

1<sup>st</sup> September, 2020

Dear Parent/Carer,

We are delighted to welcome you back to school now that the prevalence of COVID-19 continues to decrease across the country. As we all know, returning to school is vital for our children's education and wellbeing. Given the improved position, the balance of risk is now overwhelmingly in favour of children returning to school; for the vast majority of children, the benefits of being back in school far outweigh the very low risk currently presented from coronavirus. With this in mind we have updated our Pathfinder Pledges to reassure you of the measures our Pathfinder Schools are taking (see below).

### **School Attendance**

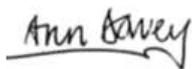
The government have made it clear that school attendance will be mandatory from the beginning of the academic year:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/what-parents-and-carers-need-to-know-about-early-years-providers-schools-and-colleges-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak/what-parents-and-carers-need-to-know-about-early-years-providers-schools-and-colleges-in-the-autumn-term>

Schools are now required to follow up on non-attendance as they did before the pandemic. If you have concerns about your child returning to school, either because you consider they may have other risk factors, or because you are worried about the risks please contact your child's school.

We very much look forward to the academic year ahead and to supporting your child(ren) to continue in their educational journey with us at Pathfinder Schools.

Yours sincerely,



Ann Davey  
Chief Executive

## Returning to school – Pathfinder Schools Pledge

At Pathfinder Schools we put the safety and welfare of our pupils, staff and community at the heart of our decision making.

As our schools re-open, we pledge to:

- Provide an environment which has been risk assessed in full consultation with staff in response to the COVID-19 infection
- Ensure that all staff are fully trained in our new way of working
- Ensure that all pupils are introduced to our new environment and supported to understand the changes and follow the guidelines
- Ensure that our cleaning and hygiene procedures follow government guidance
- Adhere to the government guidance around social distancing rules in school settings as far as is reasonably possible
- Inform you immediately if your child is not following the social distancing rules and ask that you work with us to support your child to follow the rules
- Provide a curriculum that supports your child at this time by addressing their well-being and mental health needs
- Continue to provide your child with access to the curriculum if the whole school or sections of the school have to close again due to increased COVID-19 cases.
- Contact you as soon as possible if your child displays symptoms of COVID-19 and needs to be tested
- Inform you as soon as possible if a member of staff or child in your child's group tests positively for COVID-19 as this will mean the whole group may need to self-isolate for at least 14 days
- Continue our clear and consistent approach to rewards and sanctions for children ensuring the health and safety of our school community is our prime consideration at this time
- Continue to communicate with you through our normal routes whilst avoiding face to face and paper communication in order to limit the spread of the virus
- Update you about relevant and recent Government legislation that applies to our schools

## Returning to school – Pathfinder Schools Parent Pledge

In order to support you, your child, our staff and the wider school community, we request that:

- You will inform the school immediately of any changes to parents/carer and emergency contacts details
- Let the school know if you think your child's mental health has suffered during the school closure period
- Contact the school in the normal way if you are not attending and if you no longer require a place at school
- If your child, or anyone in your household, shows symptoms of COVID-19 do not send them to school, instead go and access a test as a matter of urgency
- If your child shows symptoms of COVID19 whilst at school you collect your child from school immediately get them tested as detailed in the DfE guidance on the next page
- If your child is in close contact with anyone else who has tested positive you ensure that they remain in isolation for 14 days as per the track and trace guidelines
- On your journey to and from school, and when dropping your child off and picking them up, you adhere to the 2 metre social distancing rules and encourage your child/ren to do likewise
- Avoid **close** contact with people other than family members outside school (even if 2 households are meeting in a small group social distancing should still be maintained). This will help to protect your child, your household, school staff and the wider community
- Travel to school by foot if at all possible avoiding parking issues
- Ensure you child wears school uniform wherever possible and that clothes are regularly washed
- Avoid sending medicines to school if at all possible – if this is vital please call the school office
- Ensure only 1 person drops off each pupil and sticks to the allotted timings
- Remind your child about social distancing rules but accept they are difficult to follow and that children may not always do this successfully
- Remind your child to use good respiratory and hand hygiene
- Ensure that your child does not wear a face mask in school
- Do not visit the school, instead call or email if you need to contact us
- Ensure your child only bring the necessary belongings into school (as detailed by schools)
- Discuss the Primary Pupil Pledge with your child to support us to keep our pupils, staff and our community safe

We know that for some children it will be harder to understand the new rules. To ensure that our school community is safe for everyone, there may be occasions where we deem your child's behaviour is unsafe for the health and safety of other children and adults. In these circumstances we will work with you to support your child's behaviour in line with the schools behaviour policy.

