

PUBLIC HEALTH DIRECTORATE

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Please ask for: Ruth Tennant

Date: 9th June 2020

Dear Parent/ Carer

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter.

With your head-teacher, we are working hard to do what we can to support the borough's children back to school and to protect their health and the health of all the staff in our schools. This is an anxious time for everyone and as a parent; everyone wants what is best for the physical and mental health of their child and their family. We know that we have seen a fall in COVID cases and lock-down has been a big part of this. We also know that some families and children have found lockdown very difficult to cope with. So the next stage is how we can open things up gradually and sensibly so that we don't see cases start to rise again. We are monitoring this very carefully.

The plans that our schools have put in place will help support children back into school gradually with the right steps in place to reduce the risks of COVID as far as we can. This includes practical steps such as keeping the number of children down at first, continuing with hand washing and making sure that any children who are ill do not come into school.

Now schools are reopening, they will look slightly different and the way that pupils attend is likely to be different to how things worked before. Class sizes will be small (15 pupils or less), schools will be working to where possible implement social distancing. This means lessons may run differently, break times and lunch times may be staggered, school start and finish times may be different. This will not be a one size fits all approach but will be tailored to your child's school. Inside the classroom pupils will form a 'social bubble' – spending time with the same group of children during lessons, break and lunch and working where possible with the same members of teaching staff. This is to reduce the risk of the virus spreading and protect pupils and staff. This is a new virus and doctors and scientists are learning more about it all the time. We are following the rest of the world in gradually reopening schools in phases and learning from the experiences of places that have already opened up their primary schools.

What we do know from the UK and lots of other countries is that children and young people who have Covid-19 usually have a mild to moderate illness and that many may show very few signs of being ill. During the first peak of this pandemic, very few children across the whole of the West

Page 2 of 2

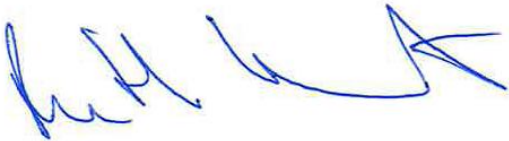
Midlands have need medical attention for COVID in hospital and those that have, have often had other major health conditions. Special arrangements will be made for any children who have health conditions which make them more at risk.

There are a number of things you can do as well:

- Regular handwashing with soap and hot water for at least 20 seconds
- If you, your child or someone in your house is unwell and you think it may be COVID-19 go to [nhs.uk/coronavirus](https://www.nhs.uk/coronavirus) or call 119 and follow the instructions.
- Stick with the social distancing rules carefully

We will continue to make sure that the plans schools have in place change when they need to and that we manage this as safely and sensitively as we can and would like to thank you for everything you are doing.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Ruth Tennant', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Ruth Tennant
Director of Public Health