



**May 2020**

## **Answering your questions**

Following the government's announcement about children returning to school on 1<sup>st</sup> June, many of you will have mixed emotions and reservations and concerns regarding your child's safety in school.

We know that you will have questions about how we are planning to operate safely and we hope that this document will help to answer many of these. Please be assured that we are working tirelessly, with the support of everyone at Mill Water, to ensure your child is as safe as possible.

Following government guidance this means:

- avoiding contact with anyone with symptoms
- frequent hand cleaning and good respiratory hygiene practices
- regular cleaning of the school
- minimising contact and mixing and maintaining a safe distance

### **When can my child come back to school?**

We will be increasing pupil numbers gradually from 8<sup>th</sup> June. We will let you know when your child will be able to return. School will be open from Tuesday – Friday, from 9.00 am until 2.30 pm.

### **What measures do you have in place for handwashing?**

Handwashing remains the most effective deterrent and staff will continue to ensure good hand washing routines for all children as follows:

- On arrival in school
- When visibly dirty
- After using the toilet
- After coughing or sneezing into a hand or tissue (preference for elbow)
- When transitioning to another room
- Before break
- After break (having used equipment at playtime)
- Before lunch
- After lunch
- Other times as deemed necessary by the adult in charge.



We have antibacterial hand sanitiser available throughout the school which is used by adults and children (under adult supervision).



If your child suffers from a dermatological reaction to washing or antibacterial hand sanitiser you may send your child in with their own antibacterial cleanser or soap. Please ensure that it is clearly named and a medical form is completed. Please note that we cannot allow any homemade alternatives as the ingredients cannot be managed.

If your child is suffering from dry hands as a result of the increased cleaning measures, you can send in a clearly named aqueous cream which they can use. Please complete a medical form and return to the school office along with the cream.

### **What additional cleaning measures do you have in place?**

We have additional cleaning and sanitising procedures in place with our cleaners which are being carried out every school day. The products that they are using both clean and sanitise the school environment.



There is sanitiser spray available in every area of the school for staff to support general hygiene as well as the usual daily cleaning. Classroom equipment has been reduced and toys and other resources are cleaned as necessary.

**How you can help:** The DfE Planning Guide for Primary Schools states that there is no need for anything other than normal personal hygiene and washing of clothes following a day in a school - parents should consider whether they wish to wash clothes or uniform more frequently. You should also encourage and supervise really good hand washing at home.

### **What if my child is exhibiting symptoms of Coronavirus?**

If your child is showing any of the symptoms below your family must self-isolate for 14 days following the government advice.

- A new continuous cough
- Temperature above 37.7 degrees
- A loss of, or change in, your normal sense of taste or smell

All staff and students who are attending an education or childcare setting will have access to a test if they display symptoms of coronavirus, and are encouraged to get tested. Where the child tests negative, they can return to school and the fellow household members can end their self-isolation. The link below will provide further guidance in asking for a test.

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing-for-coronavirus/ask-for-a-test-to-check-if-you-have-coronavirus/>

You must inform the school if you or your child are going to have a test. You must also inform the school of the results BEFORE returning your child to school.

### **What if a child or staff member develops symptoms?**

#### **Pupils**

Should a pupil become symptomatic during the school day with a

- New continuous cough
- Temperature above 37.7 degrees
- A loss of, or change in, their normal sense of taste or smell



parents will be contacted for immediate collection and the pupil will be sent to an isolation room with a supervising member of staff using additional PPE equipment as advised by Public Health England.

## Staff

Staff who become symptomatic with a persistent cough and temperature above 37.7 degrees will be expected to leave school and apply for key worker testing immediately. If positive, they must self-isolate for 2 weeks.

### What happens if there is a confirmed case of coronavirus in school?

Where a child, young person or staff member tests positive, the rest of their class or group within their childcare or education setting should be sent home and advised to self-isolate for 14 days. The other household members of that wider class or group do not need to self-isolate unless the child, young person or staff member they live with in that group subsequently develops symptoms.

As part of the national test and trace programme, if other cases are detected within the cohort or in the wider setting, Public Health England's local health protection teams will conduct a rapid investigation and will advise schools and other settings on the most appropriate action to take. In some cases, a larger number of other children may be asked to self-isolate at home as a precautionary measure. Where settings are observing guidance on infection prevention and control, which will reduce risk of transmission, closure of the whole setting will not generally be necessary.

### Will PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) be mandatory for staff and/or children?

The 'COVID 19: Implementing protective measures in education and childcare settings' states that:

**'Wearing a face covering or face mask in schools or other education settings is not recommended.'**

The majority of staff in education settings will not require PPE beyond what they would normally need for their work, even if they are not always able to maintain a distance of 2 metres from others. PPE is only needed in a very small number of cases. We have PPE available in school and staff will use this if they are undertaking duties which involve close contact, such as changing pupils.

Although wearing a face mask or covering is not recommended, if you would like your child to wear a mask then you must provide it and it should be disposable to avoid the risk of cross-contamination.

