



THE PINES SCHOOL

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23rd February 2021

Dear Parents / Carers

Following the announcement on 22nd February, The Pines will re-open to all students from Monday 8th March. We really have missed each and every child, and although we will still be operating within the same restrictions from before Christmas, we are looking forward to having our school back together again. We really do appreciate everyone's efforts in keeping school safe and engaging in online learning. It has been a difficult time for everyone and we continue to hope that there is an end in sight.

I can confirm that the staff at The Pines have been offered the vaccination, however I am not in a position to name individual staff who have had this. There was a positive uptake on the vaccination. We were thankful to be given the opportunity to receive this.

Many of the routines in place will be the same as they were before we broke up for Christmas – which seems a lifetime ago now! These will be reviewed in line with National Guidance at Easter.

### Transport

Transport will be provided for pupils as previously, keeping bubbles together as much as is practically possible. Transport should be cleaned before and after transportation and windows open to provide some ventilation. Our understanding is that the Driver and Bus guide will wear face coverings.

### Cleaning and hygiene procedures

There continues to be enhanced cleaning procedures in place during the day to clean contact points and toilets. We are also continuing to promote the regular washing of hands at points during the day. In school we do use an alcohol based hand sanitiser gel.

### Uniform

Where possible children should wear school uniform, however we know that there may be changes that are needed such as children outgrowing uniform or the need for an additional jumper / hoody to wear inside. We have to ensure that there is ventilation within the classrooms and a window has to be open at all times – this is just to allow for natural airflow and shouldn't affect the temperature in the room. However additional jumpers / hoodies can be worn

**PE kits** We are asking that on the day your child has PE that you send them in, in clothing suitable for PE. We appreciate that this is another change for children, but it means that we are able to ensure the children aren't wearing each other's clothes in the post PE mix up! Also we are unable to use the changing rooms safely at present. This just means that on PE days children come to school in joggers and appropriate footwear. PE will be going ahead but will be modified keeping government guidelines in place. Your class team will let you know the days that PE is planned for.



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## Parents on school premises

As before we are staggering collection times for the children. These will remain the same as previously. We are asking parents, when on site to maintain social distancing and wear a face covering unless exempt. Again this is following the guidance as set out by the Government. Parents evening will be held virtually again this term and is likely to be booked in for the weeks after Easter.

Visitors to the school site will continue to be limited to essential visits only such as therapeutic support, medical intervention and essential maintenance.

## Social distancing

As you will appreciate for some of our children social distancing continues to be difficult, but we have put measures in place and support the children in following this as much as possible.

Classrooms continue to be set out in a way with children seated appropriately, facing forward as much as possible.

Children remain in bubbles and we have tried to reduce the number of children within a bubble. Largely classes will only mix when on the playground. Children are taught in their classes and are not joining or entering another class. Lunches will continue to be eaten in the classrooms also.

At present there are no whole school assemblies and children enter the school via different entrances based on their bubbles. This is an effective way of reducing contact.

## Testing (for pupils in year 7 and above)

We now offer onsite Covid-19 testing for students using lateral flow tests. For the first two weeks back 8th March – 19th March we can offer tests three times for your child if you give us consent and then we will be sending home testing kits home for you to continue the process. Consent will be gained via the legal guardian via letter. We will send these home with pupils in **Year 7** and above on Monday. In order for the test to be carried out we are saying that the children would need to be able to administer the test with verbal and minimal support. We do not feel that it is appropriate for us to fully administer the tests for the children by swabbing them ourselves, but will be available to support as much as we can. Further details to follow including home testing kits. At present this is only for secondary aged children.

Testing is offered to staff.

## Face coverings (for pupils in year 7 and above)

The current guidance states that wherever possible students will be required to wear face coverings in classrooms and during activities and in shared spaces like corridors, on the minibus, unless social distancing can be maintained or they are exempt from wearing them. Face coverings do not need to be worn when students are outside. Many of our children will be exempt from wearing these, however should your child be able to and want to wear a face covering we will support with this.

For primary children there is no expectation for the children to wear face coverings, however before Christmas some children were choosing to do so and again we are more than happy to support this. Some children were opting to wear them on transport.

## Illness

To help keep The Pines as safe as possible please keep your child at home if they have any of the following symptoms:

- 1) A high temperature
- 2) A new, continuous cough
- 3) A loss or change to sense of smell or taste



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Anyone with COVID-19 symptoms or a positive test result should stay at home and self-isolate immediately. This is because you could pass the infection on to others, even if you don't have symptoms. If you have been in contact with a positive case, you must stay at home and isolate for 10 days please refer to the Government website using the link below for further information:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stayat-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection>

It is equally as important that if your child becomes ill at school that you are able to come and collect your child. This is to prevent any spread of illness.

I appreciate that this is a lot of information to digest again, much of it is the same as it was before Christmas.

Our children really are amazing (as are the staff!) and I am sure that they will all settle back into school life much quicker than we give them credit for. As a school we have taken every action we can to maintain the safety and well-being of all pupils and staff, taking into account all Government guidance.

On Monday we are welcoming the children back to school and we have delayed our world book day celebrations! Children are welcome to come to school dressed as their favourite character (or in their own clothes if they would prefer!)

As I said, we are really looking forward to seeing all of the children back, we really have missed them all!

Should you have any concerns please get in touch.

Thank you all for your continued support.



Emma Pearce



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