

Dear parents/ carers,

I hope you have all enjoyed a happy and restful Christmas.

We return to school with optimism because of the roll-out of the vaccines and the hope of a return to normality, but also aware that there is an increased risk of transmission due to the more infectious variant strain of COVID. This new variant, which has taken hold so quickly in the South East, has pushed the 'R' rate up and is causing great concern and uncertainty. We know that the NHS around the country is under immense pressure.

Tomorrow, secondary schools across England and primary schools in London and much of the South East are closed (to all except vulnerable children and children of key workers) and these schools will be operating remote learning for a limited period.

As you know St Mary's is open from tomorrow. In order to keep our school community as safe as possible we work from and regularly review our COVID risk assessment. Below are some of the measures contained within it - in the form of FAQs. I would be very grateful if you could refresh yourselves on the main points.

The main update to them regards the decision to **require the wearing of face masks on school site by parents/ carers** when picking-up/ dropping off. **Children are not required to wear face masks.** We have decided to do this for a number of reasons:

- The Government is believed to be considering the wearing of face masks outdoors as an additional measure should 'tougher COVID rules' be introduced over the coming weeks.
- The new variant is known to be more highly transmissible and face coverings should help reduce the risk of transmission. We want to keep our school site as safe as possible.
- They serve as a visual reminder of the very real threat of COVID and help us to remember to keep safe distances from one another
- A number of parents, whether in person, on the phone or in the recent parental questionnaire have expressed concern about groups of parents/ carers gathering outside classrooms at the start or end of the school day – saying that they would feel safer if we all wore masks.
- Other schools across Chorley have asked parents/ carers to wear face coverings on the school site and it has proved to work well.

Frequently Asked Questions about school's COVID-secure measures

1. How do we keep your child safe?

We are following the guidelines set out by the Department for Education. We have put measures in place to keep our community as safe as possible. Please note we cannot make school a risk-free environment and cannot guarantee that school will be virus-free but we will do our very best to do so.

2. What are the main safety measures?

- ✓ **Anyone with symptoms of COVID must stay at home** until a negative test is obtained or until period of self-isolation has come to an end.

- ✓ **Keeping children in consistent groups** which actively avoid mixing with other groups. This group will typically be their year group. However, your child might also be part of another small, consistent group with children from other year groups for example in phonics groups and in Breakfast/ After School clubs.
- ✓ **Keeping safe social distances.** Children will be reminded to keep a safe distance from one another where practically possible within their groups and different groups will not be allowed to mix e.g. different year groups are allocated different break and lunch times and different zones to play in.
- ✓ **Frequent handwashing.** Children will be required to wash their hands regularly during the course of the school day.
- ✓ **Good respiratory hygiene.** Children will be asked to use a tissue if coughing and sneezing and to dispose of tissue in a lidded bin - 'Catch it. Bin it. Kill it'
- ✓ **Enhanced cleaning of the school** by cleaning staff and of frequently touched surfaces by all staff throughout the day.
- ✓ **Always keeping occupied spaces well ventilated** – you will notice we have been keeping doors and windows open since the September restart - but this is now a requirement by the DfE
- ✓ **Engaging with NHS Test and Trace and Public Health England** and acting upon their advice in confirmed COVID-19 cases within our community.

3. What will my child wear (uniform) and what should they bring to school?

Full school uniform must be worn each day. Children **must bring a coat** in case of rain or cold weather. School bags should not be brought to school, however children should bring either book bag or reading folder into school. Children can, of course, bring their water bottle and packed lunch to school. This will remain in the cloakroom area to be taken home each night.

As classrooms will be chillier with doors or windows open, I strongly recommend that children wear vests under their shirts and jumpers. Children may also bring a warm fleece/ pullover to wear over the top of their school uniform. This is to be brought in at the start of the week and taken home at the end of the week.

4. What about PE Kits?

Children should come to school wearing their PE kits on those days and not their school uniform and remain in those kits for the rest of the day. Where it is possible, PE will take place outdoors, so children should also wear tracksuit/ jogger bottoms, a warm top and trainers (rather than the black pumps).

5. What about food and drink?

School meals will, in most cases, be taken in the classrooms. Children who have packed lunches should bring them to school in their lunch box which will remain in the cloakroom until lunchtime. Children may bring a healthy snack. There is also the offer of toast as a

morning snack. Children can bring water bottles but they must be taken home and washed at the end of each day.

6. Can I call into the school office to drop something off?

We are restricting visitors to school except for those to support education or health or those where essential maintenance are required.

If you need to bring in a forgotten lunchbox for example or if you need to take your child to a medical appointment. Please call or email us first.

7. Can I meet my child's teacher in school?

No. We plan not to have any face-to-face meetings. Please do not try and meet/ speak with the class teacher at the classroom door to pass on messages, **we need to keep entrances clear and avoid gatherings there.** If you need to contact the class teacher please do so via the school telephone or *Class Dojo*.

