

North Park Primary School

'Achieving and growing, together in friendship.'



Bessemer Green,
Spennymoor,
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DL16 6PP

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5.11.21

Rise in Covid Infection Rates in County Durham and Additional Measures in School

Dear Parent/Carer,

There has been a large increase in the number of children and young people in County Durham testing positive for COVID-19 and the highest case rates are in school age children. This is leading to spread of COVID-19 within families and into older age groups.

In light of this, school has received advice from the Local Authority and Public Health. I have attached the advice letter for your information, as it also contains guidance for you to consider.

To begin with, I want to reassure parents that we remain vigilant at North Park and monitor the number of in-school cases very closely, seeking advice as soon as necessary. Our first consideration is always for the wellbeing, welfare and education of the pupils in our care, alongside other appropriate measures we can take to ensure our whole community – children, families and the staff – is safe and protected. We only take decisions after careful review of the advice we receive and the case numbers in school; these decisions are balanced against the need to keep routines for learning etc. as consistent as possible for children.

Families have been very understanding and supportive and we ask that (in line with advice given):

- You let us know as soon as possible if your child has symptoms; organise a PCR test and keep your child at home until the result is known. If the test is negative children can return to school. If the test is positive children should isolate, in line with guidance, for 10 days. We appreciate parents sharing negative PCR results with school for our records (via the main office, email, etc.)
- If someone else in the household has a positive PCR result, please book your child a PCR test as a precautionary measure. A negative result means that your child can return to school; the LA are further suggesting (see attached letter) that if a member of the household has a positive test result then *children from KS2 (Years 3 to 6) upwards* should undertake daily Lateral Flow tests for 7 days. Children can still come to school with negative results, but should they test positive at any point, then a follow up PCR should be booked.

After careful consideration we have decided to make some initial adjustments to the way we organise things to help minimise any spread of infection; other changes may be necessary in future depending upon infection rates and any further advice we are given; if that happens we will contact you straight away.

From Monday 8th November please:

- Bring your children to school as normal – at present we are not introducing staggered start and end times. Gates will be opened at 8.45am and children should be at school no later than 8.55am, when gates will be locked. Instead of lining up or playing on the yard, children should go **straight into classes**; this means parents/carers do not need to wait on the yard, thus minimising the need to congregate in larger groups. Teachers will be in classrooms to supervise children. Reception children – staff will be on the yard to guide children straight in as they arrive.
- At the end of the day teachers will escort children to you as normal on the yard – please maintain a distance between each other and leave the premises promptly. We will keep the entry/exit arrangements under review and only plan to stagger start/end times and restrict parent access to the yard if we really have to, and if infection cases in school rise.



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- We advise that you wear a mask on school premises, for your own and others' safety. Children do not need masks.
- We will not return to individual class bubbles at the current time; however, we will minimise mixing by keeping KS1 and KS2 separate at lunch and assembly times. Children are generally taught in their own classes other than:
 - Year 1 and 2 move about groups for phonics
 - Year 4 and 5 move about groups for some aspects of English and Maths
 - KS2 children mix across groups for 15 minutes each day for spellingWe do not wish to disrupt arrangements by further restricting pupils to classes unless we really have to and will only do this if infection rates rise in school and we are advised to do so. There is very little crossover in school corridors so no one-way systems are needed.
- Children in breakfast club will be organised into year group tables. After school club will continue to be available.
- Our planned educational visits and visitors will continue at present; we have already organised these carefully to ensure we do not have unnecessarily large groups and so children can still access a variety of enrichment events.
- We will continue with the planned parent evenings next week but politely request you wear a mask when you come into school and that you maintain distancing whilst waiting to see the teacher. Any future events where parents are invited into school will be carefully considered before any decisions are made; we aim to manage everything as safely as we can and only cancel where we have to.
- If you wish to catch a teacher to speak to them, please contact the office and a teacher will call you as soon as they are able to (between lesson/after school). Teachers need to be in class when children arrive so you may not be able to catch them on the yard before school.

We will continue to review all arrangements in light of advice we are given and the situation within school. I hope these initial restrictions will be sufficient to minimise the spread of infection. Thank you again for everything you are doing to support your child and our school and in helping to keep your family and community safe.

Sincerely,

Mrs P Monk

