

# NEWSLETTER

## 22.01.2021

### **GOVERNMENT UPDATE ON COVID**

Limiting attendance at schools and colleges helps to support the reduction in the overall number of social contacts in our communities, which is a vital intervention in the context of current very high transmission rates.

The **Schools Infection Survey** (covering 3 to 19 November) found the infection rate among teachers to be similar to that of the wider population. The way to control this virus is the same, whatever the variant.

Current evidence suggests that the Public Health England (PHE)-endorsed 'system of controls' have been in use throughout the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and are still the right measures to take. It includes:

- minimising contact with individuals who are unwell,
- use of face coverings in corridors and communal areas,
- cleaning hands and good respiratory hygiene,
- enhanced cleaning,
- use of PPE and ventilation in situations set out in guidance.

These measures create an inherently safer environment for children, young people and staff where the risk of transmission of infection is substantially reduced.

The DfE keeps these controls under review, working with PHE, based on the latest evidence. Schools therefore need to continue to implement these controls to the fullest extent possible (as they did before national lockdown when schools were full).

**Remember:**  
**WE HAVE NEVER FACED A SITUATION LIKE THE CURRENT PANDEMIC.**

The new lockdown is because there is a new variant of Covid-19 that is spreading faster than others. This variant of the virus was first identified in Kent. Since early December it has increased rapidly in London, the East and the South East of England. Cases are still rising sharply in Greater Essex and hospitals across our region are near capacity. In the face of the rapidly rising numbers of cases across the country and intense pressure on the NHS, we now need to use every lever at our disposal to reduce contacts outside households wherever possible.

**The message is clear:**  
**WE ALL NEED TO DO OUR PART TO MINIMISE THE RISK OF COVID.**



### **Remember: 'Hands. Face. Space.'**

- **hands** – wash your hands regularly and for at least 20 seconds;
- **face** – wear a face covering in indoor settings where social distancing may be difficult, and where you will come into contact with people you do not normally meet;
- **space** – stay 2 metres apart from people you do not live with where possible, or 1 metre with extra precautions in place (such as wearing face coverings).

## **CORONA VIRUS**

**The most important symptoms of COVID-19 are recent onset of any of the following:**

- a new continuous cough
- a high temperature
- a loss of, or change in, your normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia)

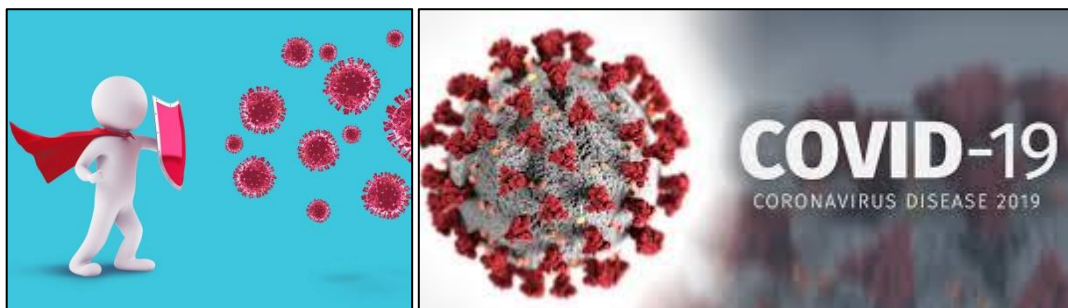
If anyone in school becomes unwell **with any of the above symptoms**, they will be sent home and be advised to follow the guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection.

This sets out that they must:

- self-isolate for at least 10 days
- arrange to have a test to see if they have coronavirus (COVID-19).

Anyone with COVID-19 symptoms or a positive test result must stay at home for the full isolation period. This is because they could pass it on to others, even if they do not have symptoms.

It may be difficult for some people to separate themselves from others in their household. Not all these measures will be possible if you are living with children or have caring responsibilities but follow this guidance to the best of your ability in these circumstances.



## **DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION CORONAVIRUS(COVID-19) HELPLINE**

The Department for Education coronavirus (COVID-19) helpline and the PHE Advice Service (option 1) is available to answer any questions you have about coronavirus (COVID-19) relating to education settings and children's social care.

<b>Phone:</b>	<b>0800 046 8687</b>
<b>Opening hours:</b>	<b>Monday to Friday from 8am to 6pm</b> <b>Saturday and Sunday from 10am to 6pm</b>

## **ATTENDANCE**

**The Prime Minister announced last week, that primary schools should move to remote provision, except for vulnerable children and the children of critical workers. Please refer to the government's website for clarity on critical workers and vulnerable children.**

The government's published guidance states:

- *"Parents whose work is critical to the coronavirus (COVID-19) and EU transition response include those who work in health and social care and in other key sectors.*
- *Schools should speak to parents and carers to identify who needs to go to school.*
- *If it proves necessary, schools can ask for simple evidence that the parent in question is a critical worker, such as their work ID badge or pay slip.*
- *Parents and carers who are critical workers should keep their children at home if they can."*

It is important that we all take steps to reduce the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) infection in the community to save lives and protect the NHS. Please consider the safety of you and your household first and foremost.

School attendance needs to be kept to the minimum, to safeguard both staff and pupils alike. Limiting attendance is about reducing the number of contacts that all of us have with others. This will also affect critical workers and vulnerable pupils in the light of limited provision in the school.

