

Seghill First School

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04.January 2022

Return to School Update January 2022

Dear Parents and Carers

First of all, I'd like to wish everyone a Happy New Year, on behalf of all our children, staff and governors.

I really hope 2022 is a much better year for us all. That said, I think the next few months – with infection rates as high as they are – are likely to be challenging for everyone. As ever we will do our level best to keep things as 'normal' as possible for the children and to keep school open for all year groups wherever possible. Closing year groups will be a last resort, but may well be needed if infection rates reach outbreak levels or we do not have enough staff to operate the school safely.

Return to school 5th January

Before our return to school tomorrow we strongly advise that your child takes a **lateral flow test**. This will give confidence to you as parents and carers and us as a school that we are all doing our best to keep all our children and staff safe.

Children will continue to be taught in **key stage bubbles**- Early Years, key stage 1 and key stage 2. Children will stay in these bubbles for playtimes and lunchtimes too.

At this time, we are not asking parents and carers to wear a face covering at dropping off and collection times, but ask parents and carers to exercise their own personal choice in this matter. We do however, ask parents and carers to take responsibility for **social distancing** while on the school site.

Please continue to follow our **one-way system** when dropping off and collecting children. There is **no exit from school via the school drive** at either 8:45am or 3:15pm.

Positive tests

If your child tests positive for COVID please make Test and Trace aware of possible school-based close contacts –we can support with this. Contact tracing is the responsibility of Test and Trace rather than school. Please support us with this process. Test and Trace is the most appropriate place to share contact tracing information, rather than a WhatsApp group.

If your child is identified as a close contact, daily lateral flow tests are advised for the next 7 days. Additionally, you are advised to limit social contact particularly with vulnerable members of family / the local community e.g. not visiting other households, parties, participating in sport etc.

Isolation period

The following guidance is now applicable:

'The 10-day self-isolation period following a positive PCR test result for COVID-19 has been reduced to 7 days in most circumstances, unless you cannot test for any reason. Children may now take lateral flow tests on day 6 and day 7 of their self-isolation period. Those who receive two negative test results are no longer required to complete 10 full days of self-isolation. The first test must be taken no earlier than day 6 of the self-isolation period and tests must be taken 24 hours apart. This also applies to children under

5, with lateral flow testing at parental or guardian discretion. If both these test results are negative, and you do not have a high temperature, you may end your self-isolation after the second negative test result and return to school education setting from day 8.'

Practically, to support us in school, please follow these two points-

- inform us the date the isolation period began.
- provide us with a screenshot of your notification of a negative lateral flow test on day 7. A photo of a negative lateral flow test cartridge is not acceptable.

Please note the reduced isolation period is only applicable through use of lateral flow testing rather than absence of symptoms.

Ventilation in classrooms

We are advised to ventilate classrooms as much as possible. During the winter months this can make classrooms quite cold. A thermal vest, t-shirt or something similar is therefore advisable under school uniform, for those particularly cold days.

Staffing

It is highly likely that we will face challenges with staffing during the following weeks or months. Your child's class may therefore be covered by a different adult.

In the event of extreme staff shortages, some children may need to access learning from home – in such circumstances, classes may be temporarily combined and priority given to vulnerable / key worker children. This would be a last resort, but I wanted to make you aware of this possibility. Please consider what your household 'Plan B' will be, in the event that children need to temporarily learn from home.

Breakfast club, after school club and extra-curricular clubs

These will run as normal.

Spring term PE days

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
	Red	Yellow	Red	
	Purple	Orange	Green	
	Blue		Purple	
	Yellow		Blue	
	Green			

Finally, we would like to ask for your patience. As I said at the beginning of my letter, positive cases are currently at unprecedented levels. Our staff team will continue to work incredibly hard, despite the challenges, to do the very best for our children. There is, however, nothing we can do about the virus itself, or last-minute changes to government policy and guidance.

Yours sincerely
Miss Chappell
Headteacher