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SUNNYMEDE JUNIOR SCHOOL

The Meadoway, Billericay, Essex CM11 2HL

Headteacher: Mrs Ronnie Branch BEd (Hons). NPQH

Telephone: 01277 651364

e-mail: admin@sunnymede-jun.essex.sch.uk

www.sunnymede-jun.ik.org

1st September 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope you have all had a wonderful summer, despite the distinct lack of sunny weather. We are looking forward to seeing the children on Thursday.

You should have received communication at the end of term and again during August that covered the following aspects of our return to school:

- Start of day entry arrangements
- End of day exit arrangements
- Use of masks by parents in the playground
- Rules for bringing in pencil cases
- Expectations for P.E. kits in September
- Downloading the new Studybug app for reporting absences

The government has advised the schools as follows, and planning for September is based on this statement : *"As COVID-19 becomes a virus that we learn to live with, there is now an imperative to reduce the disruption to children and young people's education - particularly given that the direct clinical risks to children are extremely low, and every adult has been offered a first vaccine and the opportunity for 2 doses by mid-September. Our priority is for you to deliver face-to-face, high-quality education to all pupils. The evidence is clear that being out of education causes significant harm to educational attainment, life chances, mental and physical health."*

Whilst I know the implications of the lifting of restrictions will be welcomed by many, I appreciate that some will find this unsettling. Whilst we are required to follow the new guidance, we remain mindful of these opposing views; please speak to us if you have any particular concerns about our procedures for this term.

Last week, the government produced their final 'operational guidance' for schools to clarify expectations in respect of what control measures no longer need to be put in place and what measures should continue in September. In brief, these are shown in the table below.

Control measures no longer recommended	Control measures still required
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social distancing / 'bubble' system to keep year groups separate • The school does not need to do contact tracing anymore and, if a pupil in school tests positive, the whole class 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good ventilation • Frequent handwashing / sanitising • Maintain appropriate cleaning regimes • Good hygiene for everyone

<p>or year group will no longer be required to self-isolate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wearing of face masks by staff (never statutory in primary but was in place at our school) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring and responding to COVID symptoms presenting during school time by staff and pupils • Twice weekly lateral flow testing for staff (good practice but not a legal requirement)
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As a result of the new guidelines, we will no longer need to stagger entry times in the morning and end of the day. Classroom layouts will return to normal with grouped tables, though teachers have always had the option to set their tables out in rows if they wish; this is often common practice in Y6.

As a result of this guidance, I would like to draw your attention to some other routines in September.

Face Coverings for Staff

Whilst these are not required, there may be some members of staff who choose to continue to wear a mask in central areas or when having very close contact with children. This is to protect staff and some children who may be clinically extremely vulnerable.

Face Coverings for Parents

Whilst these are no longer required in most scenarios, we wrote to you in August asking parents to respect the decision of others if they choose to wear a face covering or not on collecting their child in the playground. We have asked that, if you are not wearing a covering, you respect a parent or member of staff to keep at least a 2 metre distance if they politely request it.

DfE guidance also states, "[*the government expects and recommends that they are worn in enclosed and crowded spaces where you may come into contact with people you don't normally meet.*](#)" It is for this reason we are politely requesting that parents wear a mask if they were to attend a busy event inside the school building, for example the forthcoming Meet The Teacher briefings. Please respect our staff by adhering to any such request, unless you are exempt from wearing one on medical grounds.

Ventilation

Government guidance states, "*When your school is in operation, it is important to ensure it is well ventilated and that a comfortable teaching environment is maintained. You should balance the need for increased ventilation while maintaining a comfortable temperature.*"

We are aware it will be getting colder in the coming weeks. In line with suggestions, we will keep internal doors to the corridors open and the higher level windows in classrooms open. This is recommended to create a through draft. External doors and lower level windows will only be opened when the children are not in the room or if the children are in the class and the weather is sufficiently warm and children's comfort is not unduly compromised. We will continue to monitor this over the coming weeks as the weather changes. Where groups of parents are on site, keeping doors and windows open will particularly encouraged.

Uniform / P.E

Pupils are expected to wear the correct uniform, as per our policy. I wrote to you in August to explain some slight adjustments to our P.E. uniform. We are making these adjustments as we are trialling pupils coming to school in their P.E. kits on their PE days. If this is to work and become a more permanent arrangement agreed by governors, we will need full compliance so that pupils

look as smart as possible during the day. Please read the guidance sent to you in the holidays if you have not already done so.

P.E days for each year group are as follows:

Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
Monday Tuesday	Wednesday*	Thursday*	Thursday Friday

*Y5 children will also need to wear normal school uniform but bring their swimming kit with them on Tuesdays and Y4 will need to do this on Fridays.

