Dear Parents/Carers

I hope you are all keeping safe and well in these very strange times. The return to school has been both challenging and rewarding and I know we would all like to return to some sort of normality soon.

Prior to our return to school in September, extensive work was carried out around risk assessments which would ensure the safe return of your children and the staff into school. These risk assessments are robust and are overseen by the Local Authority, and updated on a regular basis when advice or regulations change. Safety measures were put in place in an effort to make school as safe a place as possible for us all to be, ensuring there was a balance between positive mental health and wellbeing, and protecting us all from Covid-19. Up until half term the cases of positive Covid-19 tests in school were very low and we were able to continue full time education for the majority of children.

Since half term, nothing has changed in school, with the exception of having had the full school site treated with an electrostatic disinfectant, which kills 99.9% of all bacteria within 5 seconds. We have reviewed certain policies such as mask wearing on site, however the amount of positive tests has increased. This has been a very challenging time for the whole school community. The challenges include:

1. Members of our school community becoming unwell with Covid-19
2. Parents having to home school their children often mixed in with the challenges of working themselves
3. Staff and children having to self-isolate due to close contact with a positive case
4. School not having the availability of staff to support some returning children
5. Staff having to home school their own children and being unavailable for work

At the time of writing this letter, we only have year 1 children in school. In terms of staffing (excluding lunchtime staff) we have only nine out of thirty seven staff available for work, for a variety of reasons as outlined above. One of the consequences of this is that, even when some children may be able to return from their own period of illness/self isolation earlier than the date we have given, without the staff available to teach the children, our capacity to support this is severely limited.

I do understand how frustrating this has been, and we are making revisions to our way of working as things change and develop. The aim of these revisions is to reduce the amount of children who will have to self-isolate in the coming weeks if we have further positive cases of Covid-19. Our risk assessments are minimising the risks as far as we can but they can never take the risk away completely. All decisions regarding the way we organise school have been well thought out and have been discussed with all senior leaders in school. We will continue to take advice from our Local Authority representatives and those from Public Health England. With all of this in place, I cannot say we will not have further positive cases in school, however the risks will be further minimised.

These changes are very challenging for us to organise and are very dependent on having all staff in school, safe and well. These changes will take a little time to implement, however they should help us reduce pupil self-isolation numbers. After further developments we have decided to implement the changes **across Reception to Year 6. You will receive texts messages from school for your child’s year group explaining the entrances and exits and how the children will line up. These changes are also explained below.**

**The new arrangements are as follows:**

**Nursery AM and PM**

**No changes to current arrangements**

**Reception**

**Reception will continue to arrive at school at 9.00am**

**Mrs Dunn’s class** will continue to enter the school site via the normal gate. The children will line up at the bottom of the steps in the fenced off area. The class will leave school in the normal way.

**Mrs Hinchliffe’s class** will continue to enter the school site via the normal gate. The children will line up at the bottom of the ramp in the reception yard at the beginning of the school day. The children will leave school via the back entrance through nursery yard near the cloakroom.

**Mrs Dunn has posted information regarding these change on tapestry.**

**Year 1 will continue to arrive at school at 9.00am through their normal entrance and exit**

**Miss Syropoulo’s class** will access the yard and socially distance on the side of the yard nearest the reception area. When the teachers arrive on the yard the children will line up next to their teacher. Children will leave school at the same time and be released onto their side of the yard.

**Mrs Tait/Anderson’s class** will access the yard and socially distance on the side of the yard nearest the main entrance to school. When the teachers arrive on the yard the children will line up next to their teacher. Children will leave school at the same time and be released onto their side of the yard.

**Year 2 will continue to arrive at school at 9.15am through their normal entrance and exit**

**Miss Tappenden’s class** will access the yard and socially distance on the side of the yard nearest the reception area. When the teachers arrive on the yard the children will line up next to their teacher. Children will leave school at the same time and be released onto their side of the yard.

**Mrs Fenton’s class** will access the yard and socially distance on the side of the yard nearest the main entrance to school. When the teachers arrive on the yard the children will line up next to their teacher. Children will leave school at the same time and be released onto their side of the yard.

**Year 3 will continue to arrive at school at 9.00am through their normal entrance and exit**

**Mrs Miller’s class** will access the yard and socially distance on the side of the yard nearest the main entrance. When the teachers arrive on the yard the children will line up next to their teacher. Children will leave school at the same time and be released onto their side of the yard.

**Miss Cowen’s class** will access the yard and socially distance on the side of the yard nearest Mr Brand’s house. When the teachers arrive on the yard the children will line up next to their teacher. Children will leave school at the same time and be released onto their side of the yard.

**Year 4 will continue to arrive at school at 9.15am through their normal entrance and exit**

**Mrs Williamson’s class** will access the yard and socially distance on the side of the yard nearest the main entrance. When the teachers arrive on the yard the children will line up next to their teacher. Children will leave school at the same time and be released onto their side of the yard.

**Miss Atkinson’s class** will access the yard and socially distance on the side of the yard nearest Mr Brand’ss house. When the teachers arrive on the yard the children will line up next to their teacher. Children will leave school at the same time and be released onto their side of the yard.

**Year 5 will arrive at school and be released from school via the gate accessed near Mr Brand’s House at 9.15am**

**Please be aware there will now be no vehicle access to school in the times from 9.00am - 9.30am and 3.05pm - 3.30pm**

All year 5 five children will enter the yard via the gate and go straight into school with Mr McKay and Mrs Taylor.

**Year 6**

Year 6 will have no changes to their entrance or exits and will arrive at school at 9.00am and line up at their normal side of the main entrance fence.

To avoid congestion and queues forming outside of school can you aim to arrive as near to the stated school time for your child

Finally, thank you for all your support and the many positive comments we have received from parents recently. If we all continue to work together I am sure we will achieve the best outcomes for the whole school community at this very difficult and challenging time.