22nd July 2021

Dear parents / carers,

Well done everyone, we’ve very nearly made it to the end of the year and without the popping of any ‘bubbles’ and just one day to go. We have had some families self-isolating but this has been because they were identified as close contacts from outside of the school setting. You have all shown such resilience, patience and commitment to adhering to our safe working procedures, so thank you for that. Hopefully now we will all get the chance to enjoy some greater freedom of movement, over the next six weeks.

We have had a lovely end to the term; it was great to be able to have some parents in attendance at the end of year awards ceremonies. It was sad to say good bye to those pupils and staff that are leaving us, we wish them all the best as they look forward to their next adventures.

As a setting we have had to make many changes and adaptations to the ways that we work and support our pupils and staff. Not all have proven to be that bad! The staff have met and looked at what has worked well – what would be our ‘COVID Keepers’?

* **Lunchtime arrangements** – many classes have chosen to continue to eat their lunches in the classroom, rather than come up to the hall. Staff felt that for some pupils the hall was too busy, noisy and they were being expected to sit for too long, waiting for other to finish.
* **Transport** – During the pandemic pupils were being collect from the bus by their own class teams and were using different doors to enter and exit the school. Pupils were leaving directly from their classrooms rather than all collecting in the hall and being called out bus by bus. We have agreed to make no changes to the current plan.
* **Annual Review meetings** – We have decided that parents and other professionals will be given the option to join meetings via Teams or Zoom. Of course we are looking forward to having face to face meetings but the reality is that we have seen improved attendance from other professionals when they have been able to join remotely.
* **DOJO** – The move from paper based home school diaries to Dojo has proven to be very successful – feedback from you has been overwhelmingly in favour. We have very few parents who are not yet linked; if you are one of them please get in contact with your class teacher and they will be able to talk through any questions you may have.
* **JOTTER** – Again this has proven to be a very useful way of staying in touch with you all, sharing newsletters and important information quickly and efficiently. Now that we have Dojo we are going to keep the News section of the jotter for sharing pictures of whole school events and extraordinary activities. The weekly news from the classes will be shared via Dojo and the class story. This way we are not duplicating and adding work load to the admin staff who populate Jotter.

Hopefully you are not worrying too much about the start of the new academic year. We appreciate that we haven’t been able to do all of the transition activities that we had planned. However, hopefully you have found the classroom packs and the one page plans useful and that you know that you can email your child’s classroom teacher with any queries. We have planned for the first week back to be the time for classes to gel and get to know each other better. We have booked a bouncy castle as part of the ‘fun’ days.

**Asymptomatic Testing: Secondary age pupils**

Testing remains important in reducing the risk of transmission of infection within schools. That is why, whilst some measures are relaxed, others will remain, and if necessary, in response to the latest epidemiological data, we all need to be prepared to step measures up or down in future depending on local circumstances.

Over the summer settings will only provide tests for twice weekly asymptomatic testing for pupils and staff if they are attending settings that remain open such as summer schools and out of school activities based in a school setting.

As students will potentially mix with lots of other people during the summer holidays, wherever possible, we are asking that all secondary aged students should receive 2 lateral flow tests, 3 to 5 days apart, before returning on the 8th September. Where possible, students should then continue to test twice weekly until the end of September, when this will be reviewed. Staff will also be continuing with twice weekly home tests until the end of September, when this will also be reviewed.

We recognise that complying with the home test will not be possible for all, it is possible to assist with the process and it is acceptable to do a nasal only or throat only swab if a combined nasal and throat swab is not possible. We will be able to support testing on site if hare have really struggled to do so at home. It is really important that you let teachers know if you have NOT been able to complete a test prior to return to school (please note that as before we will only support where the pupil is able to give some assistance.

We will be sending all senior pupils home with a box of LFD home testing kits.

You will have already seen the letter posted on the jotter (Monday 19th). Please take the time to read this as it outlines the new DfE arrangements for contact tracing for Step 4 and onwards.

**Medication**

We will be returning all medication to you so please remember to send it back in on the first day and ensure that all care plans are up to date.

So, all that remains is for us to thank you for the support you have continued to show the school and residence, during one of the most challenging years in education. You have shown considerable understanding at times when we know you have also been struggling and feeling challenged. Our children and young people need to be at school, settled, in their familiar routines and enjoying their learning. Roll on September!

Wishing you all a sunny, happy and virus free summer break.

Very best wishes



**Alison**

**Headteacher**