



**INSPIRE NURTURE BELIEVE ACHIEVE**

*Working **together** to be the **best** that we can be.*

Happiness

Perserverance

Resilience

Kindness

Friendship

Respect

19 October 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

Re: Latest Covid Advice – **Harvest cancelled and Parent / Carer Consultations online.**

I am writing to you as we have had emergency correspondence from North Yorkshire County Council in light of the increasing rates of COVID-19 infection in the Harrogate area, which are now among the highest in the country.

These rates are predominantly being driven by cases among school age children, with subsequent transmission into household contacts and beyond with increased pressures on health and social care in the Harrogate area.

Early implementation of measures will help limit further spread, and we have been advised to take a more precautionary approach until the local 12-15 and 16-17 vaccination programmes have time to take effect. New guidance from the Department for Education advises that Lateral Flow Device Testing can be implemented for household contacts and close contacts whilst waiting for the results of a PCR test. Whilst it is recommended for all staff and secondary school pupils, it is **left to parental discretion for primary aged pupils**. The advice also states that **where members of the households are positive, all siblings should have a PCR test**.

**Reminder:**

- Anyone who has symptoms of COVID-19 should isolate immediately and take a PCR test.
- Anyone who has been identified as a close contact of a confirmed case by NHS Test & Trace should also take a PCR test (in children under 5yrs this is only if they are a household contact).
- Close contacts will need to isolate if not exempt (i.e. if they are not fully vaccinated, or not under 18yrs 6mths).
- Positive PCR tests require the person to isolate following Test and Trace advice.
- Anyone who has tested positive on a PCR in the last 90 days does not have to do a repeat PCR test **unless they become symptomatic**.
- Contact tracing of individuals will be carried out by NHS Test & Trace. Schools will not be required to provide details of pupils directly to the national Test & Trace team.

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## **Bubbles and Social Distancing:**

Whilst social distancing and measures such as school bubbles **are no longer required**, educational settings are advised **to implement measures** where it does not cause disruption to regular activities.

As a short-term measure for the remainder of this week and for the first week back we will:

- Keeping the number of occasions where **large numbers of people mix to an absolute minimum** is advised (e.g. school assemblies etc.). **Use of virtual events** (e.g. parent / carer evenings).
- Re-introduce face coverings in classroom and communal areas (**this applies to parents gathering on the playground**).
- Avoid taking part in higher risk activities e.g. singing, close contact sports/performance arts, residential trips (**this has an impact on Harvest Festival and the Wednesday Sports Competitions**). *Our Y5/6 residential is booked for April - we are planning for this to go ahead so a letter about this will be sent in due course.*
- Consider re-configuration of classrooms to minimise face to face contact, with set seating plans to minimise number of close contacts within the classroom setting itself. (**We will consider this based on increasing number of cases**).

**Breakfast Club and After School Club are essential to the community so this provision will continue as usual.**

As cases inevitably increase, the school may need to consider whether to move to remote learning for a class or classes based on operational grounds e.g. due to staffing shortages. Public health will support any operational closures. **At present this is not a concern for our schools but may be an issue if a number of staff members become positive in the coming weeks.**

This is understandably devastating for the children and our wider school community as we have been looking forward to being together again.

Although we are unable to do the Harvest Festival, the children will perform aspects of it in their classes and hopefully we will be able to share some of these highlights on the school website in a password protected video. Please bear with us as this may take some time to edit together and upload.

The Music teachers may be advised to move the current face to face lessons online if so, they will notify parents directly of any change.

Our school community is really important to us - we were really looking forward to having you all in school and showing you the children's work and we know that you were looking forward to it too.

We have already planned to invite you in to school for a **Progress Celebration Café** where you will be able to spend time with your child, looking at their work. As soon as guidance allows, we will secure a date for this event.

If it looks like the limitations will continue for a longer period of time after the first week back, we will send some pieces of work home for you to celebrate with your child.

At present these are only short-term measures, and will be reviewed in line with guidance provided from NYCC.

Thank you for your cooperation,

Mrs Zoe Ellis  
Federation Headteacher

