

# Mrs Bland's Infant and Nursery School

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Headteacher: Mrs C Nisbet

Deputy Headteacher: Mrs S Williams

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Monday 1<sup>st</sup> November 2021

## Covid-19 Update

Dear Parents/Carers

As you will be aware, Covid-19 infection rates have significantly increased in school-aged children since the start of the academic year. As a result, a high number of West Berkshire schools now meet the Education Contingency Framework's threshold for additional monitoring and support. Although the immediate health risks of Covid-19 infection to children and young people are low, the potential harm to children and young people from missing or disrupted education is significant. The rise in numbers is thought to be where children have been back in school whilst awaiting the results of PCR tests.

In light of this, West Berkshire Council and the Berkshire West Health Protection Board have recently reviewed current guidance to ensure that we are doing everything possible to reduce the risk of transmission within educational settings in the district.

**Should a large number of pupils test positive, bubbles may close and the school/bubble will revert to remote learning. This will be on the advice of Public Health only. In order to avoid this situation, it is vital that we follow these enhanced measures.**

Following this review, we are recommending a number of proposed measures aimed at reducing the risk of Covid-19 transmission within our school. These enhanced measures, over and above current government guidance, when schools return after the October half term break.

The proposed enhanced measures are as follows:

- Use of face coverings in communal areas (unless exempt) for staff and visitors in primary schools.
- Use of face coverings for parents visiting the school site, especially when indoors. Visitors to the school should carry out an LFD before arrival and have the NHS confirmation to show to the school.
- Reduce contact between year groups as far as possible in primary schools (e.g. avoid mixing between year groups, no whole-school assemblies, separate break and lunch times/areas **where possible**). We will be reverting to Year group bubbles until the end of the Autumn term.
- Any child or member of staff who has a household member test positive for Covid-19 should take a **daily lateral flow test for 7 days**, in addition to taking a one-off PCR test. Anyone who is exempt from self-isolation (those aged under 18 or adults who are fully vaccinated) and who tests negative **can continue to attend school during this period of daily lateral flow testing**. The use of LFDs for primary aged children is left to parental discretion and test kits can be accessed via [gov.uk](http://gov.uk) or their local pharmacy.
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- Any child or member of staff who is identified as a close contact of a positive case via NHS Test and Trace should be advised to take a **daily lateral flow test for 7 days**, in addition to taking a one-off PCR test. Anyone who is exempt from self-isolation (those aged under 18 or adults who are fully vaccinated) and who tests negative **can continue to attend school during this period of daily lateral flow testing**.
- Our risk assessment has been reviewed and events planned for this half term will take place in a different format - details to follow.
- In addition to the above, we ask that parents and carers to take regular twice weekly lateral flow tests. These can be ordered through [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) or collected from a local pharmacy.

Vaccination remains an important part of helping to reduce the transmission from Covid-19 and we encourage everyone to attend for their vaccination (1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> dose) if not done so already. Booster doses are now also available for those who at most risk of Covid-19 and who had their 2<sup>nd</sup> dose at least 6 months ago. We appreciate the support from schools in helping support young people aged 12 – 15 years to access their vaccination through the School Aged Immunisation teams.

The recommended enhanced measures are anticipated to remain in place until the end of December 2021, although these will be reviewed in 4-weeks with any decision to amend or remove the measures based on the following: the case rate per 100,000 for school aged children; rate of increase (or decrease) in case rates; vaccination rates in school-aged children; the emergence of any new variants of concern; any adverse outcomes for those with Covid-19, and any other viruses in circulation.

We would like to keep school open and operational and rely on everyone working together to stay at home if unwell and follow the guidance.

I will update you all on how we propose to continue to run events planned for this half term.

Kind regards

*Catherine*

*Mrs Catherine Nisbet*

*Headteacher*

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