

New Siblands Primary
Gillingstool
Thornbury
South Gloucestershire
BS35 2EG
Tel. 01454 866754



Valuing every child through fostering independence,
inclusion, trust, respect and support

New Siblands Secondary
Easton Hill Road
Thornbury
South Gloucestershire
BS35 2JU
Tel. 01454 862888

Headteacher: Ms Carrie Osmond

03 September 2021

Welcome back to families

Dear Parents and Carers

We are so looking forward to seeing your children back in school! We hope you have all had a good summer break.

There is a lot of 'noise' about the return to school in the media, so we want to clarify our plans as they currently stand.

We are looking forward to welcoming children back into school on Monday 6th September. We will commence the start of term working in bubbles, as last year, and transition over the first couple of weeks to wider group mixing and ceasing bubbles.

We are having this transition in order to support our pupils with the changes in a careful and structured way. We are also ensuring that our bubble system is understood by all, because it will be a significant part of our emergency contingency plan to revert to these groups in the event of significant increases in cases in South Glos or any outbreak in our schools.

Our measures of control

- Measures of control remain handwashing, on site cleaning and keeping the buildings well ventilated. When the cold weather kicks in we will review this. You may have heard about schools receiving air quality monitors in the news – when we know more, we will let you know!

What happens if my child has symptoms?

- Any pupil displaying Covid symptoms should not attend school, but should take a PCR test and notify school of the result. Symptoms are still defined as a high temperature, a new continuous cough, or a loss of taste or smell.

What happens if my child tests positive?

- Any pupil testing positive should isolate and must not attend school

A member of



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What are the changes around NHS test and trace?

- Schools are no longer required to undertake contact tracing. Instead, staff, pupils and students who test positive will be subject to the normal NHS test and trace process. NHS Test and Trace will work with the staff, pupils, parents or guardians of the positive case to identify close contacts. This will be limited to very close contacts. For our school community, the implication is that NHS Test and Trace will identify who is a 'close contact' and will suggest that those individuals will be advised to take a PCR test.
- Close contacts of anyone with a positive test are no longer required to self-isolate if they are a) an adult who is fully vaccinated, or b) a child aged below 18 years and 6 months. However, NHS Track and Trace may advise them to take a PCR test.
- Close contacts of pupils who test positive (who are children) will not be required to self-isolate but will be advised to take a PCR test. If the PCR test returns a positive result they must self-isolate and access remote education. Self-isolation is not required while awaiting the result of the PCR test. If pupils are unable to or will not take a PCR test, they are entitled to education on site unless symptomatic.
- Those individuals who are symptomatic should self-isolate, not attend school and book a test.

Testing

You may have read that the DFE are asking schools to test all students at an on-site asymptomatic test site (ATS) on return following the summer holidays. However, as explained previously, we are not able to test children in our schools for many reasons including:

- Ethical reasons around testing our children, many of whom are not able to give consent or self-administer
- Employment law and other legislative issues around staff performing medical procedures on children
- Capacity to operate a testing regime when our staff are needed to work with our children

The government will be reviewing regular testing in education settings and wider society at the end of September in line with public health advice.

We do however encourage all parents and carers who are able to support their child to take a home test to do so.

Staff who wish to will continue to test at home until further notice.

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School day

All children should now arrive at school at 8.55 and finish at 3.30 unless alternative start and finish times have been specifically agreed. Secondary site parents should remain in their cars with their child / children, until a member of staff collects your them.

Visitors and parents and carers on site

Visiting professionals will be able to come to school. This includes Governors and Trustees, external professionals and therapists.

Parents are able to come to school again, but we will discuss with you whether annual reviews and other meetings might be better conducted remotely. Remote meetings will be preferred. Any on-site visits should be agreed in advance.

We will not plan any large gatherings, such as school plays or concerts at this time.

Hydrotherapy

Our pool has had to have new pumps fitted. These are being tested and the pool is being made ready for us to resume hydrotherapy sessions. We plan to do this as soon as possible.

Wearing of masks

Face masks are no longer advised by the Government in school, although they are recommended on transport. We are happy for any staff or pupil to wear a face covering should they wish to in school.

Important information about clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV) and young people

The Government emailed schools on the 26th August and stated that a letter has been sent by the Department of Health and Social Care to the families of children and young people who were previously classified as CEV. The letter informed them that UK Clinical Review Panel has recommended that all children and young people under the age of 18 should no

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longer be considered CEV and should be removed from the Shielded Patient List, the national database of people considered clinically extremely vulnerable.

The DfE email said that:

- “Clinical studies have shown that children and young people, including those originally considered to be clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV), are at very low risk of serious illness if they catch the virus.”
- “All children and young people should continue to follow the same guidance as everyone else, which can be found at www.gov.uk/coronavirus. For a very few individual children specific clinical advice may be given and this should continue to be followed.”
- “Whilst attendance is mandatory, we [DfE] recommend that leaders in education work collaboratively with families to reassure them and to help their child return to their everyday activities. Discussions should have a collaborative approach, focusing on the welfare of the child or young person and responding to the concerns of the parent, carer or young person.”

Temporary continuity direction

As before, the guidance states “where a class, group of pupils, or individual pupils need to self-isolate, or there are local or national restrictions requiring pupils to remain at home, schools are expected to provide immediate access to remote education.”

Should schools need to close, or should individuals need to self isolate, we will resume supported home learning.

Here’s hoping...

Our current position may change depending on whether the Government update their guidance for special schools as the autumn term progresses. We do know, for instance, that guidance to schools will be updated at the end of September. We will also be continually reviewing our processes and internal controls, and keeping a close eye on the rates of cases of Covid 19 in our community.

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Very best wishes

Andrew

Andrew Buckton

CEO Enable Trust

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