8. Breakfast and After School Club

The Breakfast and After School Club are arranged into four groups of children by combining children from adjacent year groups e.g. YN/ YR, Y1/Y2, Y3/Y4 and Y5/Y6. These groups are allocated different areas within the Hall/ Quad/ Playground and will be kept 2m apart where possible. We will also encourage children within these adjacent year groups to keep a safe distance from each other. Parents drop-off and collect from the front entrance.

9. Other settings

It would help us in minimising risk of transmission of the virus if parents were able to limit the number of settings they are able to attend.

10. What are the pick-up and drop-off arrangements (other than Breakfast/ After School Club)?

Please note that as of Monday 4th January, parent and carers are asked to wear face coverings at all times, whilst on the school site.

Drop off/ Pick Up Times

Year	Drop-off time	Pick-up time
N	0845	1505
R	0855	1515
1	0845	1505
2	0855	1515
3	0845	1505
4	0855	1515
5	0845	1505
6	0855	1515

You will note that we have allocated neighbouring year groups one of two drop-off/ pick-up times. We have done this to avoid congestion at points around the school site. **Please adhere to these times, i.e. please do not arrive either too early or too late.** We want to keep the site as clear as possible for as much of the time as possible.

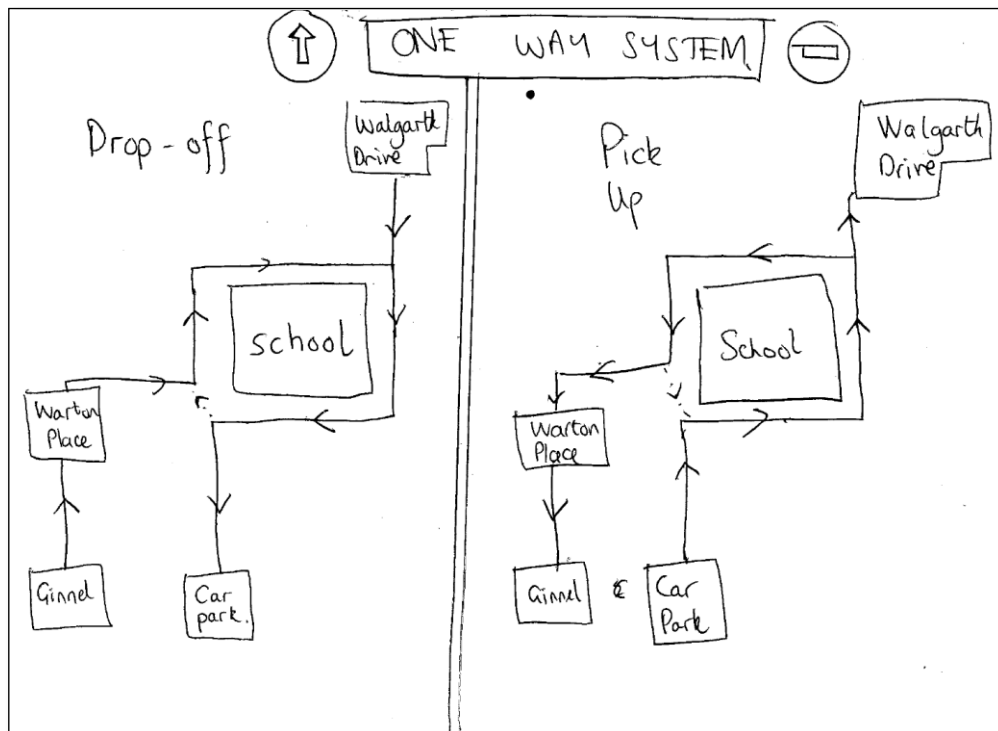
To keep numbers of people on site to a minimum we are allowing **one adult per family** to drop-off and pick-up children.

If you are dropping-off/ picking up children from two or more year groups, please drop off at the earlier time and pick up at the latest time to avoid waiting around on site.

We ask parents not to gather in groups at pick up and drop off time

For your own safety and the safety of the school community, despite the temptation please do not gather to meet socially at pick up and drop-off times. Please keep a minimum of 2 metre distance at all times between households.

One-way system



Drop-off.

Parents/ carers/ children to *enter* either through the *Warton Place* or *Walgarth Drive* entrances and then all make their way *clockwise* around the school to access classrooms. Then parents/ carers should *depart* via the *Hornchurch Drive* school car park footpath entrance *only*.

Pick-Up

Parents/ Carers to *enter* via the *Hornchurch Drive* school car park footpath entrance *only*, make their way *anti-clockwise* around the school to collect their children and then *depart* either via the *Walgarth Drive* or the *Warton Place* entrances.

11. What about use of public transport?

The Government has asked us to encourage parents and children not to use public transport where possible. If they do, please note it is compulsory for children aged 11 or above to wear face masks.

12. What if my child or a member of our household is ‘clinically vulnerable’ or ‘clinically extremely vulnerable?’

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/people-at-higher-risk/whos-at-higher-risk-from-coronavirus/>

Please let the school office know if your child is clinically vulnerable e.g. has diabetes or asthma and we will risk assess those pupils. If your child is clinically extremely vulnerable please share with us the advice you receive from your GP or consultant and we will risk assess accordingly. Please also advise us if a member of your household is in a higher risk category which might require your child to be absent from school.

