

St James' Primary School

Main Road, Biddenham MK40 4BD

Telephone: 01234 352721

Email: office@stjamesvaschool.co.uk

Website: www.stjamesprimary.org.uk



ST JAMES'
PRIMARY SCHOOL

3rd September, 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope you have all enjoyed a restful and enjoyable summer break. We are very much looking forward to the year ahead which will hopefully not be dominated by COVID as the last two years have been! I write with information regarding the start of the year – please take some time to read all this information so that you are up to speed with what to expect as children return to school. It is likely that we will see COVID rates begin to rise again across the country as schools return. We all therefore need to work together to ensure our actions do not lead to undue risks. Our approach is to start the year cautiously whilst enjoying the freedom that the lifting of restrictions will allow. Please remember, however, that if we have an outbreak, then all those restrictions will have to be re-implemented, and that if we have high numbers of staff who become unwell, then that will also affect our ability to fully open/operate.

Classes are no longer required to remain in bubbles and children can therefore mix with one another. This means we will be returning to our usual school day, including management of lunchtimes, daily collective worship in the Hall etc. We will continue to have a cleaning regime over the lunch period, focused on toilets and other high use areas/surfaces. Children will also have their own stationary set in the classroom, just to limit unnecessary contact.

If you have symptoms of COVID or have tested positive for COVID, you must not enter the school site for any reason.

Isolation

If your child is showing symptoms, then they must stay away from school and must get a PCR test. Families are able to carry our Lateral Flow Tests twice a week, and we encourage this. If there is a positive LFT, then your child must self isolate and get a PCR test. Please follow all the government guidance regarding self-isolation; if you need further advice, please contact the NHS. If your child demonstrates symptoms of COVID, (which includes persistent coughing) we will contact you to come and collect them and arrange a PCR test. There are new rules for contact tracing and self-isolation: please see [What parents and carers need to know about early years providers, schools and colleges - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/what-parents-and-carers-need-to-know-about-early-years-providers-schools-and-colleges) There is also details about how you can claim financial support if needed. The most recent Bedford Borough flow chart is included at the end of this letter.

School times

Gates will open at 8.45. The school day starts at 8.50, with the first lessons starting at 9.00. This means that **all children must be in class by 9.00** at the very latest. Any child who is not in class at 9.00 will be marked as late. If you arrive at 9.00, your child is late and you must bring them into school via the office; no child should come into school on their own at this time.

The school day finishes at 3.30. The gates will be opened from 3.20. Any child who is uncollected by 3.35 will be taken to the school office.

All parents must adhere to the timings above and move swiftly through the school site so as to avoid any hold-ups or large groups developing.

We will continue to operate a **one way system**, which means entering school via the school drive and vehicle gates, and exiting via the pedestrian gate.

On Fridays, we will return to staying open for the full school day.

Parents in school

Parents are able to come onto school site in the morning if they wish, however, you may choose to continue to 'kiss and go' if you prefer. You will be able to speak to staff briefly in the mornings if you wish, but this must only be for very quick messages. It remains our preference for parents to limit contact with staff, however, so that we can continue to limit any possible transmission. Please do not enter cloakrooms or classrooms with your children. Any longer conversations with teachers must be made via appointment. As

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much as possible, please continue to limit visits to the school office – if you can communicate via email/phone call, then please do so.

We ask that you continue to wear face coverings when on school site, although this is now no longer mandatory. When entering the school buildings, however, all parents will be required to wear a face covering unless they are exempt. Please continue to avoid congregating in groups on the playground or outside the school.

Uniform

Full uniform should now be worn, which includes appropriate black school shoes. On PE days, children should continue to wear their PE kit into school.

Please continue to limit the amount of things your child brings into school to school essential items only. No toys should be brought into school.

Attendance

Attendance is mandatory and we will now be returning to our usual monitoring procedures, in line with Local Authority policy, and will be in touch if there are concerns. Warning letters will be sent home where your child's attendance drops below 95%, and when it drops below 90% (persistent absenteeism) then you will be invited into school for a meeting to develop a plan. No leaves of absence for the purposes of family holiday will be approved. If your child will not be in school, you must contact us to let us know (by 9.30am each morning; leave a message on the answerphone if your call is not answered). All clinically extremely vulnerable children should attend school, unless clinicians have advised otherwise – in this circumstance, we will need to see a copy of this written advice.

