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**Head Teacher:** Mr S Arnold

Friday 1<sup>st</sup> January 2021

Dear Parents/ Carers,

I hope you have had a good Christmas and you have enjoyed family time, staying safe and well. On behalf of all staff and governors, I wish you all a happy new year.

Following the Prime Minister's briefing on 30<sup>th</sup> December, I write to confirm the reopening of our school on **Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> January** following our INSET Day on Monday 4<sup>th</sup>, and our expectations for the new term for helping to maintain our safety. I have received correspondence from both the Department for Education and Wolverhampton City Council and it is the expectation that all children, other than those who are clinically extremely vulnerable, must return to school on this day.

There has been much media coverage surrounding the increased spread of the virus and in particular, infection rates per 100,000. Wolverhampton's infection rate has accelerated to 533.5 (correct as of 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020). This clearly raises much concern and as a consequence, I have reviewed our risk assessment and seek your assistance in reinforcing our expectations with your child/ren for the following behaviours before returning to school next week.

- **Washing of hands:** In line with the Government's public campaign, we will continue to expect and urge children to wash their hands as frequently as possible, sanitising before and after break times, lunchtimes and PE activities and following visits, before and after using the toilet. Each classroom is equipped with its own hand sanitiser and we have free standing units placed strategically around school for staff and children's easy access and additional use. It is essential hands are washed as often as possible. The following is the guidance issued by the Government:



**Washing your hands:** *While coronavirus is not likely to survive for long periods of time on outdoor surfaces in sunlight, it can live for more than 24 hours in indoor environments. Washing your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or using hand sanitizer, regularly throughout the day will reduce the risk of catching or passing on the virus.*

- **Face coverings:** It is not a requirement for primary aged children to wear face coverings within school but we do urge you and your child/ren to wear one when entering the school grounds. Once within the school building, we ask that children place them securely within their coat pockets until exiting at the end of the day.

**Covering your face:** *Coronavirus is carried in the air by tiny respiratory droplets that carry the virus. Larger droplets can land on other people or on surfaces they touch while smaller droplets, called aerosols, can stay in the air indoors for at least 5 minutes, and often much longer if there is no ventilation. Face coverings reduce the dispersion of these droplets, meaning if you're carrying the virus you're less likely to spread it when you exhale.*

From tiny acorns mighty oaks grow...



- **Space and distancing:** Space is of extreme importance and we will continue to seat children in rows and insist children refrain from turning around as far as possible. Teachers will teach from a 2 metre distance at the front of the class, offering learning assistance briefly thus avoiding direct contact for a prolonged period of time. During last term, several classes and year group bubbles burst; we must endeavour to do our utmost in the spring term to avoid this happening. Therefore, we will ask children to refrain from playing direct contact games such as tag as Public Health England use this game as criteria for identifying close contacts when tracking and tracing. We will advocate a maintaining of space between one-another as far as possible.

**Making space:** *Transmission of the virus is most likely to happen within 2 metres, with risk increasing exponentially at shorter distances. While keeping this exact distance isn't always possible, remaining mindful of surroundings and continuing to make space has a powerful impact when it comes to containing the spread.*

As a staff, we appreciate the difficulties this presents to children when playing and we most certainly want to advocate and encourage children's safe play and social time with one-another. However, following these vital three behaviours will help to protect ourselves and the short and potential long-term impact of the virus.

In addition to the above, we will continue to keep classrooms well ventilated and encourage children to keep their jumpers on to refrain from feeling cold. We will also continue to regularly disinfect surfaces and avoid face to face meetings as far as is reasonable. If you do have an enquiry, please either telephone Miss Mills or Mrs Simcox in the School Office or send an email to the following address: [oakmeadowprimaryschool@wolverhampton.gov.uk](mailto:oakmeadowprimaryschool@wolverhampton.gov.uk) Emails will be forwarded to staff who will respond as soon as they are able to.

We thank you for your understanding of all of the measures we have in place to keep us all safe and well.

Continuing in this current climate, we also ask you to remain vigilant of coronavirus symptoms such as a new continuous cough, high temperature, or a loss or change in your sense of taste or smell. If you or a family member displays symptoms, no matter how mild, please seek a test by calling 119 or by visiting NHS.uk. Whilst the following is not issued by Public Health England, the detail it contains is useful and may be helpful in diagnosing your course of action:

Symptoms	Coronavirus	Flu	Cold
Fever	Common	Common	Rare
Cough	Common	Common	Mild
Loss of taste and smell	Sudden	Rare	Sometimes
Fatigue	Sometimes	Common	Sometimes
Headaches	Sometimes	Common	Rare
Aches and pains	Sometimes	Common	Common
Runny/ stuffy nose	Rare	Sometimes	Common
Sore throat	Sometimes	Sometimes	Common
Sneezing	No	No	Common
Shortness of breath	Sometimes	No	No
Diarrhoea	Sometimes for children	Sometimes especially for children	No

From tiny acorns mighty oaks grow...





Communicating your child's symptoms to us has been extremely valuable and we thank you for the time you take in doing this. We kindly ask you to continue doing this for our records and to support our daily reporting to the Department for Education.

Thank you as always for your support and understanding during these testing times. My hope is for a healthy new year for us all.

Best wishes,

*S Arnold*

Mr S Arnold

From tiny acorns **mighty oaks** grow...

