

## **HIGHFIELD UPDATE Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> July 2021**

I love this photograph taken at the teddy bears' picnic last Friday. It sums up the fun our children have been able to have this term despite all the restrictions. The Highfield children have been incredible this year and I am sure you are all happy to read your children's very positive school reports this week. Please find time to complete and return your parental questionnaires which the school office will be sending out electronically this week. It is really useful for the school to show that we have the backing, trust and support of our parents. Next week you will receive a welcome newsletter from your child's September new teacher. The newsletters are full of important dates and information and they will also be available on the school website.



## **COVID update**

As we approach the end of the school year, there is so much to reflect on. It has certainly been a year I will never forget but the main memory for me will be the feeling of total pride in our school and community.

Every morning I have been crossing my fingers that we won't have to close a class bubble due to a positive case. You have been very supportive by keeping your children at home and getting them tested if they have symptoms. If we get to the end of the school year without having to lose a bubble we will have been extraordinarily lucky!

Gavin Williamson, the Secretary of State for Education, made an announcement on Tuesday afternoon regarding Covid rules in schools from July 19<sup>th</sup> - Step 4, and how schools would operate regarding Covid cases from August 16<sup>th</sup> relating to the new school year. I have paraphrased some of the key aspects of the updated guidance which can be read in full on the Department for Education website.

### **When will my child no longer need to stay in their bubble and be able to mix with other bubbles?**

*At Step 4, July 19<sup>th</sup>, it will no longer be necessary to keep children in consistent groups ('bubbles'). If a school is still open at Step 4, they may wish to continue with these measures until the end of your summer term.*

We will keep our class bubbles for the last week of term and then have no bubbles from the new school year. Our school day times will also revert to normal in September. 8.55a.m. start and 3.30 p.m. finish.

### **What happens when my child has COVID-19 symptoms or has a positive test?**

*Pupils, staff and other adults should follow public health advice on when to self-isolate and what to do. They should not come into school if they have symptoms, have had a positive test result or other reasons requiring them to stay at home due to the risk of them passing on COVID-19 (for example, they are required to quarantine). If anyone in school develops COVID-19 symptoms, however mild, school should send them home and they should follow public health advice. In most cases, parents and carers will agree that a pupil with symptoms should not attend the school, given the potential risk to others. If a parent or carer insists on a pupil attending your school, school can take the decision to refuse the pupil if, in its reasonable judgement, it is necessary to protect other pupils and staff from possible infection with COVID-19.*

### **What happens if my child has a positive lateral flow test?**

*Staff and pupils with a positive lateral flow test result should self-isolate in line with the stay at home guidance. They will also need to get a free **PCR test** to check if they have COVID19. Whilst awaiting the PCR result, the individual should continue to self-isolate.*

### **Will my child have to isolate if someone in their bubble tests positive?**

*Schools will only need to do contact tracing up to Step 4. From Step 4, close contacts will be identified via NHS Test and Trace and education settings will no longer be expected to undertake contact tracing.*

*From 16<sup>th</sup> August 2021, children under the age of 18 years old will no longer be required to self-isolate if they are contacted by NHS Test and Trace as a close contact of a positive COVID-19 case. Instead, children will be contacted by NHS Test and Trace, informed they have been in close contact with a positive case and advised to take a PCR test.*

We would encourage all individuals to take a PCR test if advised to do so.

### **Do parents and staff have to wear face coverings in school?**

*From Step 4, face coverings in primary schools will no longer be advised for staff and visitors either in classrooms or in communal areas.*

### **Ensure good hygiene for everyone**

*Hand hygiene. Frequent and thorough hand cleaning should now be regular practice. Schools should continue to ensure that pupils clean their hands regularly. This can be done with soap and water or hand sanitiser.*

### **Maintain appropriate cleaning regimes**

*Schools should put in place and maintain an appropriate cleaning schedule. This should include regular cleaning of areas and equipment (for example, twice per day), with a particular focus on frequently touched surfaces.*

Highfield has budgeted to keep our additional cleaner in school for another twelve months.

### **Keep occupied spaces well ventilated**

*Where mechanical ventilation systems exist, you should ensure that they are maintained in accordance with the manufacturers' recommendations.*

*Opening external windows can improve natural ventilation, and in addition, opening internal doors can also assist with creating a throughput of air. If necessary, external opening doors may also be used.*

This announcement means our Year six children who have worked so hard will be able to have a great end of primary school experience. We are looking forward to their end of year production which will take place outdoors on 21<sup>st</sup> July at 6.30 p.m. The new guidance means that there will be no restrictions as to how many Year 6 parents and family members can come and watch their show. This will be the same for the Year 6 leavers' assembly which will also be held outdoors on 23<sup>rd</sup> July at 2.15 p.m.

For our other end of term events (sports days, steel pans) which fall before 19<sup>th</sup> July, we will continue to follow the current guidance which is that groups of up to 30 parents per class may attend.

We can do this!

Julie Colley