### What measures are in place to limit cross contamination?

It is impossible to eliminate all cross contamination within the school however, in the interests of reducing it as much as possible, pupils will be taught in one classroom throughout the day and use the toilet in or closest to that area. Break and lunchtimes will be split to reduce the number of pupils in one area at a time. Children will eat their lunch in their classroom.

### How will my child be taught when in school?

We will try to ensure that children remain in their usual class group where possible and are taught by their usual class team. Where this is not possible, we will group pupils as best we can according to their age group and the staff who know them best. Your child may have a different teacher or teaching assistant for some of the time.

### How will I drop off and pick up my child safely?

Some pupils will arrive on Local Authority transport at 9.00 am, although this time could vary. Most parents and carers will be bringing their child to school. We will be asking you to stagger arrival times and will give you an individual time slot for arrival and pick up. On arrival, vehicles will be met by a member of staff. Children should wait with their parents in their vehicle until a member of staff who will be with them throughout the day arrives to collect them and take them into school. This may be via a different entrance, depending on numbers. School will finish at 2.30 pm and pick up times will be issued.



## **What about classroom resources that are shared between children?**

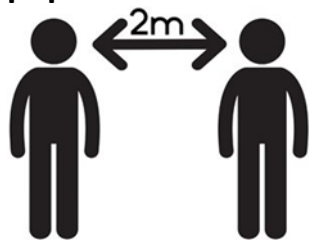
We will try to limit as far as possible any shared resources. Each child will have their own kit available and this will not be shared with other children.

Where possible, any high risk items which harbour germs will be restricted or removed from the classrooms prior to children's arrival.

We ask that children don't bring in any toys or items from home, although we understand that some pupils require a transitional object. These will be safely stored in the classroom until they go home.



## **How are you going to implement social distancing and restrict interaction between pupils?**



The government accepts that it is almost impossible to maintain social distancing in special schools. Our school plan does make allowances for social distancing in accordance with government guidelines, however this is not the same as social distancing as you might know it beyond the school environment. Due to the age of the children and the size of classrooms strict 2m distance at all times is impossible but will be encouraged at all times.

Adults are expected to attempt to observe the 2m social distancing rule whilst in school, particularly from each other. Please understand that this may not always be possible, especially when providing intimate and emotional care for our pupils. Equally, the classroom environment itself and narrow corridors make this very difficult indeed. However, staff will make every endeavour to adapt their practice accordingly, e.g. with distanced seating and dividing children into small groups in designated areas to help children have visual cues about where they can go.

This is difficult for all of the children, but we expect that they will learn the rules and will become more familiar with the new expectations over time.

## **Will parents and visitors be allowed on site?**

Visitors are not permitted on site unless their visit is deemed essential e.g. maintenance contractors, social workers.

Any essential visitors will need to self-declare being asymptomatic and use antibacterial hand gel before gaining entry to the school.

Parents will not be allowed to enter the school building at any time, with the exception of the school lobby area, without prior permission.

## **I have been receiving food vouchers as my child is eligible for free school meals, what will happen when they return to school?**

Children who receive free school meals and who are NOT attending school will continue to receive their food vouchers. Once your child has returned to school full-time this provision will cease.



## **How will the transition meetings for new pupils and children moving to new classes happen?**

Staff will continue to meet with colleagues to ensure effective handover between professionals and that all needs are well communicated.

The normal induction of new pupils due to start school is impossible under the current restrictions. We are currently planning arrangements to put in place including:

- A virtual tour of the building so that new children can see the setting.
- Sending activities to new families
- Holding the parent information session virtually.

### **What if I don't want my child to return to school at this current time?**

**Shielding Pupils** If your child is shielding or living in a household where someone is shielding and will therefore NOT be returning to school, we should already have this information. If you think we don't please contact the school.

**Elective Home Education** If your child or someone in your household does not fall into the above category and you choose to keep your child at home and electively home educate, we should already be aware of that too. You do not need to advise us of your child's absence. You can notify the school if you change your mind at any time.

**Fining for Non-Attendance** In accordance with government guidance, the school will not fine parents for non-attendance. Parents will be notified in writing when this advice changes.



**Reporting absence** During the phased return, which only involves some pupils, parents will only be required to report their child absent on the days when they are expected in school. When we return fully parents will be expected to report absence using normal procedures.

### **If my child isn't returning to school yet, what provision will be made for their learning?**

Until all government measures are lifted, we will continue to provide Home Learning activities. These will include resource packs and online links.



### **Can I contact my child's teacher?**

We want you to keep in contact with the school but we are mindful that our teachers will now have an increased workload in school, in managing home learning and contact with pupils not in school.

If your child is coming to school, contact can be maintained via the Home School book.

If your child is remaining at home, please respond to the weekly email or phone call from the class teacher or an allocated member of staff.

We hope you find this information helpful. If you have any further questions, then please do get in touch with us.

We really do look forward to the day when we can welcome all of our pupils back to Mill Water School. Until then, we are thinking of you all.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'A' followed by a long horizontal stroke.

Sarah Pickering  
Head Teacher