

Thurlstone Primary School

Back to School - September 2020- Frequently Asked Questions

Who is expected to attend school in September?

In September all children, in all year groups, are expected to attend school. School attendance will be mandatory again from the beginning of the autumn term. The prevalence of coronavirus (COVID- 19) has decreased, the NHS Test and Trace system is up and running, and the government has provided clear guidance about the measures that need to be in place to create safer environments within schools (see our risk assessment for further details). For the vast majority of children, the benefits of being back in school far outweigh the very low risk from coronavirus (COVID-19). Please contact school if you have any concerns you wish to discuss.

Are my children expected to attend if they are in a vulnerable health group or live with someone in a vulnerable group?

Children who are classed as clinically vulnerable (this includes those with asthma; diabetes; who are taking medications that can affect the immune system e.g. a low dose of steroids) are expected to attend school.

Shielding advice for all adults and children classed as extremely clinically vulnerable paused on 1 August. This means that even the small number of pupils who will remain on the shielded patient list can also return to school. Children who live with family members on the shielding list can also attend school from September.

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. You can find more advice from the Royal College of Pediatrics and Child Health at COVID-19 - 'shielding' guidance for children and young people. <https://www.rcpch.ac.uk/resources/covid-19-shielding-guidance-children-young-people#children-who-should-be-advised-to-shield>

Where children are not able to attend school as parents are following clinical advice, absence will not be penalised. Remote education will be offered in this situation.

What will happen if I don't send my children back to school?

The Government's guidance for parents makes clear that parents are expected to send their child to school. School is the best place for children to learn and it is important for their mental wellbeing to have social interactions with their peers and teachers. Non-attendance will be marked as absence. Parents should inform the school office via email or telephone before 9:30am, in line with normal school procedure, if their child is ill. We encourage medical appointments to be made outside school hours.

What happens if my child or someone in my household has coronavirus symptoms?

Anyone who has coronavirus symptoms, or who has someone in their household who has symptoms, must not attend school. They must follow the COVID-19: guidance for households with possible coronavirus infection.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance>

Please inform school of these circumstances. Anyone who displays symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) can and should get a test. We would ask that this is done speedily in order that we can act appropriately in school. Tests can be booked online through the NHS testing and tracing for coronavirus website or by telephoning 119.

Please inform school immediately of the results of a test:

- If the child or household member with symptoms **tests negative**, if they feel well and no longer have symptoms similar to coronavirus (COVID-19), they can stop self-isolating. They could still have another virus, such as a cold or flu – in which case it is still best to avoid contact with other people until they are better. Other members of their household can stop self-isolating.
- If the child or household member **tests positive**, they should follow the stay at home guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance> and must continue to self-isolate for at **least 10 days** from the onset of their symptoms. If it is the child who has tested positive, they can return to school only if they do not have symptoms other than cough or loss of sense of smell/taste (anosmia). This is because a cough or anosmia can last for several weeks once the infection has gone. The 10-day period starts from the day when they first became ill. If they still have a high temperature, they should keep self-isolating until their temperature returns to normal. If it is a member of the child's household who has tested positive, then the child along with the rest of their household should continue self-isolating for the full 14 days.

What happens if someone becomes unwell at school?

If anyone attending school becomes unwell with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature, or has a loss of, or change in, their normal sense of taste or smell, they will be sent home and advised to follow the COVID-19: guidance for households with possible coronavirus infection guidance which sets out that they must self-isolate for at least 10 days and should arrange to have a test to see if they have coronavirus (COVID-19). Other members of their household (including any siblings) should self-isolate for 14 days from when the symptomatic person first had symptoms.

If a child is awaiting collection, they will be moved to a room where they can be isolated, with appropriate adult supervision as required (the first aid room next to Mrs Gibbins' office will be used as the isolation room). The door will be opened for ventilation. If it is not possible to isolate them, they will be moved to an area which is at least 2 meters away from other people.

What happens if there is a confirmed case of coronavirus at the school?

If we are informed that a child or staff member has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) we will act swiftly in line with government and local authority guidance. The local health protection team will be contacted immediately. This team will also contact us directly if they become aware that someone who has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) has attended the school – as identified by NHS Test and Trace.

The health protection team will carry out a rapid risk assessment to confirm who has been in close contact with the person during the period that they were infectious, and ensure they are asked to self-isolate. We will follow the actions set out by the health protection team and in line with their advice we will send home those children and staff who have been in close contact with the person who has tested positive, advising them to self-isolate for 14 days.

