



Enjoying our learning...
...aiming for excellence.

Bells Farm Primary School
Bells Farm Close, Druids Heath
Birmingham. B14 5YG
Tel: 0121 675 8666
Fax: 0121 675 4138
Headteacher: Mrs B Butterworth



We're now paperless!

Letters & newsletters will now be emailed to parents. Please ensure you have provided your correct email address to the office.

7th January, 2022.

Dear Parents / Carers,

I hope you have had a good first week of the year without too much disruption. This letter will be mainly about the current situation with COVID, just to keep you all informed.

As rates of spread of the virus have significantly increased nationally and locally we have updated our risk assessment and have increased our control measures, which we are keeping under review.

We have been informed of 3 positive cases in children who have been in school this week – each from different families. We have also been notified of several children who tested positive over the holiday and have not yet returned to school. Likewise, we have had 3 members of staff who had COVID over the holiday and one has just returned today.

So it remains really important that you test your child if you are informed that someone in their class has tested positive. I know there have been issues with getting lateral flow tests recently, but please do continue to do what you can to get some tests; this will help keep everyone safer and reduce the chances of more significant disruption in the early part of the term.

Staffing

We need to ensure we have adequate staffing for teaching and learning, site safety, hygiene and cleaning, lunchtime supervision and food preparation. One of our main concerns is the levels of staff absence that may occur. We have contingency plans in place and the most appropriate ones will be used based on the specific circumstances of the absence – e.g. year group, length of absence, illness level of staff member, numbers of children off at that time.

Plans include:

- Non full time class based staff including myself and Miss Williams covering
- Support staff to double up if teachers are isolating or ill
- Use of supply teachers if available



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We also have plans if we have issues with kitchen staff and food preparation. We will notify you if there is a staff shortage in the kitchen and the children may then just have a sandwich lunch in the short term.

Control measures

Hygiene and cleaning

- Additional on-site cleaning throughout the day
- Hand sanitiser on entry to classrooms
- Hand sanitising / washing before lunch and throughout the day
- Windows and doors open regularly throughout the day and all through lunch and breaktimes
- Air quality monitors in each classroom

Face covering

- All staff and visitors to wear while in shared spaces
- All parents/carers urged to wear for drop off and pick up

Minimising contact between year groups

- Minimising cross year group mixing to only:
 - Phonics groups
 - Intervention groups
 - Tuition sessions
 - After school clubs
- Breakfast club and after school club

Testing

- At least twice weekly lateral flow testing by staff
- Highly recommend lateral flow testing for all children (reception to year 6) once a week while the rates are so high.
- PCR tests for anyone with symptoms and must remain off school pending results.

Family members with COVID

- Please contact us to discuss whether or not to send your children to school and we will discuss approved absence for children where a household member has COVID.
- Where children do attend, daily lateral flows are required.



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Close contacts (outside of household)

- Pupils should take daily lateral flows while continuing to attend school.
“**Anyone aged 5 years and over, who has been identified as a contact of someone with COVID-19 and who is not legally required to self-isolate, is now strongly advised to take a rapid lateral flow device (LFD) test every day for 7 days or until 10 days since their last contact with the person who tested positive for COVID-19 if this is earlier. If any of these LFD tests are positive they should self-isolate in order to protect other people.**”

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-for-contacts-of-people-with-possible-or-confirmed-coronavirus-covid-19-infection-who-do-not-live-with-the-person/guidance-for-contacts-of-people-with-possible-or-confirmed-coronavirus-covid-19-infection-who-do-not-live-with-the-person>

Isolation periods for positive cases

The government has announced that those who have tested positive may finish their self-isolation on day 7 if they have negative lateral flows on days 6 and 7.

If this is the case, and to further reduce the chance of passing COVID-19 on to others, if you end your self-isolation period before 10 full days the government guidance **‘strongly advises’** you:

- to limit close contact with other people outside your household, especially in crowded, enclosed or poorly ventilated spaces
- to work from home if you are able to
- in addition to venues where it is a legal requirement, to wear a face covering in crowded, enclosed or poorly ventilated spaces and where you are in close contact with other people
- to limit contact with anyone who is at higher risk of severe illness if infected with COVID-19

Although the Department for Education is saying that the 7 day guidance also applies to children, we would like to retain the 10 day isolation for all pupils as we define classrooms and school as crowded, and children in their class are not part of their household.



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I know my letter on Monday stated that we would 'prefer' this, but as the week progressed, we got a better idea of where we were after the holiday! This is just not the time to take chances because the last thing we want is an outbreak in school and further risk of illness and disruption. This will be held under review pending direct guidance from the Department for Education.

Clubs

I am pleased that we have had good take up of the clubs. Unfortunately, we have to cancel Mindfulness as a club, simply because the activities required too much close contact between the children of different year groups and there wasn't an appropriate space to spread out. However, we have now split the homework club on a Friday into key stage 1 and 2 groups with Miss Hookes running key stage 1 and Mrs Johnson running key stage 2. There will be capacity in this club for more children to join. Don't forget the clubs start week commencing 17th January.

Apologies that the first Friday letter is dominated by COVID, but there will be other hopefully happier notices next week! Until then, have a happy and safe weekend!

Kind regards,

Barbara Butterworth