



Leader's Office

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Dear Parents & Carers,

Return to school September 2020

We hope that this letter finds you and your family well. We recognise that this has been a very difficult and challenging time for everyone, and we know that many families have been greatly impacted by the coronavirus situation, socially, emotionally and economically. Our thoughts go out to each and every one of you.

Firstly, we would like to thank you for your commitment to supporting your children's education at home over the last few months. We know that this hasn't been easy. We are delighted that so many of our primary-aged children and some of our young people in Years 10 and 12 have been able to return to school in the last few weeks but we recognise the huge disruption to learning and social interaction that has affected the vast majority of our children. We now want to ensure that all parents and carers know what to expect following the government's announcement that all children are expected to return to school in September.

We want all our families to recognise that returning to school is now vital for children and young people's education and wellbeing. The longer children and young people spend out of an education setting, the greater the impact will be across all areas of their learning and development.

We appreciate that many parents will still be anxious about coronavirus and we need to work together to reduce the risk of further infection. We ask that you continue to follow [government guidance](#) if you, or a household family member display any symptoms of coronavirus: a high temperature, a new, continuous cough or a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste. Please access testing [online](#) or by calling 119 as soon as symptoms develop. If you are worried about your symptoms or if you are unsure of what to do, please call 111.

We know that the number of coronavirus cases has decreased and the risk to children and young people of becoming severely ill from coronavirus is very low. The NHS Test and Trace system is up and running to help identify any new cases quickly and protect families.

We want to provide all our families with key information to support your understanding of the expectations and measures being taken by schools in preparation for the Autumn term. The information below is a summary of the latest guidance from the Department for Education and is in line with national expectations.

Attendance

- On 2nd July, new guidance was published to announce that, from September 2020, all children and young people are expected to attend school unless exceptional circumstances apply.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools>
- Your child's school will soon be communicating arrangements for the start of the Autumn term. Children may be asked to start and finish school at different times in the morning and afternoon to help keep groups of children apart. It is very important that you ensure that your child arrives and leaves at the designated time to help support your school's COVID risk management plans.

Health and safety

- All schools will have clear systems to prevent children with symptoms and also staff from coming into school. If your child or a household member develops symptoms of coronavirus, or if a household member of your family has been contacted through the NHS Test and Trace Process and is asked to self-isolate, please follow the guidance attached to this letter. It is important that you follow this guidance to help keep everyone in the school and in the community safe.
- Schools will be implementing infection control measures to reduce the risk of the virus spreading. These include frequent handwashing, promoting good respiratory hygiene and more frequent cleaning.
- Schools will aim to reduce the amount of contact between different groups of pupils and between adults. Children will be in groups known as 'bubbles' to avoid mixing with other groups of children where possible. Your child's school will set out the measures they are able to take, and the changes needed for these to operate successfully.
- Schools will respond promptly to a confirmed case of coronavirus in the school, working closely with Public Health England to conduct a risk assessment.

Learning in school

- Schools have been asked to identify the gaps in learning created by pupils being out of school and to plan lessons accordingly. It is expected that teachers and support staff will plan activities and learning based on children's starting points and that they will reinforce the skills of reading and social interaction, particularly for younger children.
- Schools may need to make adjustments in the planned curriculum for the Autumn term but all schools are asked to ensure that pupils have access to the broad and balanced curriculum.
- Older pupils will continue to study for their examinations in 2021 but these may be adapted to account for lost curriculum time. Further details will be published shortly.
- Younger pupils will continue to be assessed through statutory tests and teacher assessment.
- Schools will continue to provide an inclusive education for all children with SEND, making use of resources available in Ealing as well as making any reasonable adjustments to ensure access to the curriculum is supported.
- Adaptations to some subjects including PE, music and drama will be made to support respiratory health. Pupils will not be gathering in very large mixed groups for assemblies and concerts.

Home learning

- All schools have been asked to ensure that they can put in place high quality home learning in the event that schools have to temporarily close in the future or in case a class or year group is asked to stay at home for a short period. The government is expected to announce its expectations for what home learning should look like for younger and older pupils in September.

Transport


- We continue to encourage families and pupils to walk or cycle/scoot to school where this is practical. This is a healthy option and a contribution to protecting our environment.
- Where older pupils need to travel to school by train or by bus, they must wear a protective face covering and dispose or store this safely when they arrive at school. Your child's school will set out any specific expectations about travel for older pupils.

Thank you again for your patience and for your cooperation at this time. I hope that this letter has helped provide the reassurance needed to support your child's return to school in September.

Yours sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Julian Bell in black ink, written in a cursive style.

Councillor Julian Bell
Lead of the Council

Handwritten signature of Yvonne Johnson in black ink, written in a cursive style.

Councillor Yvonne Johnson
Cabinet Member for Schools and Children's Services

Flowchart for parents: what to do if someone has symptoms of COVID-19

Version 1 (07 July 2020)

