

4th November 2020

Dear All,

I am afraid we find ourselves having to send another letter to you regarding COVID related arrangements. I want to thank you most sincerely for your patience with all the information we are sending to you. I know that at times there has been a lot and you've been most understanding. We are really trying to keep this to a minimum, but as you can imagine, there is a lot to keep you informed about. This letter contains vital information about how we will manage any rise in infections in our schools, so it's vital that you read through to the end so that you understand what we are doing and the reasons for doing so.

We enter a lock down situation because infection rates are rising. Both BMS and BFS are planning our response in case this should have a direct impact on our schools. Whilst we have been extremely lucky so far, we have to assume that at some stage, isolation periods and quarantine due to any close contacts being infected or our staff catching the virus, may mean that we simply don't have enough staff to continue teaching safely.

We have reviewed staffing levels and modelled how we would work should we lose staff. It has become clear that if we have less than 70% of staff, we will not be able to function safely. We are very keen not to close – we know the pressures that puts on families and we really don't want to disturb the learning further for the children and so are aiming to stay at least partially open as much as we can.

We are committed to using our own staff to keep school running. We will not use supply staff as they work in multiple schools and we could run the risk of them bringing the virus into schools.

To that end we will have to put a rota system in place so that we can keep disruption to a minimum and no single year group is adversely affected – we want school to stay open for as long as possible for as many children as possible.

In this rota system **we will not be open to the children in the classes stated**, regardless of their status as key worker or vulnerable children. To have either of these children's groups in would compromise the integrity of the bubble system. To cross contaminate the bubbles could lead to the whole school being closed to everyone and that is something we are really trying to avoid.

Those children not in school will be provided with remote learning activities via the CATlive provision. Their work should be brought into school with them when they return so that the teacher can provide feedback and understand what your child has covered whilst they've been at home.

We will try our absolute best to give you as much notice as possible if we needed to implement this plan but we may not always be able to. In letting you know our plans now, we are hoping this "heads up" will make it easier for you if/when we do need to make changes and perhaps enable you to make arrangements with your employers.

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Plan A - If we get below 70% staffing

If we get below 70% staffing in a key stage at BMS then THAT key stage will go to Plan A - not necessarily the whole school. Again, working on the principle that we want as many children as possible in school for as long as possible, we would try to keep key stages together.

We would need to implement a rota system in which pupils would access school 4 days a week. The following classes will need to be AT HOME on the following days:

Day of Week	Class to stay at home			
Monday	5V	6V	7V	8V
Tuesday	5W	6W	7W	8W
Wednesday	5X	6X	7X	8X
Thursday	5Y	6Y	7Y	8Y
Friday	5Z	6Z	7Z	8Z

We do not want to close year groups for more than a day at a time as that would lead to significant amounts of time where children will not be with a teacher. Already we are finding that some youngsters are missing significant periods of time in school due to isolation or quarantining. We are desperate to keep that to a minimum.

By working this way, we could ensure there were enough staff to cover in other classes if required. We appreciate that those families with children in multiple year groups may find this difficult but we simply cannot mix bubbles or accommodate “swaps” as this would compromise the integrity of the bubbles.

Plan B - If we get below 55% staffing

As you can imagine, we have to plan for what we may do if we get below 55% staffing capacity – this is a real possibility! If this was the case, we would need to implement a rota system in which pupils will access school 3 days a week. The following classes will need to be AT HOME on the following days:

Day of the Week	Classes to stay at home			
Monday	5V	6V	7V	8V
	5W	6W	7W	8W
Tuesday	5V	6V	7V	8V
	5W	6W	7W	8W
Wednesday	5X	6X	7X	8X
	5Z	6Z	7Z	8Z
Thursday	5X	6X	7X	8X
	5Y	6Y	7Y	8Y
Friday	5Y	6Y	7Y	8Y
	5Z	6Z	7Z	8Z

We will provide further information should we need to activate these arrangements and we are under no illusion about the disruption these may cause. We promise we will do all we can to avoid using them but in order to do so, it is vital that you follow all the guidance we’ve given you.

If your child has any symptoms you must not send your child in to school. Get a test. Keep them off school until the results are received.

If you or **any member of your household is symptomatic the whole household has to isolate** until test results are received for the symptomatic person.

If a **member of your household or a close contact tests positive you need to remain at home for 14 days** – even if you have a subsequent test and it comes back negative

Failure to comply with this guidance puts others at risk and could lead to school having to close. This would put huge pressure on families at a time when everyone will need each other's support.

In addition to this we need to remember to remain vigilant and ensure that the HANDS – FACE – SPACE message is adhered to. We will continue to remind the staff and pupils, but would be grateful for your support in this area too.

Clearly, given how lucky we've been, you've been doing all you can and we are very grateful. By taking care of yourselves, you're taking care of us all – thank you!!!

As ever, thank you for your support, understanding and patience.

Yours sincerely,



Mrs D Wilks
Executive Headteacher