

TODDINGTON ST. GEORGE CHURCH OF ENGLAND SCHOOL

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Dear Parents and Carers,

Thank you for continued support during such challenging times. I hope you and your families are staying well, and it has been a pleasure to see the high quality work turned in by those at home, and the ongoing learning taking place for those in school. Parents and Carers continue to do an absolutely stunning job of supporting learning during this challenging time. Thank you!

Critical Worker and Vulnerable Children bubbles

We really do appreciate how challenging it is for critical workers at the moment, and are hugely grateful for their contribution to our community. The DfE have broadened their criteria for Critical Workers, and as a result we are seeing requests for in school places continue to grow. We have approximately 30% of our children attending school, which is double the figure compared to the first lockdown, when the virus was less transmissible.

Therefore, if you are working from home, please keep your children at home with you. I understand concerns about learning, and the worry that gaps may form, but I assure you that once we have beaten this virus, all our efforts will be focused on catching up on learning. Please do remember that nationally, all children are in this position together. Bubbles in school are following the same planning as those at home, and are being covered by the staff available; being in school should not be considered as giving children an educational advantage. It is imperative that we all play our part in reducing the transmission of the virus, and keep our families and community safe.

Staff Covid Testing (possible impact on children currently attending school)

From the 25th January, the government has asked all staff working in primary school settings to begin Lateral Flow Device (LFD) testing twice a week. This has been a huge logistical exercise, involving training and planning, and is ready for implementation next week. With a third of people carrying the virus unknowingly, this may well result in disruption, and we may see the closure of bubbles in school.

To help families plan for this eventuality, staff will test on a Wednesday and Sunday morning, and we have adopted the following plans:

- Wednesday: staff will complete the LFD test by 7am. The test takes 20 minutes to display results. Parents will be informed of any bubble closures taking place **that same day** by 7:45 am. We appreciate that this is a very tight turn around, and will send out the text alert first, followed by an email. We kindly ask parents to watch their phones on a Wednesday morning.
- Sunday: staff will complete the LFD test on a Sunday morning. Parents will be informed of any bubble closures that would affect the next day, Monday, by 12 noon, via a text alert, followed up by an email.

The LFD positive result will need to be followed up by a second test via the usual Covid testing routine. If that test is also positive the bubble will stay closed. If the second test happened to be negative, then we can welcome the children back into school. Families will be informed of Public Health's decisions as soon as possible.

Remote Curriculum Offer

We have been blown away by the engagement and quality of learning taking place at home - thank you! This really will support your child with their learning when they return to school. The teachers have been in competition to see who can get the most children to join their weekly google meet, Mrs. Rivers with 18 is in the lead, and we are looking forward to seeing if we can beat it next week!

The Future Reopening Of Schools

Gavin Williamson has announced that schools and parents will have two weeks notice before schools fully re-open. Unfortunately, we do not yet know when that will be, as school leaders hear, at the same time as the nation. We are really missing the children, and school just does not feel the same without them, so we are really looking forward to hearing that announcement.

Planning For Half-Term Childcare

As you are aware, schools have had to rapidly respond to changing government guidance alongside the ever changing national situation. To support parents and carers in making plans for half term for childcare, I wanted to clarify that our Academy will be closed over half term as normal. This is so that all our staff can have a well deserved rest and re-energise for what we hope will be the beginning of planning a whole school return.

All schools within the Harlington Cluster continue to work collaboratively on this and we are guided by DfE and Local Authority guidance. Present guidance informs us that parents can access childcare from their support bubbles, should this be required during half-term.

Staff well being

Staff have continued to receive very kind words of thanks and appreciation, from families in school and those learning from home. I would like to personally thank parents and carers who do get in touch to share such positive thoughts, as it really does give our staff a little boost, at a time that is also challenging for them. They are continuing to work ever so hard, and it is an absolute pleasure and privilege to stand by their side, and be part of their team.

As ever, should you have any concerns please do not hesitate to get in touch. Thank you for your continued support and understanding.

Yours sincerely,

Colette Lamb