

02nd January 2021

Returning to School from January 5th 2021

Dear Families,

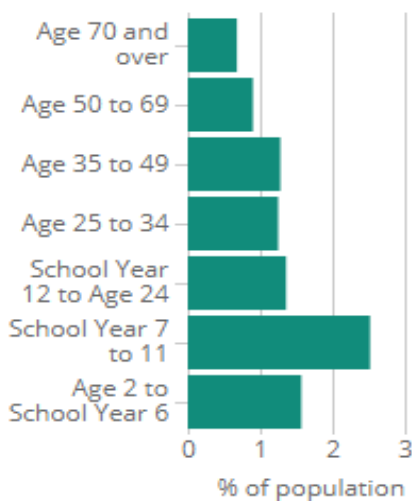
Firstly, I want to wish all our families a Happy New Year. We hope that you have managed to have a safe and happy festive holiday. We return to school caught between the optimism of the vaccine roll out for Covid-19 and the concern caused by the increased rates of transmission of Covid-19 across the country. There is now a general acceptance that the increase in Covid-19 rates is related to four key factors. They are:

- Improved detection of the virus due to mass testing.
- Increased interaction amongst people due to Christmas contact and the relaxed tier approach.
- Impact of cold weather and winter on the virus.
- Change in behaviour of the virus related to new and emerging strains of Covid-19.

This increase has affected all age groups including children of primary school age. Charts below from Office for National statistics show change in primary aged **children but highlight that children remain at very low risk**. Risk is clearly about limiting transmission within our community and safeguarding people vulnerable to Covid-19.

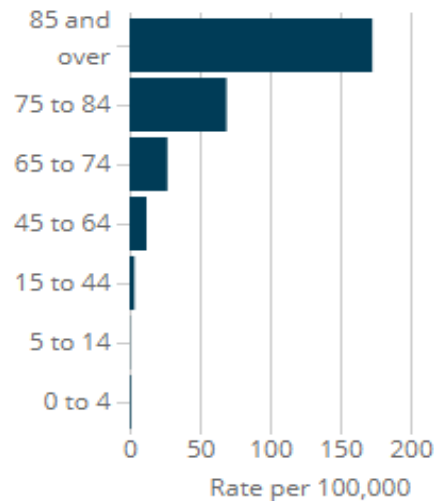
Infections

Estimated percentage of the population testing positive for the coronavirus (COVID-19) on nose and throat swabs, week ending 12 Dec



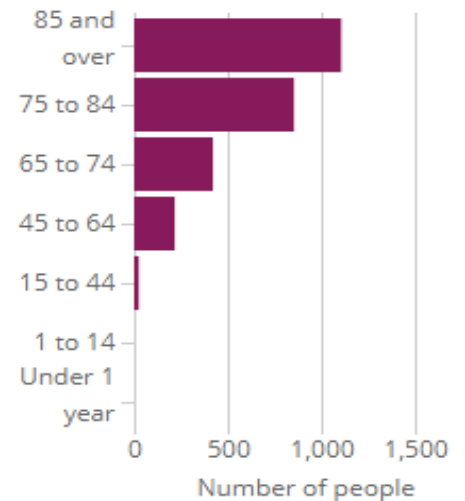
Hospital admissions

Overall COVID-19 positive hospital admission rates per 100,000, week ending 13 Dec



Deaths

Number of deaths involving the coronavirus (COVID-19) by age group, England, registered week ending 4 Dec



For our school, there are no changes to our safety plan but I will be asking all staff and families to ensure that we refocus on the rigour of the safety measures and ask everybody to support our efforts to reduce transmission. **If we do this, we can keep our school community safe.**

We know that it is crucial that we keep our children in school for their well-being, mental health and to safeguard their futures. We will only continue to support our school being open if we are confident that we can do this effectively and safely.

Last term we have 4 children test positive. For three of those cases we traced the transmission back to the family home. No cases resulted in transmission within our school. We believe that is a direct consequence of the detailed safety measures that we have deployed in school. We will continue to apply the 'virus busters' approach that has helped our children understand three simple steps for safety.

Children, Parents and Staff @



St George's
Primary School

Are Virus Busters



Three important messages are:

1. Stay Clean. We wash our hands regularly and use the hand sanitisers provided.

2. Be Hygienic

- put tissues in bin
- keep hands off each other and your face
- cough into sleeve or tissue etc.

3. Keep a Safe Distance. Viruses travel. We can stop them moving by keeping a safe distance.

Our children have responded well to these measures and ensured that our school has remained a safe, secure and happy place to learn.

We need your support to make this plan work. Below, we are revisiting some of our key messages that we have shared last term. Nothing below is new information but we need your help.

Adults Take Steps to Limit Transmission of Covid-19

We want to thank the majority of families who have supported us in making our community safe. Every day we are managing around 900 children for drop off and collection. To do this safely we need to ensure that we minimise risk of adult infection by:

- 1 adult per child to limit crowd size.
- Adults maintaining 1m+ social distancing.
- Self-isolating if you are symptomatic or asked to because of test and trace (see below).
- Adults wearing masks in crowded spaces.

We are aware that not everybody views these measures as necessary. However, we are asking you to support these to maintain the confidence of all our community and avoid the rising threat Covid-19 infections. They are simple requests and supporting them will be appreciated by adults who may feel at risk.

At Lower Site this is an increased problem due to the complexity of being a huge school with small playground space and limited entrance and exit points. Whilst road closure has helped us, it does mean that some families can be waiting for over 20 minutes to drop their children off. We are working really hard every day to keep this time to a minimum.