## **Department for Education Guidance**

### **What we will do if someone becomes unwell at an educational or childcare setting?**

If anyone in the school becomes unwell with a new and persistent cough or a high temperature, or has a loss of, or change in, their normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia), they must be sent home and advised to follow the guidance:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance>

which sets out that they should self-isolate for at least 10 days and should arrange to have a test to see if they have coronavirus (COVID-19).

PPE will be worn by staff caring for the child while they await collection if a distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained (such as for a very young child or a child with complex needs).

We need to ensure that we have up to date phone numbers and that you are available to pick your child up at short notice should this be necessary.

### **If the test is negative**

If the test is negative and your child feels well and no longer has symptoms similar to coronavirus (COVID-19), they can stop self-isolating and return to school. They could still have another virus, such as a cold or flu – in which case it is still best to avoid contact with other people until they are better. Other members of their household can stop self-isolating.

### **If the test is positive**

If the test is positive, they should follow the above guidance and must continue to self-isolate for at least 10 days from the onset of their symptoms and then return to school only if they do not have symptoms other than cough or loss of sense of smell/taste. This is because a cough or anosmia can last for several weeks once the infection has gone. The 10-day period starts from the day when they first became ill. If they still have a high temperature, they should keep self-isolating until their temperature returns to normal. Other members of their household should continue self-isolating for the full 14 days.

### **What about the rest of the School Community?**

If someone in the school tests positive the school will contact the local health protection team who will work with schools to guide them through the actions they need to take. Based on the advice from the health protection team, schools must send home those people who have been in close contact with the person who has tested positive, advising them to self-isolate for 14 days since they were last in close contact with that person when they were infectious. Close contact means:

- direct close contacts - face to face contact with an infected individual for any length of time, within 1 metre, including being coughed on, a face to face conversation, or unprotected physical contact (skin-to-skin)
- proximity contacts - extended close contact (within 1 to 2 metres for more than 15 minutes) with an infected individual
- travelling in a small vehicle, like a car, with an infected person

The health protection team will provide definitive advice on who must be sent home.

## Pathfinder Schools – Primary Pupil Pledge

We are looking forward to welcoming your child back to school, for some of them this will be the first time they have been in school since March. Before they return we would ask that you talk with them to help them understand or remember the new rules and try to answer any questions they may have. We have highlighted some specific areas that are important for your child to understand – school staff will reinforce these with your children both on their return and on a regular basis.

I will make sure that I keep a safe distance from others on my way to and from school

I know I need to try my very best to keep a safe distance from others and why I have to follow the rules in class and in the playground

I know that it's really important to tell an adult if I feel unwell

I'll make sure I get rid of germs on my hands – using soap and water for 20 second and hand sanitiser

I'll always follow the rules and listen to the staff so that I keep myself and others safe

I will store anything I bring into school where I am asked to, I won't touch anyone else's things

I'll make sure I cough and sneeze into my elbow or tissue (I know all about catch-it-bin it-kill it!)

I know that if I find it hard to follow these rules, I will need to follow the schools behaviour policy, which may mean that I am not working with my friends

I know why I can't play with children from other bubbles in the school, even if they are my friends, I know this may be hard but it will keep everyone safe

I'll only enter and exit the school from the doors that I am allowed to use

I'll only use the equipment provided to me by school and no-one else's

If I feel sad or worried I'll talk to my parents or a teacher

I will stand in the right place on the playground in the morning, at a safe distance from others, and go to my teacher when asked



### **Your Child and Mental Health**

The mental health of our pupils is extremely important, and we will be focussing on this with your children when they return to school.

NHS England has issued advice on what parents should look out for and steps that they can take to look after their child's mental health, based on advice from clinicians and first-hand experience from patients and parents.

Signs that parents should look out for include:

- You might find that your child is more upset or finding it harder to manage their emotions
- They may appear anxious or distressed
- Increasing trouble with sleeping and eating
- Appearing low in mood, withdrawn or tearful
- Reporting worried or negative thoughts about themselves or their future
- For younger children, there may be more bed wetting.

If you are worried about your child's mental health, you can help by:

- Making time to talk to your child
- Allowing your child to talk about their feelings
- Trying to understand their problems and provide reassurance that you have heard them and are there to help
- Helping your child do positive activities
- Supporting them to get back into routine by arriving at school on time and helping with home learning
- Looking after your own mental health

You should contact NHS 111 online or a GP immediately if you notice any physical injuries on a child, such as deep cuts or burns.

If you do have any concerns about any mental health issues that your child has been experiencing, we ask that you make your child's school aware of this. As you will not be able to speak to your child's teacher in the usual way, you can either call the school and make an appointment to speak to the teacher, or email the school directly.

You can find useful resources if you follow the link:

<https://www.minded.org.uk/>