



Bedford Road Primary School

Believe and Achieve Together

Back to School Arrangements September 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

As we near the end of term, I am writing to update you on the approach the school will be taking in order to get back to 'normal'. Unfortunately, this is another of my long letters, but it contains a lot of important information that I hope you can take time to read.

I want to start by saying that having spoken to some staff, parents and with Governors, the overwhelming feeling is that a cautious approach is the preferred approach for September.

During the past 18 months, we have learned lots of new ways of doing things. We have had to put things in place that have made things quite difficult and we have also made some changes that have been for the better. Some of these things we are happy to be able to change back to the old way, but some of the things we will keep as they have worked so well. Through it all though, you have supported the school so well and for that I want to say a huge thank you.

I am in receipt of the government's latest COVID-19 operational guidance for schools and you will no doubt have heard in the press that things can operate differently from 19th July. The guidance states that 'As COVID-19 becomes a virus that we learn to live with, there is now an imperative to reduce the disruption to children's education.' I couldn't agree more.

However, within the guidance we have also been advised to have a 'Stepping Measures Up' plan. This is to ensure that if circumstances change in a particular area we are ready to follow Public Health England advice and reintroduce measures that had earlier been relaxed. The Governors and I have decided that we will take a cautious approach and when we return to school after the summer break we will gradually make the changes back to normal. It feels the right thing to do, to wait to see how things are at the end of the summer break before making sweeping changes, only for me to have to communicate in late August that we can't go ahead as we had planned.

The vast majority of our systems will remain in place for the last three days of this summer term. Step 4 comes into effect on 19th July and school ends on Wednesday 21st July.

Changes that will take effect from September:

Bubbles

The government is no longer recommending that it is necessary to keep children in consistent bubbles. This is good news as it will provide us with greater flexibility over curriculum delivery. We will gradually introduce this mixing of classes by initially moving from class bubbles to Year group bubbles in years 2 - 6. Year R and year 1 will continue in year groups bubbles, as they are at the moment. Although we won't be rushing to allow mixing across year groups in school, we will be able to allow for mixing in extra curricular activities and curriculum interventions and activities. We hope to start sending details of clubs in the autumn term.

Tracing close contacts and isolation

We will of course follow the new guidance on contact isolation **from 19th July** and will no longer be sending home whole bubbles for isolation. It is worth noting here that during the past 10 months we have only sent one class bubble home to isolate; as a school, we have been very lucky.

The new guidance states that after 19th July, schools will no longer be expected to undertake contact tracing. Instead they will be contacted directly by NHS test and trace and only if a positive case has specifically identified an individual as being a close contact. From 16th August children under the age of 18 will no longer be required to isolate if they are identified as a close contact.

It is worth mentioning that we will continue to have a role in working with health protection teams and in the case of a local outbreak in the setting, we may be advised to reintroduce some control measures.

Face coverings

From 19th July, face coverings are no longer being advised by the Government for staff and visitors on the school site. Whilst we no longer expect parents to wear face coverings when bringing children to the gates, we respect those who make a personal decision to continue to do so. We will ask any visitors who come into the school building to wear face coverings.

For the time being it is likely that we will ask staff to continue with their face coverings in communal areas and on the school gates as a precautionary measure.

Again if we have an outbreak in school, we might be advised to temporarily re-introduce the wearing of face coverings for parents coming onto the school premises.

Stepping measures up and down

As mentioned earlier, we will put plans in place which will outline how we will operate if there is an outbreak in the school or local area. Given the detrimental impact that restrictions on education can have, any measures will be considered as a last resort, kept to the minimum number of groups and for the shortest amount of time possible. In all cases of stepping measures up we will work with Public Health teams.

Control Measures

We will continue to be extremely thorough with our control measures.

Hand and respiratory hygiene

We will continue to ensure good hygiene for everyone and ensure that pupils clean their hands regularly with soap and / or sanitiser. The 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach will continue to be very important.

Maintaining thorough cleaning regimes

We will continue with our current high level cleaning schedule. We will review this termly.

