

Barnes Farm Junior School

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Dear parents/carers,

I am writing to you to share additional information about the protective measures our school is taking on behalf of our staff, children and families in response to the current Covid-19 challenge.

In order to fulfil the key long-term strategic goal that is enabling children to have regular access to an excellent education during a global pandemic, the school staff have worked tirelessly to ensure we continue to meet the evolving Government guidance. In addition to the huge array of protective measures being taken in school (from regular handwashing and sanitising to keeping distinct bubbles of children apart), we are also charged with the responsibility to effectively liaise with both parents and external health agencies when needed.

From the moment this pandemic began back in March 2020, the school has aimed to communicate the key information that parents require in order to ensure as smooth an experience for both parents and children at school as possible. If we bombard you with too much information, then we risk really important pieces of information being lost amongst others. If we don't send enough, then parents feel anxious and ill-informed. It is not always an easy balance to strike.

The rise in positive cases locally in our community has regrettably but inevitably brought the virus to our door. In each and every case notified to us, we liaise closely with the local Public Health England body (Essex and Southend Contact Tracing Team) with the Department for Education as an additional back-up source of advice and guidance. Individual cases are investigated and risk assessed and the resulting instruction is always followed by the school. Sometimes, this instruction is that there is no further action to take over and above the advice being sought. At other times, swift and direct action is recommended (such as the example in Y3 over the weekend).

We always do as we are instructed.

This means that there may be instances where we are notified of a case but because of the circumstances, the public health advice is to take no further action. Due to privacy and data protection reasons, we can never identify the specific individuals concerned and therefore, if we were to notify everyone in this instance, it would only lead to further anxiety at a time when we play a pivotal role in providing assurance within our community.



Our continuing approach, therefore, is to seek expert health instruction in each and every instance of any Covid-19 notification and to only notify parents if action is directed by that public health body. By following this approach, we trust that we can strike the appropriate balance between being open, informative and responsible as a public body in order to play our part in the community's response to this pandemic.

Yours faithfully,



Ross McTaggart
Headteacher