Please also note that there may be additional P.E. days for certain events but we will advise you in advance if this is the case.

Equipment

Equipment can now be used more freely in school, though guidance states that regularly used items should continue to be cleaned frequently so this will remain part of school procedure.

Physical equipment, including balls, for use in the playground will be provided by the school – children should not bring in their own balls etc.

Water bottles: children should continue to bring in a filled water bottle with their name on it for their own personal use

We wrote to you last week to confirm that children can bring in pencil cases now but they will not be allowed to share contents with those around them. The content list can be accessed here: <http://www.sunnymede-jun.ik.org/key-forms.html>

Enhanced cleaning in line with guidance will continue to take place, particularly of frequently touched surfaces and objects.

Respiratory Hygiene (Catch it, Kill it, bin it)

The 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach continues to be very important. Tissues will be available in all rooms and lidded pedal bins are available outside all classrooms and key areas for safe disposal of potentially contaminated materials.

Hand Hygiene

Government guidance states, "*Frequent and thorough hand cleaning should now be regular practice. You should continue to ensure that pupils clean their hands regularly. This can be done with soap and water or hand sanitiser.*"

We will continue to use a mix of handwashing and hand sanitiser in school at appropriate points in the day. Previously, we sent you the COSHH details of the hand sanitiser that we use in school. This product will remain our first choice. However, due to supply issues at present, we may have to use a similar alternative at short notice. We will continue to use hand sanitiser with your child unless you advise us otherwise. Please email the school office if you do not want your child to use hand sanitiser.

Breakfast Club

From September, we will continue to ask that children who attend breakfast club are dropped off by 8:00am at the latest at the main Meadoway entrance. This worked very well over the past year, as members of staff could focus on supervising children and supporting with food and activity

provision. As we are changing our morning entry arrangements, the entry gate will now be locked from 8:00am so it is important that your child arrives by this time. Breakfast club staff cannot hear the gate buzzer from the hall so, if you arrive late, it cannot be guaranteed that you will be able to gain access; this would depend on someone being in the office.

Tracing and Self Isolation

Government guidance is now that primary children who have been identified as a close contact of someone who has tested positive, even if they live in the same household, should continue to attend school as normal.

However, NHS Test and Trace will work with the positive case and/or their parents to identify close contacts. Contacts from a school setting will only be traced by NHS Test and Trace where the positive case and/or their parent specifically identifies the individual as being a close contact. This is likely to be a small number of individuals who would be most at risk of contracting COVID-19 due to the nature of the close contact. As parents or carers, you may be contacted to help with identifying close contacts.

NHS Test and Trace will inform affected individuals, children or their parents or carers that they have been in close contact with a positive case, and advise them to take a PCR test. We would encourage all individuals to take a PCR test if advised to do so.

Positive Rapid Lateral Flow Test Results

We know that some parents are regularly or periodically using LFD tests at home with primary age children. If your child has a positive test result at home, your child will need to self-isolate in line with the stay at home guidance <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection> and then book a PCR lab test which must be taken within two days of the lateral flow test. Whilst awaiting the PCR result, the individual should continue to self-isolate.

If the PCR test is taken within the 2 days following the positive LFD result, and is negative, it overrides the self-test LFD test and your child can return to school, as long as they don't have COVID-19 symptoms.

Please note that, if your child does have COVID-19, you still need to advise the school of the details, including the date their symptoms started, the date of their test, the type of test (LFD or PCR) and their return date, preferably using the new Studybug app, or by email if you have been unable to set this up. This will help to signal that your child needs to have remote learning activities organised for them and to provide free school meals if your child is eligible.

If Your Child Displays COVID-19 Symptoms in School

Government guidance states: “If anyone in your school develops COVID symptoms, however mild, you should send them home and they should follow public health advice.”

The main common symptoms of COVID-19 in children are identified on the NHS website as:

- a high temperature
- a new, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot, for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours
- a loss or change to sense of smell or taste – this means they cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal

The above will be used as the basis for deciding whether a child should be sent home. If , however, your child has a specific diagnosed medical condition that means they would regularly show these symptoms, please provide a letter from the doctor to indicate this condition or an NHS headed letter or similar setting out their specific medical condition.

If You Suspect Your Child Has Coronavirus or Has a Positive Test

Your child should not come to school if:

- they are showing one or more COVID-19 symptoms, however mild
- they have had a positive PCR test results
- they have had a positive LFD test and are awaiting a confirmatory PCR test
- they have been advised by a clinician on medical grounds (extremely rare)
- they are required to quarantine

In the above cases, you should follow public health advice on self-isolation:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/self-isolation-and-treatment/when-to-self-isolate-and-what-to-do/>

Staff COVID Testing

Whilst it is not a legal requirement to do so, all our staff have elected to carry out twice weekly LFD testing. Whilst there may be some scepticism as to the accuracy of these tests, they do provide a further control measure as other restrictions are removed, thereby providing reassurance to our staff team in an environment where there is more close contact in confined spaces than in most other contexts.

