



THAKEHAM PRIMARY SCHOOL
Rock Road
Storrington
West Sussex
RH20 3AA
Headteacher: Mrs S. Norton
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'Small School, Big Opportunities, Great Achievements'

Monday 24th August 2020

Dear Parents/Carers.

Pupil Wellbeing and Attendance expectations

Return to school and pupil well being

We hope you are enjoying a restful break and we are very much looking forward to welcoming children and families back to school in September. We hope you have found the Covid-19 protocols we issued before the end of the summer term useful and you have taken time over the summer to familiarise yourself with the changes and also support your child to understand these too. This is important whether your child has been in school in the summer term or not, as you can imagine, with the whole school planned return, many routines have changed, as has government guidance. Teachers will support all children with these routines once they return to school and I am sure (as was the case last term), that once we have lived with these for a short while, they will become second nature. It is important to point out that we will be constantly reviewing our protocols and this may well lead to changes as we go which we will inform you of and share with your child too.

It may be helpful for you to be aware that our COVID-19 risk assessment has been updated (and will continue to be in light of regular monitoring and updated local and national advice). This has been approved by our governing body. All schools in WSCC will also have meetings to discuss the return to school protocols with our County Adviser ahead of our return, so you can be confident that the plans in place have been quality assured. The WSCC Communications team have provided a communication site for parents over the summer which may also help with any questions you may have:

www.westsussex.gov.uk/coronavirus

We were very happy with how well children settled into school during the summer term after their period of extended absence. We recognise however that just under half of the school have not been on site for around six months. We have worked hard to keep in touch with children and families during this time and have provided additional support whether this be on a learning or emotional level as needs arose. Further support may be required when we return in September for a period of time until children settle, or more extensive support may be needed, or children may just settle in with no problems at all! All are possible and we are preparing for a whole range of scenarios.

It would be helpful therefore if your child is feeling **especially anxious ahead of the return or there has been a bereavement in the family/close contacts or a significant change in your circumstances that may affect your child adversely**, that you let us know so we can be aware, and if necessary make some adjustments which we can discuss in liaison with you. With this in mind please can you email me in confidence before August 28th head@thakehamps.co.uk Please be aware that this period is still the summer holiday and I must balance my own family and work commitments during this time. Therefore,





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please restrict communication to this topic. For any other general enquiries please contact the school office who will monitor emails for part of the day from Friday 4th September (INSET). Please be aware that school office staff are not contracted during the holidays and so any email sent will not be responded to in the usual way during this time.

We will be vigilant as to how children present especially in the first few weeks and discuss anything that might crop up with you. We have planned activities during the first week to support children settle in, to (re) build relationships and to monitor their well-being. Pupil voice will be very important in this, allowing children to share how they have found the past few months, how they are feeling now and their aspirations for the short and longer term (at an age appropriate level).

We value your feedback as to how your child is settling in and we actively encourage you to contact us if you have any questions or worries once we have returned. Please ring or email the office to arrange for your child's teacher to contact you. Any parent appointments on site must be agreed in advance, in line with our Covid protocols. No matter how small or big the worry may seem we can support you and your child. Please, please do not bottle up worries as this can lead to the issue feeling much bigger for you or your child when you do finally contact us. School staff have always enjoyed very positive relationships with families and this was recognised in our Ofsted inspection and is something that I know parents and staff value as seen through the outcome of parent surveys and in general communication. It is important that all communication is timely and respectful in order to resolve any concerns. It is important we work together to support your child.

Attendance – updates in relation to Covid-19

Over the course of the summer holiday you may well be aware of the changes at a national level regarding Covid-19. These include the need to **self-isolate for an increased amount of time – 10 days if experiencing symptoms, the need for quarantine for 14 days on return to the UK from certain countries and a number of local lockdowns the government have been introduced in localities across England**. All of these may well affect pupil attendance when we return to school and for the foreseeable future. In light of these and updated attendance guidance from the government, I felt it would be helpful to outline attendance expectations that will be in place from September.

