



Mill Water School

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5th March 2021

Dear Parents / Carers

I am very excited to be welcoming most pupils back on Monday and getting back to our normal timetable.

[Additional operational guidance for special schools, special post-16 institutions and alternative provision \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/90421/Additional_operational_guidance_for_special_schools_special_post-16_institutions_and_alternative_provision.pdf)

“From 8th March 2021 school attendance is mandatory for all pupils. It is vital for pupils and students to attend school or college to minimise, as far as possible, the longer-term impact of the pandemic on their education, wellbeing and wider development.”

If your child is clinically extremely vulnerable, the guidance strongly recommends your child remain at home and, for these pupils only, remote learning will continue. The expectation is that all other pupils return on Monday 8th March. Where pupils are not able to attend school, as they are following clinical or public health advice related to coronavirus (Covid-19), the absence will not be penalised.

In the latest guidance, you will read that the systems of control in school are almost the same as in September, so we are well prepared for these. The DfE have brought in the additional measure of the optional use of face masks in classrooms up until Easter for secondary school aged pupils. However, there is an important exemption for you to be aware of:

“Those who rely on visual signals for communication, or speak to or provide support to such individuals, are currently also exempt from any requirement to wear face coverings in schools or in public place”.

Therefore, as a staff team, we will not be wearing face coverings in our classes due to the communication needs of our pupils. As additional measures, we already wear face coverings in the corridors and at the end of the day as our bubbles mix for transport. We would want this to continue until guidance allows us to socially mix.

The vaccine programme is firmly underway which is very positive and staff will carry out two lateral flow tests per week.

If at any time class bubbles become short-staffed, we will continue to work collaboratively with families to agree an approach that is in the child or young person's best interests.

Safety Measures

We will continue to update our risk assessments to reflect and respond to central and local government guidance and Public Health England advice. Our latest whole school risk assessment can be found on our website.

- Increased cleaning procedures carried out by class teams
- social distancing for staff (with signage as a reminder)
- regular home rapid testing
- use of face masks in shared areas unless interactions with pupil are affected
- provision of PPE for activities deemed higher risk
- continued bubble approaches

Curriculum

Pupils will continue, for now, to work in bubbles with minimal movement across classes. This also means that assemblies or large gatherings of pupils and staff are not planned potentially until 17th May, in line with the government's 'Road Map' guidance.

Pupils will continue to engage in their usual class learning and work towards their own personal academic and EHCP targets. Alongside this, we will focus on pupil wellbeing and pastoral support. This will be planned and delivered on an individual, needs led basis.

We are hopeful that more off site visits and school trips will resume in the summer term, potentially at step three of the government's 'Road Map' from 17th May. Again these will be subject to full and updated risk assessments.

Please note that all of the above advice and guidance may be subject to change. Much of what is planned over the coming weeks is based on the 4 steps of the governments 'Road Map'. If any of the steps are delayed due to a government response to data, then subsequent steps and dates will need to be pushed back in order to maintain the necessary 5-week period between each step.

At Mill Water School, I am hopeful that we can work hard to keep our school open, delivering the education, support and interaction that is so vital for our young people. We will also strive to communicate at all levels with you as staff and families to navigate this 'Road Map' together.

Please let me know if you have any queries about the information in this document or any further questions you would like to raise.

Yours sincerely



S A Pickering
Head teacher

World Book Day 2021



Whether at home or at school, pupils celebrated the comfort and escapism that reading and stories can bring on World Book Day on Thursday. They grabbed their favourite books and got cosy with snacks and a blanket. Then they were treated to a virtual Paddleboat Theatre show of Dream Maker. This was kindly funded by our PTFA and was thoroughly enjoyed. Pupils in school also went on a story hunt and explored this beautiful 'poet-tree' created in our apple orchard.

Spring Awakes at Mill Water!!



This half-term we are exploring Spring time. Children from Class 5 have been learning about how plants grow from seeds and about feeding birds, while admiring this beautiful peacock. We have also been out on walks, whilst sharing our excitement about everyone coming back into school next week.