Remote Learning

If your child is at home self isolating, they will be able to access remote learning activities. On Day 1 of their isolation, class teachers will put together all the resources and information ready to begin this on Day 2 of isolation. Please therefore give us as much notice on Day 1 as possible to allow for organising this. There will continue to be remote sessions via Teams, so please ensure you still have your child's log-in details.

If your child does not have access to a computer or the internet, please contact Mrs Morton by **Friday 10th September** so that she can identify needs across the school and put into place appropriate plans. For those children entitled to Benefits led Free School Meals, food parcels will be made available by our caterers Caterlink for you to collect; please note there is no provision made for vouchers to be made available (as per Government guidelines)

Contingency

We have contingency plans in place if there is an outbreak – essentially we will revert back to all the restrictions we had in place last year. The Public Health team have set out a series of thresholds which, if reached, may lead to temporary restrictions being re-introduced. Please continue to report all positive cases to us so that we can keep track on numbers and identify any patterns/causes for concern. Please remember, we will always follow Public Health advice.

Clubs

We will gradually re-introduce clubs and activities outside of school hours over the coming year as the wider COVID picture becomes more apparent/better understood. Initially, we will have music lessons in place, before school gymnastics and in-school choir. You will be advised of any other clubs via the newsletter as and when these become available.

School events

We have planned for the return of activities such as class assemblies, whole school services and shows, book blinks etc, however these are all dependent on the COVID situation, and will be presented as Face-to-face events, virtual events or a blended version.

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Please keep an eye out on newsletters with updated information. We appreciate your understanding regarding the difficulties of long term planning and the need to make changes, often at short notice.

Parents Evenings this year will be held virtually via the system we introduced in the summer term.

CO2 Monitors

You may be aware that the Government have made a commitment to provide CO2 monitors to all schools to support our work in making sure children are safe. Bedford Borough have provided us with our monitors (although we are 1 short at the moment) and these are already in class. These will help us to identify when ventilation needs to be increased.

Staying the same

We will continue to focus on ensuring children wash/sanitise their hands regularly. Please help us by reminding your child about how to wash their hands properly, and reminding them to sanitise their hands as they enter their classrooms in the morning. We will also be teaching the 'Catch it Kill it Bin it' approach to coughs and sneezes – reinforcement and support from home will be greatly appreciated. We will continue to prioritise the mental health and well-being needs of children, continuing with the Making Me programme which started last year. Anyone – staff, children, parents, visitors – can wear face coverings if they choose. We expect that all statutory assessments will return this year, although await confirmation from the Government on this. Statutory assessments take place in Reception (Baseline), Y1 Phonics (June), Y2 & 6 SATs (May), Y4 Multiplication Tables Check (June). In addition, children in Y2 will undergo a phonics check this term.

Finally...

For parents in Reception, unfortunately Mrs Doughty is unwell and is unable to return to school at the moment. We are working to make arrangements to cover her absence so that your children have a settled start to their school life. Planned home visits will still take place with myself or Mrs Morton coming along with Mrs Warren and Mrs Reilly. We will keep you updated with all relevant information once confirmed.

I think I've covered everything! There's bound to be something I've forgotten or things we need to change as school starts. I will upload relevant documents onto the website, including our risk assessment and outbreak management plan. I'm sure that by continuing to work together we will be able to keep our school relatively safe and therefore ensure our children enjoy a much more settled year – as always, your support is incredibly important and very much appreciated. We can't wait to see you all next week!