From the start of the autumn term 2020, as directed by the government, pupil attendance will be mandatory and the usual rules on attendance will apply, including:

- parents' duty to ensure that their child of compulsory school age attends regularly at the school where the child is a registered pupil
- schools' responsibilities to record attendance and follow up absence
- the ability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices, in line with local authorities' codes of conduct





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Although school attendance is mandatory from the start of the autumn term, there are some circumstances where pupils cannot attend school due to coronavirus. The government has therefore introduced a new code for attendance (X) which will be used in the examples outlined below to ensure parents are not penalised for following official public health advice for their child not to attend a given session. This new category of non-attendance (code X) will not count as an absence (authorised or unauthorised).

1. Pupils who are required to self-isolate if they have symptoms (whilst awaiting the outcome of a test). If your child remains unwell following the test (such as with a different illness), then their absence will be recorded in the usual way as 'illness' (I). If your child tests positive, they should continue to self-isolate for at least 10 days from the onset of their symptoms. They should only return to school if they do not have symptoms other than a cough or loss of sense of smell or taste (anosmia). This is because a cough or anosmia can last for several weeks once the infection has gone. Similarly if your child tests positive, the absence will be recorded as 'illness' (code I).
2. If someone in the pupil's household has symptoms and the household has to self-isolate (whilst awaiting the outcome of a test). If the household member tests positive, your child should continue self-isolating for the full 14 days from when the member of their household first had symptoms. This will also not be classed as absence (code X relating to C19).

NB Parents/guardians must inform us as soon as the test results are received – whatever the outcome.

3. In the event of a confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) case in school, the local health protection team will provide advice on who this applies to, advising them to self-isolate for 14 days since they were last in close contact with the person that has tested positive when they were infectious. This will not be classed as absence (code X).
4. Pupils who are required to self-isolate because they are a close contact of someone who has symptoms or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19). Pupils may not have symptoms themselves but may be required to self-isolate if they are a close contact of someone with coronavirus (COVID-19). The [NHS test and trace](#) guidance states that a person should self-isolate for 14 days if they have had recent close contact with a person who has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19).
5. Pupils who are required by legislation to self-isolate as part of a period of quarantine e.g. on return from countries specified by the government – see guidance on [how to self-isolate when you travel to the UK](#). As usual, parents should plan their holidays within school breaks and avoid seeking permission to take their children out of school during term time. Families should also consider that their child may need to self-isolate following trips overseas that require a period of quarantine. If a pupil is required to be in quarantine on arrival in, or return to, the UK, this is not counted as absence (code X).





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6. Pupils who are clinically extremely vulnerable in a future local lockdown scenario only

Shielding advice for all adults and children paused on 1 August 2020. This means that even the small number of pupils who will remain on the shielded patient list can return to school, as can those who have family members who are shielding.

If in future, rates of the disease rise in local areas, children still on the shielding list (or family members still on the shielding list) from that area, and that area only, may be contacted by the government and advised to stay at home and shield during the period where rates remain high. Families will receive a letter if they are required to shield again that parents will be able to share with us.

Home Learning

If your child is not attending school due to circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19), **the DfE expect schools to be able to provide access to remote education and it is our expectation that children and families engage in this unless the child is unwell.** The time at home should not be treated as additional time off/holiday. Schools are required to keep a record of, and monitor engagement with home learning and will maintain contact with you and your child in and around the teaching and learning expectations on site. This may be contact via SeeSaw, calls or emails. If you have any queries with home learning we would strongly encourage you to contact the school office and your child's teacher will respond as soon as possible, though this may well be at the end of the school day due to teaching commitments.

I hope this provides some clarification on attendance expectations and how we are required to record this in relation to Covid-19 from September. **If you are travelling back from a country that the government has issued quarantine advice for which may impact on your child returning to school as expected in September, or if your child will be absent please inform the school office by email or phone. Please provide a clear reason for the absence so we can record the absence correctly and make appropriate plans as needed.**

I wish you a happy and healthy end to the summer holidays and look forward to seeing you in September.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Sam Norton
Headteacher