Ventilation

We will continue to keep the school buildings well ventilated.

Following public health advice on testing, self isolation and managing confirmed cases

Children should not come to school if they have symptoms, have had a positive result or if there are other reasons requiring them to stay at home due to risk of passing on COVID-19 (for example they are required to quarantine).

We will continue to follow guidelines and send home anyone who develops symptoms.

Attendance

School attendance continues to be mandatory for all pupils of compulsory school age and it will be our priority to ensure that as many children as possible regularly attend school.

Remote Education

We have been asked to maintain our capacity to deliver high quality remote education for the next academic year. We will continue to operate in much the same way as we have this academic year and will follow any new direction that may be imposed.

Pupil wellbeing and support

Our support for pupil wellbeing will continue to be a priority.

School meals

Support will continue to be provided for those eligible for benefits-related free school meals and who are learning at home during term time due to imposed isolation.

School drop off and pick up

The new way of dropping off children and picking up has worked well for us. This system ensures that we can get children safely into school and provides a calm start to the day. It is our intention to continue with this system, but we hope to be able to reduce the time between each drop off / collection slot.

Please see the attached link which gives an overview of the new times and the gates that you will use. Please adhere as closely as you can to the times stated.

Click here: [Whole school opening times September 2021 Parent copy](#)

Reception, year 1 and year 2 will now enter via pedestrian gate opposite Sainsburys. Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 will enter via the Hillgrounds car park gate. Please note that the times have changed for some year groups and most noticeably for year 5 and 6 pupils.

Please note - this will be a trial and if we find that the time slots are too close together, we may need to tweak these slightly to accommodate this. Please bear with us. Similarly if you are not sure how to drop off siblings, we will be happy to assist with which gate you should use for pick up and drop off.

From September, we will no longer be requesting that parents wear face coverings on the school site at pick up and drop off times. However, we appreciate that for some, they will feel they wish to continue to do so. The personal choices of individuals will be respected.

If we are advised to step up our measures because of an outbreak we will communicate with you and respectfully ask you to recommence with mask wearing for a temporary period.

Lunchtime arrangements

We have no immediate plans to change our routines at lunchtime. The systems we have in place now have worked extremely well and have had a really positive impact upon behaviour and we have also seen a huge reduction in playground accidents.

We will review this in the Autumn term.

Book bags / rucksacks / bringing things to school

In September, we will be asking children to bring their reading books to school daily. For this reason, children may once again start to bring a **small rucksack**. The rucksack must be no bigger than: Height: 40cm / Width: 28cm /Depth: 11cm to carry their water bottle, reading book and lunchbox. They may of course continue to carry these things separately or bring their items in a carrier bag if this is preferable. No items, other than those linked with learning, should be brought to and from school. Please do not allow your child to fill up their bag with toys etc.

PE Kit on PE days

This has proved very popular with staff and parents. This is something we intend to keep for the longer term. For this reason it is very important that your child wears the correct PE kit on PE days.

PE kit is as follows:

Black shorts / black joggers (no logos / stripes / patterns)

White polo / t- shirt (no logos / patterns)

Black hoodie (no logos / stripes / patterns)

White or black trainers (no stripes / patterns / colour)

And finally

We are conscious that there will be things that we will want to reintroduce, but we want to see how things are going when we get back in the Autumn term. We will gradually make decisions about when we start assemblies in the hall, when to allow large groups to sing together and

bringing back volunteers and regular visitors. There may be other things that you are hoping to hear about starting up again, please bear with us and we will get to these things when we feel the time is right.

If you have any questions about the contents of this letter please do not hesitate to contact the school office. Although I have tried to cover everything, it is completely possible that something has been missed.

Let me finish by once again thanking you for your continued support of the school and the staff. I have been humbled by the way the school community has pulled together. Your children have been amazingly resilient throughout the Pandemic and let's now work together to make up for this disrupted time they have experienced.

Lindsay Gould
Headteacher
Bedford Road Primary School