With very best wishes,

Maria Soulsby
Head Teacher

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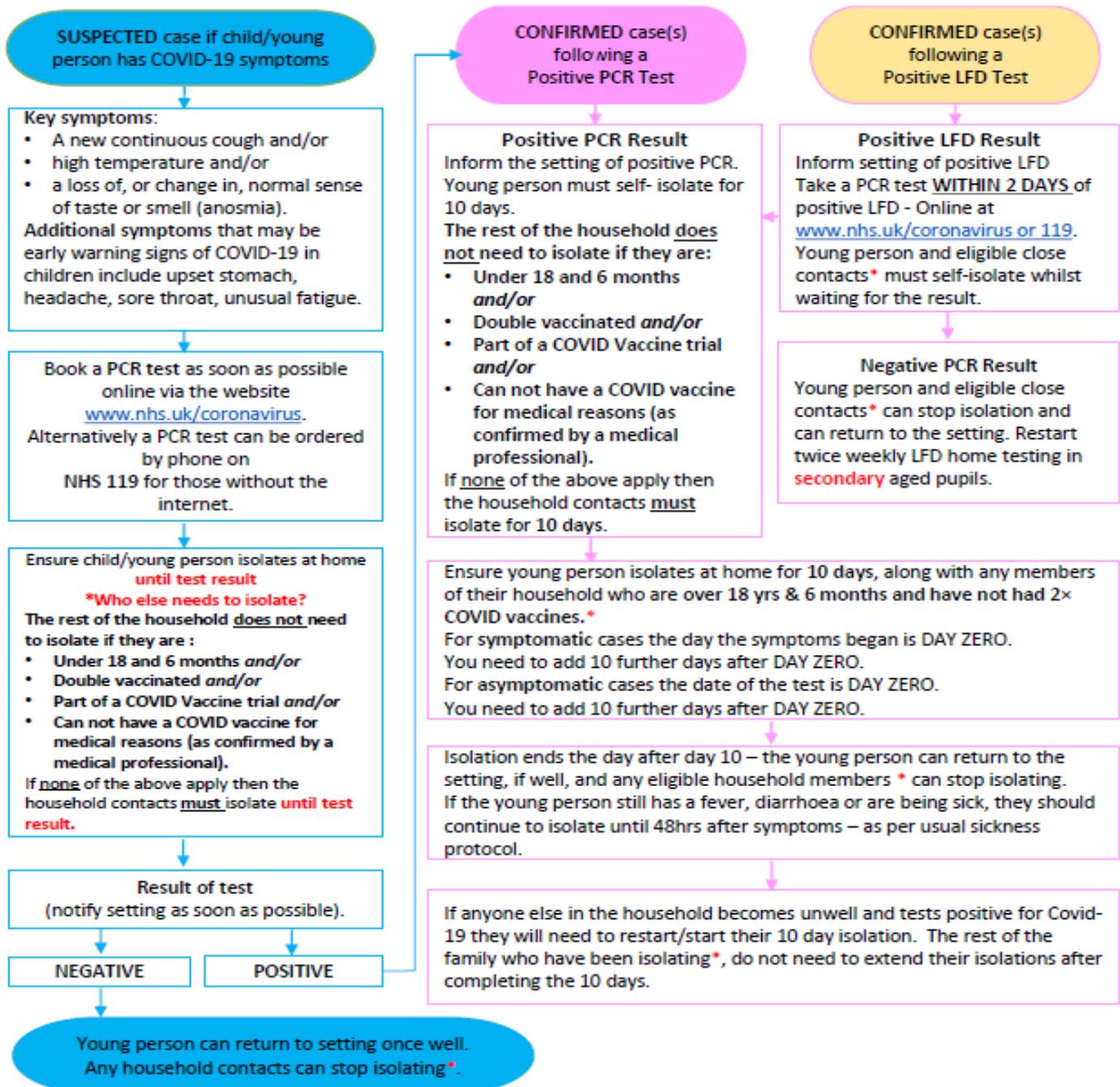
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COVID-19 Guidance for Parents/Carers in Bedford Borough Education Settings From 23rd August 2021

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For any SUSPECTED or CONFIRMED case of COVID-19 in a young person please follow the flow chart below.



- We continue to ask families/children to wash hands regularly, keep spaces well ventilated, wear masks in crowded, public indoor areas.
- Masks are to be worn on transport to and from educational settings.
- LFD test = Lateral Flow Device tests are rapid tests that can be used at home and the result is available after 30 minutes.
- PCR test = polymerase chain reaction test that can be booked online and is sent to a lab for the result.
- If you have recently (within 90 days) had a positive PCR test for COVID-19 you are exempt from testing by both PCR and LFD within 90 days of a positive PCR test result, unless you develop new symptoms. Individuals may choose to take a LFD test after the isolation period.
- LFD tests are used for identifying Covid-19 infection where there are no symptoms and should **not** be used if you have any symptoms.
- LFD tests are safe to use in pregnancy.
- If you have had a COVID-19 vaccination you should still take part in the LFD testing as you may still transmit the virus.
- If you have been identified as an eligible close contact* of a positive case, a negative LFD test does not mean you can stop isolating.
- If you have had a recent nosebleed, or have a nose piercing use the other nostril to swab for the LFD test.