



Shanklea Primary School

Headteacher – Mrs Helen Brown
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Nairn Road, Parkside Chase, Cramlington, Northumberland NE23 1RQ

Friday 18th September 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

Important Information

Following confirmation of a member of the Nursery team testing positive for Covid-19 this week, I am sure you will not be surprised to hear that a considerable amount of our work and attention this week has focused on the issue of Covid-19 and testing. Thankfully, Public Health England (PHE) colleagues were able to provide school leaders with clear and timely advice and confirmed that the case on our site was “managed exceptionally well.”

We have now been informed of a further positive test within the Nursery cohort and a member of Key Stage 1 staff today (Friday).

When a positive case is confirmed, the school must identify all the 'close contacts' of that person. There are three categories of close contact

- 1) Direct face to face contact for any length of time
- 2) Within 1m for 1 minute or more
- 3) Within 2m for 15 minutes or more.

Identified close contacts must self-isolate for 14 days.

As a result of our investigations, and rigorous application of the PHE guidelines **ALL** Nursery children and staff need to self-isolate for a period of 14 days from when they last attended the setting.

Children who attend **Shanklea Squirrels** are NOT required to self-isolate as the setting has only had to close due to staff shortages and safety measures.

Families of children, (including Years 1 and 2), who have had close contact with someone who has tested positive have been sent letters advising them of their need to self-isolate. It is very important that those children do not come onto site (or indeed anywhere else outside the home) until the two weeks isolation has ended.

Staff will be in contact to arrange remote learning with children.

Overall, the control measures in school are well established and are helping to keep pupils and staff safe. Social distancing, wherever possible, continues to be vital at all times, including between staff.

The bubble system is working well and is under constant review. Methods for keeping bubbles separate, even outdoors at break times, have been revised to minimise close contact as much as possible.

We are giving further consideration to identifying and minimising each individual's 'close contacts' to



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minimise the disruption to learning and to home lives that positive Covid-19 test results can bring.

Remember prevention is the best:

- 1) We will aim to minimise contact with individuals who are unwell by ensuring that those who have coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms, or who have someone in their household who does, do not attend school
- 2) We will ask children to clean hands thoroughly more often than usual
- 3) We will ensure good respiratory hygiene by promoting the **'catch it, bin it, kill it'** approach
- 4) We have introduced enhanced cleaning, including cleaning frequently touched surfaces often, using standard products such as detergents and bleach
- 5) We will minimise contact between individuals and maintain social distancing wherever possible
- 6) Where necessary, we will wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE)

Face Masks

Public Health England does not (based on current evidence) recommend the use of face coverings in schools. This evidence will be kept under review. They are not required in schools as pupils and staff are mixing in consistent groups, and because misuse may inadvertently increase the risk of transmission. There may also be negative effects on communication and thus education.

If you still want your child to wear a mask you must instruct them not to touch the front of their face covering during use or when removing them. They must wash their hands immediately on arrival (as is the case for all pupils), 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 heading to their classroom.

Clubs and Assemblies

We will not be running any communal assemblies and children will continue to eat lunch in their classroom in order to minimise contact across groups. We will not be offering any extra-curricular after school clubs initially.

Attendance

We expect students to aim for 97% attendance (or no more than five days of absence in the academic year). Regular attendance means students have a much better chance of making good academic progress. There may however be statutory reasons or exceptional circumstances where students are not able to attend and we have outlined these below to help:



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What should you do if...	
Your child has Coronavirus symptoms.*	<ul style="list-style-type: none">-Child should not come to school-Self-isolate-Parent please contact school (daily)-Arrange a test for the child and inform school of the result The Coronavirus test result comes back negative.
Your child tests positive for Coronavirus.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">-Do not come to school-Self-isolate (for at least 10 days from onset of symptoms* as per government guidelines)-Contact school (daily) Child feels better (after 10 days). Guidelines state children can return to school even if they still have a cough or loss of sense of taste/smell as these symptoms can last for several weeks even after the infection is gone.
Person in the same home has Coronavirus symptoms.*	<ul style="list-style-type: none">-Child should not come to school-Self-isolate-Parent please contact school (daily)-Member of the household should get a test and inform school of the result The household member's test result for Coronavirus is negative.
Person in the same home tests positive for Coronavirus	<ul style="list-style-type: none">-Child should not come to school-Parent please contact school (daily)-Self-isolate (for 14 days) After 14 days of self-isolation.
NHS Test and Trace have identified my child as a close contact of someone who has symptoms or confirmed Coronavirus	<ul style="list-style-type: none">-Child should not come to school-Parent please contact school (daily)-Self-isolate (for 14 days)



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Child required to self-isolate as part of a period of quarantine following overseas	<ul style="list-style-type: none">-Avoid taking holidays in term time-Refer to FCO guidance if booking travel-Inform school in advance of any intent to travel
If returning from a country where quarantine is needed:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">-Child should not come to school-Parent please contact school (daily)-Self-isolate (for 14 days) After 14 days of quarantine
Child is extremely clinically vulnerable (in a future local lockdown scenario only). Received government letter informing them they are required to shield	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Child should not come to school-Parent please contact school (daily).-Share government letter with school-Shield until you are informed that shielding is paused again and restrictions are removed. School contact you to inform you that restrictions have been removed and child can return to school.

