



Workshop Priory C of E Primary Academy

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Monday 9th November 2020

Dear parent or carer,

Please find below a 'Frequently Asked Question' document to answer a number of queries and questions we have received recently:

What should I do if I have any concerns whatsoever?

In the first instance, you can contact the school office. During the day, you can ring 01909 478886. The office email address (office@worksoppriory.snmat.org.uk) is monitored on evenings and weekends and we are often able to reply quickly. Contacting us is the best way to get accurate information and this will give you a chance to talk through your concerns with the school. We would strongly recommend that you avoid placing too much weight on hearsay, which can sometimes be misleading and inaccurate, and instead talk directly to the school.

What is a bubble and who is in one?

In order to help to minimise the spread of a confirmed case of Covid19, each class is in their own bubble. This means that only they use their classroom, they eat their lunch either in their classroom, or the hall, (which is cleaned thoroughly between each sitting) and they play in their own designated part of the playground, away from other classes.

Children in Y1 and above sit in the same seat each day, including to eat their lunch if in the classroom. Any children taking part in group work or 1:1 tuition also have a similar seating plan.

The vast majority of staff work in just one bubble, although the nature of their role means that a small number work across more than one bubble. Those staff maintain the prescribed social distancing guidance whenever possible.

Some classes share toilets. Is this a big risk?

We only have a certain number of toilets in school, so some sharing has to take place. We follow the DfE guidance on this. Naturally, when two bubbles use the same toilets, any spread of Covid19 could transfer across the bubbles. There is no evidence that this has happened in any of our confirmed cases so far. As a result, a strict and thorough cleaning schedule is in place throughout the day, including by teachers, TAs and designated cleaning staff. Where two classes share the same toilets, there is a strictly 'one in, one out' policy, which is rigorously enforced.

Why is it that only certain children are sometimes asked to self-isolate and not the whole bubble?

The advice the DfE gives to different schools depends on their type. In the case of mainstream primary schools, if a child tests positive in Early Years or Year 1, the whole bubble is advised to self-isolate, as the



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youngest children are not expected to be able to maintain social distancing. In other year groups, the DfE criteria helps us to identify who has been a **potential close contact**. The DfE then advise the school on what measures to take. This may include one or more children being identified, or the whole class.

Self-isolation advice given to mainstream primary schools by the DfE is different to some other educational and care settings. It is also specific to the age of the children, the specific nature of the school and its local circumstances. Whilst we fully understand that there is a level of risk to staff, pupils and parents in the current pandemic, the Children's Commissioner for England, Anne Longfield, alongside the Head of Ofsted, Amanda Spielman continue to reiterate their concerns that some schools are sending their bubbles home too easily and frequently.

Where does the school receive its advice?

Schools have a dedicated number through to the Department of Education, who work alongside Public Health England in advising schools what to do in the event of a positive test result for a member of the school family. It is not for the school to negotiate the advice given from the DfE. It is our job to present the information we have in order for them to tell us what to do.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) have produced similar advice and they conduct checks on schools to ensure they are following it. The school's 33 page risk assessment has been shared with the recognised trade unions since day one. The Southwell and Nottingham Multi-Academy Trust have also completed site visits to check that the school is following the risk assessment closely.

How does the Department of Education determine who is a close contact and must therefore self-isolate?

The DfE use the following criteria to determine a close contact:

- ✓ Anyone who has been coughed on by an infected person or touched them directly
- ✓ Anyone who has spent more than 1 minute, in face to face conversation with an infected person, within 1m
- ✓ Anyone who has spent more than 15 minutes with the infected person at a distance of between 1-2m
- ✓ Anyone who has shared a car with an infected person

On receiving a positive test result, the DfE guidance assumes that the child has been infectious for the 2 days prior to the test date, or the start of symptoms, whichever is first.

What information does the school provide when seeking advice from the DfE?

The school provides information collected on each day that we are open. This includes table plans to determine which children have been sat where, details of which staff and pupils have had close contact as listed above and the dates and times of symptoms, tests and results.

Our staff have these systems in place to ensure that we are able to answer the DfE questions as confidently and accurately as possible. This means that staff take note of what they observe in the classroom and on the playground.

I am worried about my child coming to school, but they have not been told to self-isolate. What should I do?

The single best thing to do is to ring school and discuss your concerns. We have already worked with a number of parents to plan alternatives, where they are appropriate. Unless we are aware of your concerns, we are unable to help you resolve them.



If my child is required to self-isolate, how will they complete their school work?

The best thing for your child's learning is to be in school, but if this can't happen, the next best thing is that they are learning from home, accessing work that has been set for their specific age and ability. The class blogs continue to offer weekly work for any child who cannot be in school. Some children are also being offered additional live teaching in the coming weeks via Microsoft Teams, for which your child has an Outlook365 login.

Whilst we have asked several times already, you still have time to inform us if you do not have a device to enable your child to access this work. Please contact the school office with any problems you encounter.

Will I get a fine for keeping my child at home?

We are permitted to mark any child who has been told to self-isolate with an authorised absence. We would hope that they take a full part in home learning.

Unfortunately, as the register is a legal document, we cannot authorise absences for those who have not been advised to self-isolate. However, the Governing Body and the Multi-Academy Trust will only consider requesting a fixed penalty notice (fine) if the set work is not being completed at home.

Why are some children required to self-isolate for longer than others?

The date of self-isolation *always* begins for close contacts from the day they last had contact with the infected child. Some children will have only had contact on one day, whereas others may have last had it on another day. This is particularly the case for small group work, catch-up support or booster groups.

What should I do if I get conflicting advice about self-isolation?

The advice we receive is specific to school settings and comes from a Government Department. If you are in any doubt at all about what you have been told, please contact the school.

We fully appreciate the worry, uncertainty and inconvenience that the Covid pandemic is causing. The staff of the school are also sharing the same risks, so we know that it is natural for us all to want to keep our wider families and friends safe. Much of what we are being asked to do is enshrined in law and we do not have the choice but to follow it to the letter.

It is, regrettably, going to be a long winter, but please be reassured by the words of Chris Witty (Chief Medical Officer for England) that, 'schools are the safest and best places to be, not just for children's education, but for their wellbeing.'

Yours sincerely



Mr Phil Abbott
Headteacher

