

The Beacon Folkestone

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Dear Parents/Carers

The first two weeks have flown by and I am amazed at the resilience and adaptability in how the pupils have responded to the changes in school, thank you for all your preparation and support in making this transition back to school happen so smoothly, we really appreciate it.

We thought it would be a good idea to respond to everyone after receiving a few parental/carer questions regarding our response to CV-19. We felt sharing this to all our parents/carers may reduce some worry or concern that we are all experiencing.

Break Times and Lunchtime

Pupils remain in their classes/bubbles for most of the day, this does not mean they aren't accessing the outside spaces for their learning, particularly as the weather has been kind and we are utilising the outside areas whilst we can. During lunchtimes children/young people sit in their classes/bubbles with three children/young people to a table so they remain distanced wherever possible. The tables are apart from other classes/bubbles and they are supported by adults throughout the lunch period. The queuing for lunch collection is spaced out and the children have been fantastic at self-regulating this!

Entry and exit to the lunch hall is through different dedicated doors to avoid any congestion. The dining hall is cleaned between sittings by our cleaning team who are deployed throughout the day with continuous cleaning tasks (including door handles, desks, and frequently touched surfaces).

The children/young people have dedicated zone based spaces for breaktimes (including lunchbreaks) which means they are away from other children/young people in the school, having their own area to enjoy some time to play. There is additional staffing on hand to support the children and ensure we can control any interactions, making sure they are limited and safe.

It is clear in the government guidance that it is not a case of "all or nothing" and applying this principle there is a mixing of a small number of classes/bubbles but with the mitigating procedures of distancing, handwashing prior and post lunch activities and ensuring there is no form of grouping or crowding. The children and young people can interact in a supervised way that still ensures they are significantly reducing the risk of transmission.

Transport

We are constantly tweaking transport procedures to reduce the risk of any prolonged interaction upon entry and exit to the school. We are receiving reassurance that the taxi firms are following cleaning procedures to keep our children and young people safe. The staggering of drop off and pick up times seems to be creating a steady flow and makes for a calmer start and finish to the day for everyone.

Children/Young people or Staff with symptoms

The symptoms are still defined as:

- **a high temperature** – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature)
- **a new, continuous cough** – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual)

- **a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste** – this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal.

Where an individual presents with one of the above symptoms they will need to self-isolate for 10 days and receive a test. If the test comes back as positive, we are able to track all pupils and staff movements during the day and advise if anyone who has had prolonged contact will need to isolate for a 14-day period.

It is not automatic that a class/bubble needs to immediately isolate if a child or adult from their class/bubble presents with one or more of the symptoms. Further action only has to happen when a case is confirmed after a test. In the case of a positive test result then everyone in the group/bubble and others who have had significant or prolonged contact would need to isolate for 14 days with the recommendation they get a test (even if the test is negative they would still have to isolate for 14 days as the virus can take this amount of time to manifest).

Since the start of term we had very few pupils and staff presenting with symptoms, but thankfully all have tested negative and hence we have had no cause to close any classes/bubbles as of yet. Thank you for your support where some pupils have been unwell and you have kept them off of school as our normal illness requirements, you have made some very sensible decisions and communicated with us along the way. We really appreciate this.

Parents' Evenings

We cannot hold parents' evenings at this stage. However, picking up with some of the key features that worked during lockdown regarding the weekly phone calls and communication, we will be in touch very soon with our proposed plans on how parents' evenings will look and how we feel they can be more meaningful and less time pressured for us all. This will include the very important aspects of the review of your child/young person's EHCP and the progress they have made.

Offsite Activities

Currently only activities that are directly linked to our regular and essential curriculum based learning such as Motor Vehicle Sessions, Environmental Science/Studies or Forest School are going off site.

We have visited Folkestone sports centre last week to walk through their risk assessment and ensure their measures align with our own standards and expectations. We are pleased to say that we were able to approve their measures and therefore can start to allow some groups back to the Sports Centre starting this week. This is constantly under review and if we need to reverse our decision then we will do so without hesitation. Your child/young person's teacher will advise you prior to them recommencing their sessions at Folkestone Sports Centre.

As a leadership team we are meeting daily to debrief and make any adjustments regarding our protocols and procedures, our risk assessments are formally updated every week.

I hope this helps clarify some questions that have arisen. We really appreciate your continued support and working in collaboration to make our environment as safe as we can for everyone.

Yours sincerely

Ady Young
Headteacher