The school has had an increase of requests this week to accommodate more pupils. We do NOT have capacity to accommodate large numbers and need to minimize this. If the school reaches a point where we deem it not viable to accommodate more pupils, we will take the guidance and advice of Essex County Council in potentially offering placement for your child at a neighbouring school.

Your support will be much appreciated to only revert to the offer of requesting the school to provide a place for your child(ren), if you have exhausted any other alternatives as critical worker.

We understand that these are unprecedented times but do need your co-operation and support in this matter to reduce contact and the spread of Covid-19.

**Thank you to all the parents/carers who have completed the online google questionnaire. Please do inform the school of your intentions of sending your child(ren) into school prior to them attending.**

### **PARENT CONSULTATIONS**

Teaching staff has now completed the outstanding parent consultation from last term. Many thanks for the positive feedback and suggestions.

### **REMOTE HOME LEARNING**

I acknowledge that this is particularly challenging for many parents. Please support the school in making the best effort to provide the best remote home learning. School staff has worked really hard in collating work.

Our school's Remote Home Learning document is now published online.

**Staff will be in contact weekly, by making a phone call home as part of a welfare check.**

We have had some challenges in contacting a few families and acknowledge that it is really difficult at the moment. If you have not spoken to the class teacher, please contact the school to arrange for a convenient time to be contacted.

### **DEVICES AND DIGITAL PLATFORMS:**

A few laptops are available to support home remote learning. Please contact the school office for more information.

The Government and Department of Education have purchased a number of additional for schools. We will be allocated a few. Once received and set up by our IT support Team, we will look at Home laptop agreements. The school has also applied for support in setting up Office 365 as the digital platform.

### **FREE SCHOOL MEALS**

**Please contact the school if your child is entitled for Free School Meals.**

We have been providing meal parcels this week and will review this in the weeks to come, following updates from government and the Local Authority.

The national Free School Meals (FSM) vouchers have been reintroduced for the period of 18<sup>th</sup> January – 12 February.. Families will receive an eCode by email to redeem from a supermarket of their choice.

## SCHOOL MENU

Our kitchen staff has updated the weekly menu for those on site. The 3-weekly menu is published on the school's website. We are continuing to offer balanced hot meals daily for those on site.

### 3 Week Menu Rota

Dr Walker's CE Primary School – Term 2020

**Menu Two served on weeks commencing: 4/1/21, 25/1/21, 22/2/21**

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
<i>Reception Class (Caterpillars) have the daily option to choose a hot meal or the packed lunch for the day (see below)</i>					
<b>Choose your main</b>	Macaroni Cheese	Savory Mince	Beef Burger in a Bap	Sweet Winter Chicken	Fish Finger
<b>Vegetarian Option</b>	Roasted Vegetable Pasta	Vegetarian Casserole	Vegetarian Burger	Sweet Winter Quorn	Veggie Parcel
<b>On the Side</b>	Sweetcorn Salad Crusty Bread	Mashed Potatoes Green Beans	Diced Potatoes Baked Beans Salad	White Rice Broccoli	Chips Peas Sweetcorn
<b>Lighter Bite</b>	Panini choice of fillings Salad	Panini Ham or Cheese Salad	Jacket Potato Choice of fillings Salad	Jacket Potato with Choice of fillings Salad Wrap choice of Fillings	Crusty Bread Mixed Salad Panini Fish Finger or Cheese
<b>Pack Lunch in classrooms</b>	Panini choice of Fillings	Panini choice of Fillings	Beef Burger in a Bap Or Vegetarian Burger in a Bap	Wrap with choice of Fillings	Fish Finger Or Cheese Panini
<b>For Dessert</b>	Ginger Biscuit Fresh Fruit	Yoghurt Fresh Fruit	Crumble Slice & Custard (no custard for P/L) Fresh Fruit	Smoothie Fresh Fruit	Homemade Lemon Drizzle Sponge Fresh Fruit

Also available daily: Bread, Salad, Fresh fruit, Yoghurt. Fresh milk or water.

## **CANCELLATION OF 2021 NATIONAL CURRICULUM ASSESSMENT**

**STA recognise that due to the further disruption caused by this change, key stage 1 (KS1) and key stage 2 (KS2) national curriculum assessments cannot continue as intended.**

The following assessments, scheduled between April and July 2021, have been cancelled:

- KS1 teacher assessments
- KS2 tests and teacher assessments
- phonics screening check
- all statutory trialling

## **A NOTE ON ADVERSE WEATHER CONDITIONS**

As we are experiencing the winter months, a few useful reminders about our arrangements, should we need to close due to adverse weather.

Please be assured that we will endeavour to open and remain open wherever possible but do have to be mindful of Health & Safety both on site and importantly on the journey to and from school.

If we are faced with inclement weather before the start of school, a decision not to open it will be communicated to parents/carers via school text and/or email. Also please check twitter for any updates. It will also be broadcasted on radio stations Hearts Essex and BBC Essex.

Parents/carers can see the full list of closures on the Essex County Council website.

Website link: <http://www.essex.gov.uk/Education-Schools/Schools/Dates/Pages/Emergency-School-Closures.aspx>

Path:

- Visit Essex County Council's home page at [www.essex.gov.uk](http://www.essex.gov.uk)
- Search for Emergency School Closure
- Or click the Education and School's area.
- Click Schools
- Click Dates
- Click Emergency Closures

The Emergency Closures page will update as and when notifications are received, therefore it is recommended to continue to check or refresh the page.

Best wishes,

Dr L Lawson  
*Headteacher*