Close contact means:

- direct close contacts - face to face contact with an infected individual for any length of time, within 1 meter, including being coughed on, a face to face conversation, or unprotected physical contact (skin-to-skin)
- proximity contacts - extended close contact (within 1 to 2 meters for more than 15 minutes) with an infected individual
- travelling in a small vehicle, like a car, with an infected person

Household members of those contacts who are sent home do not need to self-isolate themselves unless the child, young person or staff member who is self-isolating subsequently develops symptoms. If someone in a class or group that has been asked to self-isolate develops symptoms themselves within their 14-day isolation period they should follow 'stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection'.

They should get a test, and:

- if the test delivers a **negative result**, they must remain in isolation for the remainder of the 14-day isolation period. This is because they could still develop the coronavirus (COVID-19) within the remaining days.

- if the test **result is positive**, they should inform school immediately, and must isolate for at least 10 days from the onset of their symptoms (which could mean the self-isolation ends before or after the original 14-day isolation period). Their household should self-isolate for at least 14 days from when the symptomatic person first had symptoms, following ‘stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection’

How will children socially distance at school?

We understand that the children will find social distancing difficult. Government guidelines recognise that “younger children will not be able to maintain social distancing, and it is acceptable for them not to distance within their group.”

Children will remain in their class group (or bubble) for the majority of classroom time. Mixing with other groups will only occur to facilitate essential learning activities.

Older children will be encouraged to maintain distance and not touch staff and their peers where possible.

Staff will maintain distance from pupils and other staff as much as possible.

Playtimes and lunchtimes will be staggered, some bubbles will have the same play time slots, but will not use the same areas of the school grounds. e.g. Y5 and Y6 will both go out to play at 10.40, but will not mix on the playground. No more than two bubbles will have their dinner at any one time and they will be seated separately.

What will the school do if children do not follow social distancing or otherwise breach hygiene or safety guidance?

Expectations of behaviour and rules will be clearly explained to children, along with reminders and highlighting models of good hygiene and attitude. Children who, despite help and reminders, cannot follow safety guidance will have a risk assessment conducted and parents contacted.

What if some children and families do not follow government guidance on social distancing when not at school?

It is not within the power of the school to prevent children and families mixing beyond the school gate. Schools cannot accept responsibility for managing risk in the community. To make communities and our school safe, we ask that all families play their part and follow current government guidelines.

How will drop off and collection times be managed?

As you already know we will have a staggered start and end to the day. We would ask that only one parent/carer drops off and picks up and that parents observe social distancing at these times. Children will be greeted by staff at the designated arrival points; unfortunately, parents will not be able to enter classrooms. Please spend some time explaining this to your child. Staff will not be able to physically remove children from their parents.

We would advise you to travel to school by walking, cycling or by car. It is not recommended to take public transport if you have an alternative.

Will the school take my child's temperature every day?

We will not take children's temperatures on arrival at school, however if we suspect that a child has coronavirus symptoms, we may use a non-invasive thermometer gun.

Will school meals be available again?

From September, our catering service will be offering a variety of meal choices again. All Key Stage 1 pupils will be entitled to universal infant free school meals; usual free school meal entitlements will apply for other year groups. Parents will be able to purchase school dinners for Key Stage 2 pupils via the school money system as usual. Please ensure payments are received at the beginning of the week. There will be staggered meal sittings: tables and other frequently touched surfaces will be cleaned between sittings.

Does my child need to wear uniform?

From September, our usual uniform policy will apply. Uniform promotes a sense of pride and identity within our school community. Current government guidelines state that uniforms do not need to be cleaned any more often than usual, nor do they need to be cleaned using methods which are different from normal. In order to maximise ventilation, windows in classrooms will be opened. Please ensure children wear jumpers/ cardigans each day to ensure that they are warm enough.

Children will be expected to get changed for PE. PE kits should be brought into school on your child's allocated PE day(s). We will not be able to loan PE kit if a child forgets their own.

What will the curriculum be like for my child in September?

When children return to school in September they will be taught a rich and broad curriculum.

For pupils in Reception, teachers will assess and address gaps in language, early reading and mathematics, particularly ensuring children's acquisition of phonic knowledge and extending their vocabulary. Reception children will be provided with opportunities for outdoor learning.

