areas and equipment at least twice a day.

### Keeping occupied spaces well ventilated

School will continue to ensure that the teaching environment is comfortable yet well ventilated. The guidance states that we need to consider the ventilation of spaces when parents are invited to such events as school plays etc. We will take this one step at a time based on the local and national picture. Please be assured that if we are able and we feel it is safe to do so, we will invite parents into school but please understand that, should we not be able to invite parents to events, it is purely based on mitigating the risks at the time of the event based on the situation we find ourselves in. It may be that we have to stagger year groups across the whole day to reduce numbers on site, limit the number of adults watching performances whilst also increasing the number of performances etc. Fingers crossed the virus remains under control and we will be able to return to all the wonderful events we had before the pandemic hit.

### Follow public health advice on testing, self-isolation and managing confirmed cases of COVID-19

When a child or member of staff develops COVID-19 symptoms or has a positive test, the school will follow public health advice on [when to self-isolate and what to do](#). Children should not come into school if they have symptoms, have had a positive test result or other reasons requiring them to stay at home due to the risk of them passing on COVID-19 (for example, they are required to quarantine). If anyone in Newchurch develops [COVID-19 symptoms](#), however mild, we will ask for them to be collected and advise them to follow public health advice.

Any child awaiting collection will be left in a room with a designated member of staff. A window will be opened for fresh air ventilation and appropriate PPE will also be used if close contact is necessary. Any rooms used by the positive case will be cleaned after they have left.

The household (including any siblings) of the positive case should follow the PHE [stay at home guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection](#).

### If a member of staff or a child tests positive on a Lateral Flow Test (LFT), do they need to go for a confirmatory PCR test?

Staff and children with a positive LFT test result should self-isolate in line with the [stay at home guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection](#). They will also need to [get a free PCR test to check if they have COVID-19](#).

Whilst awaiting the PCR result, the individual should continue to self-isolate. The guidance states that if the PCR test is taken within 2 days of the positive lateral flow test, and is negative, it overrides the self-test LFT test and the child or member of staff can return to school, as long as the individual does not have COVID-19 symptoms.

### How will COVID-19 impact on my child's attendance?

As always, children's attendance is mandatory for compulsory school age children and it is a priority to ensure that as many children as possible attend school on a regular basis.



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Should a child be required to self-isolate or quarantine as a result of COVID-19 in accordance with relevant legislation or guidance published by Public Health England, the attendance code used will be X (not attending in circumstances related to COVID-19). If a child is unable to attend because they have a confirmed case of COVID-19, they will be reported as code I (illness). Any child who is abroad and unable to return to school, the X code will not be applied. Instead, a Code Y will be used – unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

### **What if we travel abroad as a family prior to September 2021?**

In all cases, parents must adhere to the [travel legislation](#), details of which are set out in [government travel advice](#). Families travelling abroad should bear in mind the impact on their child's education which may result from any requirement to quarantine or isolate upon return.

### **Will my child receive work if they need to isolate or quarantine?**

Should your child be required to isolate or quarantine, the school will aim to provide work for the children. In the academic year 2020-2021, Mrs Wilkinson-Gamble has been our virtual teaching assistant and has been the point of contact for the children. In September, Mrs Wilkinson-Gamble will be returning to school and this will not be the case.

In the event that an individual child is required to isolate, then work will be uploaded to Google Classroom by the start of the **next** school day. Teachers will be working to organise face to face teaching and so there will need to be a period of time to allow them to create resources for home learning as this is very different to the practice in the classroom and requires time to do this. We ask for your patience and understanding with this.

Should a whole class be required to isolate (along with their class teacher and teaching assistant) then our remote learning plan will be implemented and there will be live lessons with a schedule for each day. In all cases, remote learning will be the equivalent in time to the school day and all children are expected to engage in remote learning.

### **My child had a chrome book to support home learning but it has been returned to school. How do I access home learning if my child needs to isolate?**

We have asked that all chrome books to be returned to school as we would like to use them as part of our computing curriculum.

If your child had a device loaned to them from school, they will receive a replacement laptop which will have been converted into a chrome book. This will be sent home with them in the first week in September.

Should you find that you had a device for your child, but this is no longer the case, please contact school and we will look to support you. In all cases, a loan agreement is required with specific terms and conditions for the loan of a device.



**My child is struggling with their mental health, showing signs of anxiety, stress and low mood. How can school help?**

Unfortunately, it is a reality that we find that an increasing number of children are struggling with their mental health and well-being. As a school, we have invested a lot of time and training for staff as well as developing the curriculum in this area. We are currently working with Chester University to receive training on Trauma, Attachment and Mental Health in order to strengthen our capacity to support our Newchurch robins.

If your child is struggling with their mental health, we urge you to make an appointment with either Mrs Debbie Conreen (SENCO) or myself to look at steps to support your child. We have a number of staff trained in therapies such as: Theraplay, Therapy Dog, LEGO therapy and Drawing and Talking Therapy which we can use to support your child.

Should we feel it appropriate and with parental consent, we will suggest a referral to the Mental Health Team for additional support. In all cases, confidentiality will be maintained.

**My child is in receipt of benefits-related free school meals. What will happen if they need to isolate?**

Any isolating children in receipt of benefits-related free school meals will receive either a food parcel or a voucher. The Local Authority is in the process of deciding on whether families will receive a food parcel or a voucher. We will keep you updated on this once we know the details.

If your circumstances have changed and you believe your child may be eligible for Free School Meals, please contact Mrs Heath in the school office on 01925 763427 or [newchurch\\_primary@sch.warrington.gov.uk](mailto:newchurch_primary@sch.warrington.gov.uk) who will be able to support your application.

Prior to us returning to school in September, there will be further correspondence regarding risk assessments, drop offs and collections etc. We have also set up a text message for you with a reminder of the times your child(ren) need to be dropped off and collected.

Just one final reminder is that our PE kit includes a red polo shirt now not a white t-shirt.

Take care and keep safe.

Kind regards,

*Mrs Jayne Narraway*

Headteacher



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