

Whiteshill Primary School

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'We are curious, we are unique, we are together, we are Whiteshill!'

26th August 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

I hope that the children have all had a fun and restful summer and that they are ready and excited to return to school next week. As you will probably already know, the government advice over the summer has not changed and therefore we will be able to welcome back **all** children to school when the Autumn term begins on Wednesday 2nd September. Children entering school in reception (Willow Class), please see the letter which I sent out at the end of the summer term for information on the part-time schedule your children will be following for the first few weeks – if you have any questions or you are not sure, please do feel free to get in touch.

I have attached to this email some important information which **you will need to read through in full** before the children return next week:

- Reminders of key information e.g. start and end times, uniform
- Information about how to book your child's place in breakfast and after school club.
- A help sheet on what to do if your child or someone in their household develops coronavirus symptoms.
- Information on what the school is doing to minimise risk and keep the children as safe as possible in school.
- A Government leaflet on the subject of returning to school.

I also wanted to share with you some web links which you might find helpful below:

- The government guidance for parents around schools opening in September can be found [here](#)
- The full Government coronavirus advice and guidelines can be found [here](#).
- Our updated school policies with appendices which are in line with guidance on COVID-19 as well as the Gloucestershire Local Authority Risk Assessment which I have completed, and which staff will be following in school to minimise risk, can be found on the school website [here](#).
- Information on how to keep your child safe online can be found on our school website [here](#).

Attendance

In March when the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak was increasing, the government decided that no parent would be penalised or sanctioned for their child's non-attendance at school. Now the circumstances have changed and it is vital for all children to return to school to minimise as far as possible the longer-term impact of the pandemic on children's education, wellbeing and wider development. **School attendance will therefore be mandatory again from the beginning of the autumn term.** This means from that point, the usual rules on school attendance will apply, including:

- Parents' duty to secure that their child attends regularly at school where the child is a registered pupil and they are of compulsory school age;
- Schools' responsibilities to record attendance and follow up on absence.
- The availability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices in line with local authorities' codes of conduct.

Therefore, from September our usual attendance policy will apply and all children will be expected to attend every day. The request for leave of absence form will once again need to be used and this can be requested via email on admin@whiteshill.gloucs.sch.uk. Our updated draft attendance policy can be found on the school website [here](#) and information from the Gloucestershire Local Education Authority about attendance for parents can be found [here](#). Please also read the COVID-19 appendix to the attendance policy which has now been updated ready for September.

Obviously, a small number of pupils may be unable to attend at times in line with public health advice because they are self-isolating and have had symptoms or a positive test result themselves; or because they are a close contact of someone who has suspected or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19). It is important that the guidelines around self-isolating in line with the NHS test and trace are followed and children will not be expected to attend school when this is the case. The government have now advised us however that we will have to provide online home learning for children who are at home for this reason and that it will no longer be optional, so children will be expected to complete the learning that is set whilst they are at home so that they do not fall behind their peers during these periods of self-isolation.

According to the government website, shielding advice for all adults and children was paused on 1 August. This means that even the small number of pupils who will were on the shielded patient list can also return to school, as can those who have family members who have been shielding. If your child or someone in their household has been on the shielding list because they are clinically extremely vulnerable and you have not done so already, please do let the school know so that we are able to support you if guidance changes. The current advice about shielding from the government can be found [here](#).

some pupils no longer required to shield but who generally remain under the care of a specialist health professional may need to discuss their care with their health professional before returning to school. If you think this might apply to your child, you can find more advice from the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health [here](#). Please let the school know if this applies to your child.

Please note - where children are not able to attend school as parents are following clinical and/or public health advice, absence will not be penalised.

We look forward to seeing you all next week.

Kind Regards



Heather Francis
Headteacher