Symptom Aware and Testing

Common colds, sore throats, runny noses and other symptoms are normal over the winter. However, we all need to be vigilant to Covid-19 symptoms. Symptoms for Covid-19 testing remain:

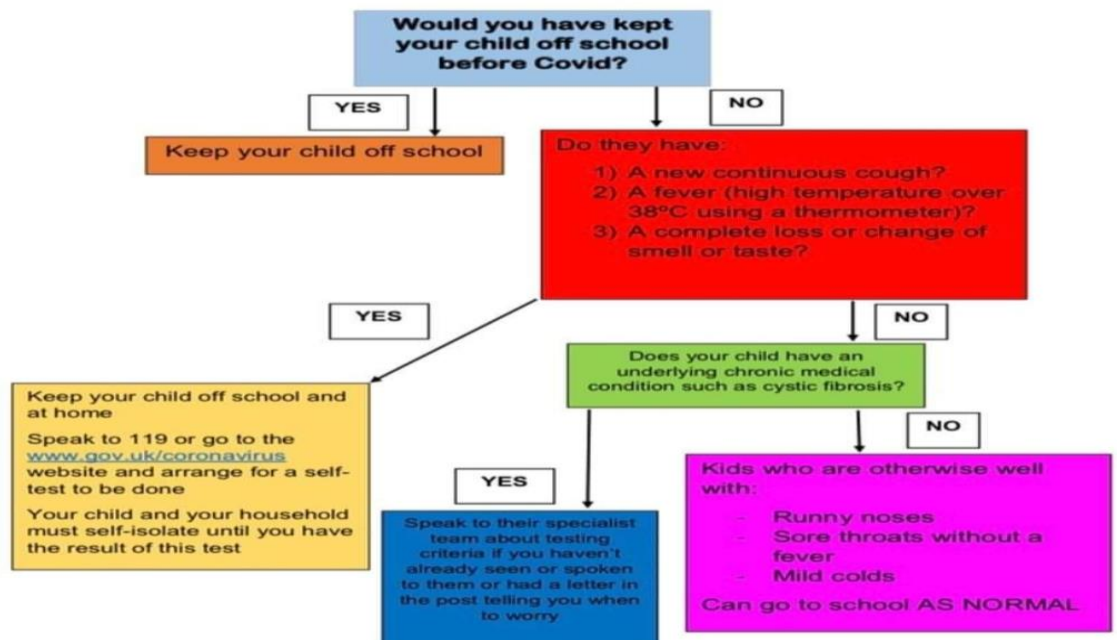
- High temperature and fever.
- New and continuous cough.
- Loss of taste or smell.

If anybody in your house is symptomatic, please get tested so we can all make informed decisions about whether your child should be in school or not. Testing is now quick and easy to access. We all need to see testing as a measure that we use when it is needed and something that helps us manage our lives normally.



My Child Is Unwell. What Do I Do?

As stated earlier, children continue to get routine illnesses. That is normal. Flowchart from Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health will help. If you are unsure, please call us.



Closing Bubbles and Learning from Home

If we have to manage a positive test in school, we will inform parents and work with public health to look at the need for self-isolation in groups and classes. Parents should not panic about tests in the community or listen to misleading rumours. We will keep you informed if anything impacts on the safety of our school. We will quickly set up remote learning through our digital platforms that your child is already using. These are:

- EYFS: ILD Platform
- Years 1 and 2: See-Saw
- Years 3 to 6: Google Classroom

Self-isolation following a test can last up to 10 days. We will continue to manage learning throughout any closure.

Our staff members will also face having to manage isolation due to impact of Covid-19 on their family or circumstances in their child's school. There will be occasions when we need to make staffing changes because of Covid-19. We will always write to you about these if they are going to have a long term impact.

What Happens If We Have to Self-Isolate?

Wait for test results and follow government rules on self-isolation. You must self-isolate if:

- you have any symptoms of coronavirus (a high temperature, a new, continuous cough or a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste)
- you've tested positive for coronavirus – this means you have coronavirus
- you live with someone who has symptoms or tested positive
- someone in your support bubble has symptoms or tested positive
- you're told to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace
- you arrive in the UK from a country with a high coronavirus risk – see GOV.UK: how to self-isolate when you travel to the UK

You don't need to self-isolate for any other reason. If you are unsure, please call or email school.

If your child has to self-isolate:

- Call or e-mail us, so we know what is happening and can be supportive.
- We have set up a weekly learning programme on the school website with our partners at Broad Oak Academy: <https://classroom.thenational.academy/schedule-by-year>

We are expecting the next three months to be turbulent. We envisage:

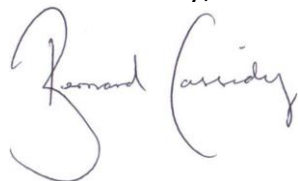
- Further risk of national or local lockdowns
- More classes being isolated and working remotely to help us minimise risk of Covid-19 transmission.
- More disruption to our staff team due to Covid-19.

There may also be changes in safety plan following new advice from Department of Health or Education. We envisage this as one 'final push' to get through this pandemic and will need to trust and support each other to ensure that we remain strong as a school community and work together in the best interests of our children.

Too often in this country, messages about mask wearing, PPE or Covid-19 safety are politicised. Our appeal is a very simple one; we want everybody to their bit to help. Every request is simply made in the interests of our children's education.

Staff team and I are looking forward to having your children back at school on Tuesday. Our staff team continue to put themselves in work as front line key workers. Their confidence in work is reliant on our safety plan and your support. We know that together we can get through this in the best interests of our children.

Yours sincerely,



Mr Bernard Cassidy
Head Teacher