



Layton Primary School

Headteacher: Mr Jonathan Clucas

17/06/21

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope this letter finds you and your families well. Firstly, the school and all the staff wish to send their best wishes to all those currently suffering from COVID-19, children and adults; we wish you all a speedy recovery.

We are aware that following the recent surge in cases, there is much information in the public domain regarding school processes and procedures following identification of positive cases in school. The school is also aware of speculation on social media. Speculation is not necessarily helpful in the circumstances to either parents or the school. Social media is not an official source of communication and inaccurate rumours can spread and escalate. Therefore, if you do have queries, I would be most grateful if you could refer to the school website or the contents of this letter.

I have written to all parents on previous occasions regarding the multiple extra arrangements currently in operation in school to mitigate risk of infection. However, following the recent relaxing of restrictions, many schools have seen a surge in cases of COVID. At the current time, we are making all decisions regarding school organisation in consultation with public health officials in what is a rapidly evolving situation. I remain in regular contact with them; their team is under the direction of Arif Rajpura, Director of Public Health for Blackpool.

The risk assessment for the school is available on the school website. This is available for all parents to read if they wish. This risk assessment details how the school responds in all circumstances relating to COVID. Please make yourself aware of it.

The risk assessment has been agreed with Governors, Public Health England, with Health and Safety at Blackpool Council, with the Local Education officials and with the major teaching unions. It is robust and rigorous. Prior to this week, the risk assessment had ensured the school has been COVID free for five months. After the recent rise in cases in school and following the wider the opening of society, it will be reviewed and revised, and we will work with others to ensure it remains as robust as it can be. No risk assessment can eliminate all risk; we aim to mitigate that risk. Given the greater transmissibility of the Delta variant, this is a difficult task.

When school is notified of a positive case, there exists a protocol which has been drawn up in consultation with Public Health England.

- In a short period of time, school has to identify close contacts, often within an hour; we are a large school. In our risk assessment, because of our size, our bubble includes all children and permanent staff within that year group.
- Next identified are contacts of contacts, staff or children who may have been within the year group but have had no direct contact with the person identified as a positive case, perhaps because they may have been in another class within the year group for a limited period of time. Public Health England advice is that contacts of contacts do not need to isolate.





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The school has received several queries around which staff are isolating and which are not. The advice on this is clear and it has been available on the Public Health England website for several months, and is contained within the DfE guidance. It is those who may have had close contact, without face coverings for 1 minute or more, or with a face covering within 2 metres for 15 minutes. It is not always possible to identify which children have had this contact; this is why we have taken the decision to close bubbles as year groups. It is usually possible to identify which adults have. Decisions are based on this information; it is the process by which we have operated since the onset of the pandemic.

Bubbles exist in order that each time a case is identified, clear decisions can be made. Since January 2021, DfE guidance has made provision for staff to cross bubbles. The phrase from the DfE guidance is below:-

“All teachers and other staff can operate across different classes and year groups to facilitate the delivery of the timetable and specialist provision.”

There are a small number occasions where staff do need to cross bubbles to ensure children have access to the curriculum and to ensure health and safety standards are met. This week has been one such occasion. Since the start of the pandemic, these occasions have been limited to when absolutely necessary; it has not been a routine occurrence; therefore, any queries relating to this should refer to the DfE guidance.

In wider society, gatherings of more than 30 people outside are currently not allowed. The maximum number inside is currently six. Cases of COVID in Blackpool are up by 50% compared with last week. Preston Hospital cases have doubled daily within the last week. Other Hospitals in the North west are running short of critical care beds. There are currently several cases in our school, and cases of COVID are rising in many educational settings; children are not vaccinated and as society opens, the risk of spread increases amongst the younger age groups. Decisions are made with public health advice with this information in mind. As the information changes, so do the decisions. It is therefore necessary, at times to make decisions which cause disappointment, such as the need to hold Sports Day without spectators. We are aware this is disappointing for you; it is disappointing for us also. These decisions are made with the safety of our children and school community in mind and are necessary in the current circumstances.

Given the current restriction on numbers of people allowed to gather (30 outside, 6 inside), we currently have 620 children, 80 staff and over 600 parents on site each and every day. This is equivalent to a large gathering. As such, it is necessary to take additional precautions. I understand some parents may feel as though masks outside are not necessary; that guidance refers to gatherings under 30, rather than the numbers on site we cater for daily. Therefore, face coverings are now compulsory on school site. It is worth remembering that within the country, 10 million adults are still to be vaccinated.

School buildings are not designed to mitigate infection in a pandemic; we are taking every possible precaution based on the relevant public health guidelines, taking the right advice and making the best decisions we are able to in the circumstances, in order to ensure the smooth running of the school. This is a difficult time for our school community and we will need to be vigilant as restrictions are eased further, particularly with the Delta variant.





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Can I thank you for your understanding and co-operation at this time, and remind parents that all queries should be directed to the school. If you wish to raise a complaint, there are processes for doing so and we will deal with all complaints received in the proper manner and according to policy.

Once again, can I remind parents to adhere to the current government guidelines regarding self-isolation, should your child be in Year 2 or Year 5, and limiting of social contacts. Blackpool and the North West are identified as surge areas, where the virus is growing. All of us in our school community need to remain vigilant and support each other to remain safe.

Can I thank you for your continued support, especially the messages of support which school have received over the past week.

Yours sincerely,

Jonathan Clucas

Head teacher