Remote Learning

Remote learning will continue to be provided, as per the policy published on our website

http://www.sunnymede-jun.ik.org/assets/Ronnie%20Branch/Policies/remote_learning_policy_January_2021_PDF.pdf

Work will be provided in the following scenarios:

- When a pupil has COVID but does not have symptoms that prevent them from completing school work (when you report to the school that your child has COVID, please can you advise whether they are well enough to complete work or not). This will trigger a message to the class teacher to ensure work is uploaded to the website and the year group emails are checked)
- When a pupil is required to self-isolate in line with government guidelines

Where pupils are required to stay at home for COVID related reasons, they are expected to complete work if well enough. Please let the school know if you need an electronic device in order to access the work set on the school website or need any other support in order for your child to access and complete work.

Attendance

As was the case in the summer term, it is mandatory for all children to attend school except when they have COVID themselves or have been instructed to as part of the NHS Track as set out above and in the very rare scenario that a child has been instructed not to do so by a medical professional and evidence can be provided in writing. If you have any concerns about returning to school, please contact the school, so we can discuss these with you.

Free School Meal Eligibility

If your child is off school for the COVID related reasons outlined above, it would be helpful if you could remind the office staff if your child is eligible for free school meals and whether you would like to collect a food parcel. For periods of absence of a week or more, we may provide vouchers instead of a food parcel. This will be at the school's discretion.

Wellbeing / Pastoral support

When children return to school, as they usually do, we look to see if there are any children with high levels of anxiety. Our staff team is committed to supporting these children. For those we have identified as needing a little extra pastoral support, Mrs Houghton, our trained mental health first aider, will be available on a Monday morning to meet and talk through concerns and offer strategies to help them settle back into school life. Some children with anxieties, of course, may not show these; please let the class teacher know if you are concerned about your child's wellbeing and need some support.

Online resources to help you support your child with mental health and wellbeing, include:

- [MindEd](#) - a free educational resource on children and young people's mental health
- [Every Mind Matters](#) - an online tool and email journey to support everyone in taking action to look after their mental health and wellbeing
- [Bereavement UK](#) and the [Childhood Bereavement Network](#) - information and resources to support bereaved pupils, schools and staff
- the [DfE blog](#) - includes [mental health resources](#) for children, parents, carers and school staff

Events for Parents

Whilst schools can now welcome parents back on site, we will remain cautious about holding events where parents and children come into school in a confined space. Whilst we have put dates in the diary for a number of events, we may change the way we approach these events as the time approaches. We also reserve the right to cancel them if we have concerns about the number of cases in school or the local community.

'Meet the Teacher sessions' are the first events for parents and these will take place in the main school hall rather than classrooms, allowing for better ventilation and more space. Please collect your child as usual and then come to the main school entrance. Any children will be taken to a classroom for the duration of the meeting. As per the government's expectations of how those people who do not normally meet coming together in confined space – please see section on face coverings – please wear a face covering or wear your exemption lanyard. Thank you for your co-operation and understanding – despite the lifting of restrictions, we are still trying to ensure our staffing levels remain high.

Meet the Teacher sessions will take place at 3:30pm as follows:

Y3: Friday 3rd September

Y4: Monday 6th September (amended date)

Y5: Tuesday 7th September (amended date)

Y6: Wednesday 8th September

Clubs, School Trips, Swimming

These will be steadily reintroduced once we return and all available clubs should be up and running by half term at the latest. Some clubs will be mixed year groups and some will be for specific year groups, as has always been the case.

School trips can take place provided there is a thorough risk assessment in place that addresses health and safety precautions in relation to COVID.

Swimming will take place for Y4 and Y5 pupils. Letters to parents have already been sent.

Outbreak Management Plan (contingency framework)

If it is considered that the school has an 'outbreak' in school, we may be advised to reintroduce some control measure such as staggering or reintroduction of bubbles. Any decision made will be directed by local health protection teams, in consultation with the local authority and in accordance with the government's published 'contingency framework'. Any additional measures put in place will be a last resort and a decision not taken lightly.

You will be relieved to know that this letter is coming to an end! I apologise for it being long but wanted to ensure that we are as transparent and as clear as possible with you about school policy and procedures. The only thing to make you aware of is the P.E. days for each year group. We will be confirming these with staff on Wednesday and will advise you by Parentmail on Wednesday afternoon.

We look forward to welcoming all the children back on Thursday and hope that this academic year will be less disruptive than last year.

Kindest regards



Mrs Ronnie Branch
Headteacher