12 .What happens if my child or someone in my household develops COVID 19 symptoms away from school?

Anyone who develops symptoms of COVID-19, or whose household member develops symptoms, should immediately self-isolate. They should not attend school and should follow the steps below.

- Parent/Carer should notify the school of child’s absence by phone
- Read [Stay at home](#) guidance for isolation advice for child and their households. The person with symptoms should isolate for 10 days starting from the first day of their symptoms and the rest of their household for 10 days.
- Child, parent or household member who has symptoms should get tested via NHS UK or by contacting NHS 119 via telephone if they do not have internet access

VERY IMPORTANT A child must not attend school if a member of his/her household is displaying symptoms of COVID until that household member has received a negative test.

The main symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19)

- *new continuous cough – this means coughing a lot more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if the child or staff member usually has a cough, it may be worse than usual) and/or*
- *fever (temperature of 37.8°C or higher) – this means hot to touch on the chest or back (it is not necessary to measure temperature)*
- *Loss of or change in, normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia) – this means the child or staff member has noticed they cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal.*

13 .What happens if my child develops COVID symptoms in school?

If a pupil displays symptoms they will not be permitted to remain in school. The pupil will be taken to the KS2 outdoor Quiet Area (which is sealed off) and where there is PPE. The

supervising adult will put on PPE as appropriate, if they cannot keep a 2m distance or if they do not feel comfortable without.

You will be contacted to collect your child, who will be taken to entrance via outside of school to meet you. **As stated above, the child and all the members of the child's household must self-isolate. A test must be arranged for the child and any other household member with symptoms.**

We have to be quite 'black and white' about this. We know that at this time of year children will get non-COVID related coughs and temperatures as a matter of course, but as you will appreciate, we cannot take any chances in this current and very dangerous phase of the pandemic.

14 What happens following a negative test result?

School asks parents and staff to inform us immediately of the results of a test. If the test gives a negative result, <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing-and-tracing/what-your-test-result-means/>. Children do not need to self-isolate and can return to school as soon as possible if the test is negative, as long as:

- Everyone they live with who has symptoms tests negative
- everyone in support bubble (see guidance for definition) who has symptoms tests negative
- they were not told to self-isolate for 10 days by NHS Test and Trace – if you were, see what to do if you've been told you've been in contact with someone who has coronavirus
- they feel well – if they feel unwell, they must stay at home until they're feeling better
- If they have diarrhoea or you're being sick, stay at home until 48 hours after they've stopped.

15 What happens if there is a positive test result?

Parents/ carers must:

- i. provide details of anyone they or their child have been in close contact with if they were to test positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) or if asked by NHS Test and Trace.
- ii. self-isolate if they or their child have been in close contact with someone who tests positive for coronavirus (COVID-19)
- iii. if they or their child tests positive, should follow *the 'stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection'* and must continue to self-isolate for at least 10 days from the onset of their symptoms and the child return to school only if they do not have symptoms other than cough or loss of sense of smell/taste. 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. Other members of their household should continue self-isolating for the full 10 days.

- iv. The confirmed case must also self-isolate for 10 days after the test day if they are asymptomatic.

The INFECTIOUS PERIOD IS FROM 48 hours BEFORE ONSET OF SYMPTOMS (or the time of test if they don't have symptoms) UNTIL 10 DAYS AFTER SYMPTOMS STARTED

16. What will school do if there is a positive test for COVID-19 for someone who has attended school?

- a) School will follow the advice in the PHE NW COVID-19 Resource Pack for Schools.
 - b) School will notify the local authority
 - c) School must send home those people who have been in close contact with the person who has tested positive, advising them to self-isolate for 10 days since they were last in close contact with that person when they were infectious.
- **In school, close/direct contact is considered to be:**
 - being coughed on, or
 - having a face-to-face conversation within 1 metre, or
 - having unprotected skin-to-skin physical contact, or
 - travel in a small vehicle with the case, or
 - any contact within 1 metre for 1 minute or longer without face-to-face contact
 - extended close contact (between 1 and 2 metres for more than 15 minutes) with a case
- d) School will not share the names or details of people with coronavirus (COVID-19) unless essential to protect others.
 - e) Household members of those contacts who are sent home do not need to self-isolate themselves unless the child who is self-isolating subsequently develops symptoms.

17. What happens if there are multiple confirmed cases and possible outbreaks?

- a) We will act as we would in point 16. We will inform the local authority promptly who will investigate and advise us on appropriate action.
- b) In some cases, health protection teams may recommend that a larger number of other pupils self-isolate at home as a precautionary measure – perhaps the whole site or year group. School closure based on cases within the school will not generally be necessary, and will not be considered except on the advice of health protection teams.

18. What will happen to my child's education if they need to self-isolate either as a result of any of the reasons given above?

We have made plans to continue your child's education if they are required to self-isolate. Obviously, your child is poorly we would not expect them to complete work.

Best wishes,

Patrick Smyth