

'Achieving Excellence through Leadership'

GILES JUNIOR SCHOOL

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Headteacher: Miss. L. Whitby

Wednesday, 04 November 2020

Dear Parent/Carer,

School Closure Thursday 5th and 6th November 2020

The decision to close the whole school has not been made lightly. I have spoken with my chair of governors, Kim Hedley, who is in full support of the school closure to stop the spread of the virus among our school community. I have had advice from the head of Hertfordshire County Council who also agrees closure will support relevant changes to take place.

Today we currently have high numbers of children isolating due to being in contact with a positive case of a member of staff. While we can't ever be certain how or where COVID-19 is spread from we feel that if we act swiftly we will be able to minimise further disruption to learning. Obviously, the rise in cases has prompted the government to enter a second lockdown from tomorrow, which will limit the opportunities for the general population to socialise and visit non-essential shops. Our risk assessment followed the guidance, as well as the remit to make sure that the curriculum was not narrowed and full provision was given within the space we have available to us. For seven weeks this plan was effective.

As a school, we can't risk the health of our pupils and staff where we have had 4 positive cases within 14 days until we have further advice on how best to proceed.

Therefore, the school will not be open to ANY pupils for the next two days. We will re-assess the situation and provide work for the pupils to carry out at home for the following two days. Remote learning will be set on the school website during this time as outlined in earlier communication. Teachers can be contacted via their class email address which is also available on the COVID tab on the school website.

If you have been previously contacted in regard to being in contact with a positive case then the requirement is still for your child to self-isolate for the time outlined in the original communication. During this period should your child be tested positive please communicate this to the school so we can support tracing any necessary contacts.

Legal requirements for self-isolation

You could be fined if you do not stay at home and self-isolate following a positive test result for COVID-19, or if you are a contact of someone who has tested positive, and you are notified by NHS Test and Trace that you need to self-isolate.

It is also an offence to knowingly provide false information about your close contacts to NHS Test and Trace.

Failure to comply with these requirements may result in a fine of up to £10,000. These [regulations only apply in England](#).



<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection#:~:text=From%2028%20September%2C%20you,a%20positive%20test%20result.>

Those pupils who are learning remotely while we halt the spread of the infection will need to adhere to the current guidance during this period of national lockdown. The details of this guidance can be found below.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/new-national-restrictions-from-5-november>

Further communication will be sent to detail how we will further mitigate risk upon return of those pupils who are not currently required to isolate. The barriers which have prevented us being able to have individual class bubbles up to this point are: lack of space, ability to release teachers from teaching duties (legally entitled non-contact time), specialist teaching to maximise their progress in key areas such as PE, targeted grouping of pupils in some subject areas such as maths. We will need to restructure our whole way of working to facilitate class bubbles.

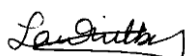
The measures we will be organising during these two days will be:

- Classes bubbles only with limited other adult contact
- Redeployment of staff who taught multiple groups to be within a bubble and utilised in a different capacity
- PPA (time which must legally given to teachers outside of the classroom) to be given to all staff on Friday afternoon (the school will close at 12:00pm to facilitate this)
- Implement class toilets which have controlled use throughout the day
- Additional cleaning for the next two days
- Remote learning delivered and set up for those isolating for the following week
- Designated areas for pupils to play outside within classes only
- We will have an IPC infection nurse visiting the school next week to support any further improvements we can make which we will put in place immediately.

To respond to some parents who have raised that online learning was not available quickly enough I wanted to outline the processes involved to help parents better understand the wider picture which is being presented to us when delivering this. Year 3 offered a bespoke set of learning as all teachers were available to do this and were not in school teaching. This was aligned to what they would have taught if the children were attending school. Year 5 had online learning links which matched the topics being taught the evening before so was available for English and Maths for the start of the day. Year 4 put a mixture of bespoke recorded lessons and links to support those for the small group of year 4 pupils who were isolating as they could use their half term to do so. Year 6 devised resources, which were being accessed successfully by a number of pupils who were isolating for other reasons than school contact through a Googledrive link which was sent out. In reality face to face lessons are planned a few days at a time so they can be adapted to plug gaps or move the children on at the pace deemed necessary.

We are working hard to balance offering learning for those in school which is as close to those who might be in school while recognising that there is limited capacity in the day when a teacher is teaching in class. We strive to improve the ability to achieve this balancing act while we adjust to the restrictions this pandemic has brought.

Yours sincerely,



Louise Whitby
Headteacher