



WESTGATE PRIMARY SCHOOL

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Additional Measures While in Lockdown

Dear Parents / Carers,

Firstly, again, thank you for your continued support during these recent months and particularly since September when all children returned to school. As you know we have now entered a period of national lockdown until 2nd December. Guidance for schools has not really changed within the primary phase apart from the need to consider colleagues who are now classified as 'clinically extremely vulnerable'. The number of cases in the North West region is one of the highest in the country and we have all noticed the number of children within the Lancaster and Morecambe area having to have periods of time off school self-isolating as a result of a positive case in their bubble.

Following discussion with fellow head teachers in the area, and staff in the school we are making the following changes and gentle reminders to what we do in school to ensure that we keep the risk of future cases as low as we possibly can.

Face Coverings

Public Health England guidance still instructs that face coverings for primary-aged children are not required and we will still work with this. However, we note that despite all your efforts to keep socially distanced when bringing your children to school or collecting them, we now recommend that from Monday 9th November, parents and carers wear face coverings when dropping off or collecting your child. I am aware that a growing number of you are already doing this, but I am also aware that several of you have underlying conditions that pose a greater risk for you. I want to keep all adults as safe as possible so this will help with an extra level of safety for you. Children are very welcome to arrive with face coverings but these need to be removed before going into school. Many fellow primary schools are now adopting this change. I would like to stress this is a request and not a statutory requirement under the guidelines.

Staff Visors

Staff and some parents have noted that when passing information on to colleagues in the morning or on collection, it is very difficult to hold conversations discretely without being less than 2 metres away from each other. As a result, from Monday 9th November staff at the meet and greet doors will be wearing transparent visors. It is so important that faces are seen when talking, but the visors will add that extra bit of protection for staff and parents. Again, many schools in the area are now introducing this. We are really grateful that you keep conversations minimal and only when necessary, but we all value those brief moments when important information is passed between us. There are a small number of colleagues who are beginning to wear transparent visors when working very closely with children, such as intervention activities and one-one reading etc. This is in-keeping with many visitors who come to support particular children in the school.

One Parent / One Way

Thank you for continuing to follow the one-way system. It helps to reduce the risk of face-face contact in the mornings and afternoons. We have noticed some families forgetting the one-parent rule when dropping children off or collecting them. Please keep to that rule as it does help keep numbers of adults down during those really busy times. It is also worth reminding you that we do need to close classroom doors at the times stated as that is when lessons start. I know it is frustrating when you get all the way to the door only to find it shut, but we do need a clear cut-off time so that learning can start. We are aware that a number of children are arriving late and having to go through the front door. This could potentially compromise our bubbles when non-related children of different year groups arrive at the same time. To avoid this, please keep to the times when your child is due to arrive between the 'doors open' times and the time of school actually starting for your child.

We do allow some flexibility when there are unusual delays such as roadworks, traffic incidents on the route, or adverse weather. In those cases, teachers will be advised to extend the time before the doors close by a few minutes.

Please try to avoid gathering too closely near the Gaisgill gate. We appreciate how hard that is, but some children have found it difficult to get through when leaving at the end of the day.

As you can see, these measures are more for those external busy times than in the running of the day. We are still confident that the measures that we keep in school remain robust and successful and this is testified by the fact we have so far had no internal transmissions. This is down to everyone's continued efforts in this time.

Please Keep Children Off if someone in the home has symptoms or tests positive

It is so important if your child has suspected symptoms, or someone in the house has symptoms, then you keep the child off while undertaking a test. If someone tests positive in the household, or who has had close contact up to two days before symptoms show, then they **must** self-isolate for 14 days. Ignoring this could potentially risk wider isolation of staff and pupils. Symptoms are: a persistent cough lasting an hour or more or several bouts of coughing over a day; a high temperature; loss of taste and / or smell. Any of these symptoms could indicate COVID and would need a test to be certain.

Finally

In these tough times, I am aware of how well everyone is doing keeping distance and avoiding social things such as Halloween and Firework nights etc. I am fully aware that schools are the one place where people are gathering and working front-line but with instruction from the DFE not to wear PPE in the primary years. Colleagues support this due to the need for children to see the faces of adults working with them, and to prevent children tampering with face coverings which could increase the risk of transmission rather than reduce it. Regular hand-washing / sanitising, and keep bubbles separate are the most effective measures to help our mission. The measures we are putting in place at the start and end of day from Monday should help add further protection to you and my staff who together are working so well in and around school. This should help us remain open to all children as much as possible.

As ever, thank you for supporting us with these measures at this time.

Yours sincerely,



Keith Wright
Head Teacher
Westgate Primary School