For pupils in key stages 1 and 2, staff will aim to identify gaps and re-establish good progress in the essentials (phonics and reading, increasing vocabulary, writing and mathematics). They will explore opportunities across the curriculum to embed reading, and develop children's knowledge and vocabulary.

There will be a strong focus upon pupil emotional and social well-being and supporting pupils in returning to school. Focused pastoral support will be provided where needed.

What provision will be made for my child if they have to self-isolate due to their own/ household member's symptoms; if they are instructed to self-isolate by NHS track and trace; if there is a local or national lockdown?

If children have to self-isolate for any of the reasons described, remote learning will be provided immediately. It is expected that pupils complete this to ensure learning is continued whilst they are unable to attend school.

Will children and staff be wearing PPE?

Government guidelines say that staff and children in schools do not need to wear PPE. We will ensure that handwashing and good hygiene practice is in place. During the day surfaces will be wiped down. At the end of each day a thorough clean will take place.

Staff will wear PPE for first aid and intimate care needs in line with current practice or if a child becomes unwell with symptoms of coronavirus while at school and needs direct personal care until they can return home.

Where staff are unable to adhere to current social distancing guidance within school, they may choose to wear PPE.

We have supplies of PPE for first aiders and any staff coming into close contact with pupils.

If pupils arrive at school wearing a face mask they will need to ensure that it is removed safely. It is important not to touch the front of their face covering during use or when removing it. They must wash their hands immediately on arrival, dispose of temporary face coverings in a covered bin or place reusable face coverings in a plastic bag they can take home with them, and then wash their hands again before going to their place in the classroom.

How will school limit the risk of infection for my child?

Government guidelines will be followed including:

- We will reduce mixing of pupils, keeping pupils in class groups/bubbles all the time.
- We will minimise staff movement across classes where possible. When staff do move groups, they will aim to maintain social distancing where possible.
- There will be staggered play times, dinner times, start times and home times – we will limit the number of children on lunch and breaks. No more than 2 groups will be outside together for breaks/ lunchtimes.
- Resources that are shared between classes, such as sports, art and science equipment will be cleaned before passing to another class, or rotated to allow them to be left unused and out of reach for a period of 48 hours (72 hours for plastics) between use by different classes.
- Some equipment, specifically P.E will be allocated to classes and will be used only by that class.
- Contact will be minimised with individuals who are unwell by ensuring that those who have coronavirus symptoms, or who have someone in their household with symptoms, do not attend school.
- Hands will be washed on arrival at school and then frequently throughout the day – this will be supervised for younger pupils.
- Children will be taught good respiratory hygiene – we will promote the ‘catch it, bin it, kill it’ approach. Each class will be provided with bin with a lid for tissues: this will be emptied daily.
- Posters will be displayed around school to remind the children of good hygiene and hand washing practices.
- We will clean frequently touched surfaces often, using standard products, such as disinfectant.

How will parents be able to ask staff questions?

If parents need to communicate with staff we are asking them to phone and email rather than visit. Any visit to the school must be made via an appointment. Appointments will not be made at the start and end of the day to maximise social distancing. When visiting school for a pre-arranged appointment, parents and visitors are to use the hand sanitiser available and are asked to maintain a 2 metre distance from staff at all times. One visitor at a time will be allowed into the sliding doors to visit the school office – we ask that face coverings are used. There will not be any face-to-face meetings with teachers.

What does my child need to bring to school each day?

It is important that children bring as little as possible to school to reduce the resources that might be shared between children and between school and home.

Every child should bring their own, named, bottle of water. At the end of each day, water bottles must be taken home to be washed.

On warm, sunny days, please ensure children are sent to school with sun hats and apply suncream (ideally long-lasting) before they leave home. If this needs reapplying throughout the day, ensure you send your child with their own individual suncream, labelled with your child's name. Children will need to be able to apply this themselves.

Each child will be provided with their own school stationery (pencil cases must not be brought to school).

Reading books will be changed by staff twice a week. Returned books will be placed in a box and not made available to others for at least 48 hours.

PE kits need to be brought on allocated PE day(s).

Lunch boxes can be bought into school.

Will after school clubs take place?

In September, due to the need to minimise contact between different groups of pupils and embed the new protocols, we are not able to offer after-school clubs. We are aware that some working families find these helpful in terms of childcare and we strongly believe that extra curricular activities support children's well being and social development so will keep this closely under review and endeavor to introduce them as soon as possible.