*Symptoms refer to those defined by Public Health England guidance as follows:

- a high temperature – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature)
- a new, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual)
- a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste – this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal

Undoubtedly, the mental health and wellbeing of our students and families has been affected in different ways this year, with many facing ongoing tough times and uncertainty. Nationally, anxiety and depression have markedly increased; with feelings of panic, stress, fear and fatigue being prevalent among young people faced with uncertainty and lack of control.

In these changing times, practical strategies for understanding, promoting, and supporting the mental health and wellbeing of young people have never been more important. Therefore, it is important that children are encouraged and supported to look after their mental health every day too. Below are some suggestions for how you can help your child do this and what you can do when things get tough and if you're worried about your child's mental health.



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We all have mental health, just as we all have physical health. Being mentally healthy means that we feel good about ourselves, make and keep positive relationships with others and can feel and manage the full range of emotions.

These can range from happiness, excitement and curiosity through to less comfortable feelings such as anger, fear or sadness.

Good mental health allows us to cope with life's ups and downs, to feel in control of our lives and to ask for help from others when we need support.

Top tips for how you can support your child's mental health

Often, life events that are outside our control can damage our mental health, and this is made worse if we feel powerless to do anything about them.

One of the ways we can re-gain a sense of control and nourish our mental health is to **remember 'the five ways to wellbeing'** which have been found in research to improve mental wellbeing in children and adults.

Below are some ideas for how you can support your child, as well as some suggestions for where you can get further information.

Our everyday habits are important to our mental health, just as they are to our physical health. Here are a few suggestions to help your child develop good habits.

Day to day

- Think about the **five ways to wellbeing**
- Are there things you can encourage them to do, or do together, each day?
- Talk openly about mental health
- Just as you might encourage them to eat fruit and veg to keep their bodies healthy (and model this behaviour yourself), talk openly about, for example, staying connected with others or being physically active in order to take care of our minds.
- Model good habits
- Children often learn from copying what they see around them. If you are taking care of your own mental health, it's easier for them to see what good habits look like.
- Think about phone usage – both theirs and yours
- We don't fully understand the impact of social media on our mental health but using phones and laptops can impact on our sleep, which is important to our mental health.



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- We're also more likely to listen to one another if we're not distracted by technology.
- Notice any changes in your child's behaviour.
- Young people tell us how they're feeling in many ways, not always verbally.
- Learning what is normal for your child makes it easier to notice when things change, and if this might be a sign that they're struggling.

When times get tough

Sometimes you might worry about your child's mental health. While you might need to speak to a member of school staff or your GP for advice, here are a few things you can do if you're worried.

- Let your child know that you're concerned
- Explain why you feel that way, for example if you've noticed they haven't been interested in activities they usually enjoy.
- Use activities that you do together to have conversations about how they are doing
- Talking whilst doing something together, side-by-side, such as cooking, can help them share their feelings more easily than a face-to-face conversation.
- Let them know that struggling sometimes is normal and nothing to be ashamed of
- Tell them about the mental health spectrum and that we all, including you, go up and down the scale throughout our lives. Reassure them that talking about difficult feelings with the people we trust is a brave thing to do.
- Listen and empathise
- Often the first step to feeling better is feeling connected and knowing that someone is alongside you.
- Empathy helps young people (and adults) connect. Empathy involves acknowledging what your child is feeling, trying to understand things from their point of view and avoiding judgement. Empathy is usually more helpful than giving advice or trying to 'fix' their problem.

If you're still worried

- Talk to a trusted member of school staff or your GP who can point you towards sources of help.

Help and further information

The resources below have more about mental health and wellbeing:





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- Mumsnet, who provide advice for parents by parents, are supporting our Make it Count campaign and have lots of great advice on parenting on their website.
- MIND have a whole range of information and support information for children and parents on their website:
- Young Minds provide useful information for young people and their parents about mental health, seeking treatment and the mental health system.
- The NHS website is a useful place to find out about all kinds of illnesses, including mental health problems.
- Mind Ed for Families is a website developed by Health Education England and the Department of Education to help families understand and support their children, from parenting tips to getting help in a crisis.
- Headspace has some useful audio and video clips about different conditions and people's experiences, as well as some mindfulness resources.

Stay in touch

Thank you again for all your support during these challenging times. Please be assured that we will do everything possible to ensure the children are safe and supported to achieve their full potential.

Kind regards,

Mrs H Brown
Head Teacher