



6th September 2021

Dear Parents/Carers,

Stepping through 2021 - 22 – Step 1
Welcome Back!
What's it going to look like?

We are so excited to be welcoming your children back to school tomorrow. The last two school years have been dominated and shaped by the challenges presented by COVID-19, and we begin this year with the positive hope that school will be open and available for everyone for every day of the school year in 2021-22.

We are entering a period where we are told by the country's leaders that COVID-19 will become a virus that we 'learn to live with', that 'direct clinical risks to children are extremely low' and that 'by mid-September all adults will have had the opportunity to have 2 doses of vaccine if they wish'. Good news indeed.

Also on our radar is the news that numbers of people with COVID-19 in Devon, and Teignbridge, are currently higher than the national average, and that there is a general expectation that returning to school may see numbers increase too.

With this in mind the purpose of this letter is to let you know how we plan to operate, supporting everyone's comfort and concerns for the first weeks of term. We plan to take a positive but careful approach to September, following which will review all measures and update you on next steps from Monday 4th October.

So what will the school do?

Be assured that we will continue to:-

- **Ensure good hygiene for everyone** – no changes from last term
- **Maintain appropriate cleaning regimes** – no changes from last term
- **Keep occupied spaces well ventilated** – we will use monitors already in place in our classrooms to ensure ventilation levels are good, while keeping everyone comfortable
- **Follow public health advice on testing, self isolation and managing confirmed cases** – we will continue to follow advice and guidance carefully

What will daily routines look like?

There has been some relaxation in expectations around bubbles, assemblies and eating arrangements in guidance provided by government. We are mindful however, that we want everyone's return to school to feel comfortable and safe in the current context. With this in mind **for the next four weeks we will continue to follow the bubble, assembly and lunchtime arrangements that we had in place last term.** We are lucky that the school site and size means this has little impact on day-to-day operation in school.

With a successful September under our belt we then look forward to relaxing arrangements around bubbles, assemblies and lunches, and can even welcome you back into our classrooms and the beginning of each day – something that we have all missed enormously. **We look forward to sharing next steps with you in a few weeks when everyone is settled.**

What does this mean for parents/families?

Essentially we will carry on where we left off last term – pick up and drop off will look the same, in-school arrangements will look the same and be the ones that your children are familiar with.

We hope that this will give everyone a familiar and comfortable start to the new year – all being well we'll move forward together in 4 weeks time.

Face coverings are no longer advised for visitors to the school in classrooms or communal areas, so if you are comfortable you need not wear a mask when visiting reception or chatting to or meeting with a member of the school team.

We would only ask you to wear a face covering if you are spending time in a busy learning area/classroom, as guidance suggests that these should be worn in 'enclosed and crowded spaces where you may come into contact with people you don't normally meet'.

What do we do if there are cases of COVID-19?

There are changes here.....

If you think that your child is displaying symptoms of COVID-19 it is of course important that they do not come to school and that you seek a test for them – please let us know if you are faced with this situation.

Following recent changes in guidance, children and fully vaccinated adults are no longer required to self-isolate if they live in the same household as someone with COVID-19, or are a close contact of someone with COVID-19.

This means only people with symptoms or a positive diagnosis needs to self-isolate.

If you are contacted by NHS Test and Trace you may be asked to take a PCR test, but you will not be asked to self-isolate when waiting for results.

This means that only children with a positive diagnosis, or showing symptoms of COVID-19 need to self isolate. This is great news for everyone!

As a school we have plans in place if significant numbers of children receive positive diagnoses, but we'll hope that we never have to action that, and if we do we'll keep you in the picture.

Next Steps

All we need to do now is look forward together, as we have done since the first school closure in March 2020. This time though we can look forward knowing that 'normality' in school is just around the corner. If September works well, we will be writing to you with the next steps that we're all looking forward to by the end of the month. To be honest, we can't wait, but let's do it step-by-step, together!

Yours sincerely,

Scott Hampton
Co-Head Teacher

Katy Galling
Co-Head Teacher

Niema Bohrayba
Chair of Governing Board