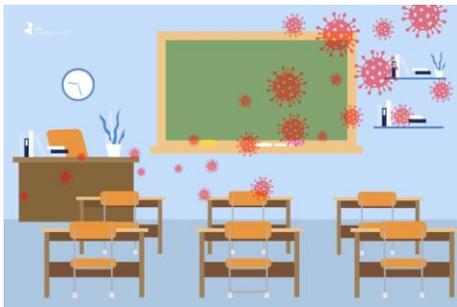


The Two Way Street

Dear Parents/Carers,

We hope all our pupils enjoyed a well-deserved break over half term. After so many months away from school and with new routines to adapt to, we have been so impressed with how they returned to school in September and settled in over the last half term. Our staff has felt very well supported by our families, and we would like to take the opportunity to reassure those of you who have had questions or worries of the measures we are taking to try to keep all children in our care as safe as we possibly can. We understand that with the announcement of another lockdown during November, this may cause further anxiety for both children and families. While it has been decided for now that schools are exempt and they are the best places for our young people to be, we will continue to work hard to make it as safe and happy an environment as possible for all our pupils.



Classrooms continue to be forward facing, with children spread out as much as possible. The children are encouraged to remain in their seats during lesson times. Staff will be wearing masks or visors, particularly when moving around the classroom to support pupils with their work and to listen to readers. Assemblies now take place in class, with some led by the class teacher and some whole-school assemblies online, to help keep the class bubbles separate. We enjoyed a wonderful Values Assembly at the end of the last half term on a Microsoft Teams meeting, which allowed the whole school to be involved, as well as parents of the children who had earned a school values badge. Doors and windows are kept open to allow the rooms to be well ventilated. We will of course allow the children to wear coats to keep warm. We appreciate that it will be getting colder over the next few weeks, so please send children well prepared for this, with plenty of layers!

All children have been provided with all the equipment they need in school, so do not need to bring in anything from home. They need a drink and their lunch (if they do not have school dinners) so please encourage them to leave big bags at home as they can be a bit of a hazard in the classrooms! With the tables spread out, drawers on tables and coats on chairs, some of the classrooms are quite tight for space. We are keeping communal areas clear and not using cloakrooms for now.

Coming to school in PE kits has worked really well and without the time taken for changing, also allows for a longer time actually participating in physical activity! This is really important at the moment, especially during lockdown and while other clubs outside of school may not be running.



We are trying to walk a mile every day, as well as trying to ensure the children get outside for fresh air every day. Again, please ensure they are well prepared for this as the weather changes!

We are sending reading books home so that children can be heard both in school and at home. When children complete a reading book, they are collected over the week and left to 'quarantine' over the weekend before being put back out the following week. The ICT suite is not in use so the iPads are timetabled in for computing and then cleaned after each session. Therefore, our computer time is very limited, with only a few shared computers for each year group. We are trying to encourage children to take reading quizzes at home where possible when they complete a book so that we do not have too many children using these during the day.

Staggering collection from school at the end of the day has been working really well and we appreciate your support on this. It has avoided excessive congestion and allowed bubbles to keep separate. Break times and lunchtimes are also staggered for the same reason. Children are reminded to wash their hands before both breaks and we have had additional hand washing stations put in around school. Hand sanitiser is also available throughout school.

Each class has their own box of equipment to share which is cleaned regularly. Outside, each bubble has their own designated area.

At lunch time, teachers wipe down the tables after lessons so that

children can eat in their own classrooms. Children who have school dinners have individually wrapped lunches brought to the classroom. If the weather is really bad and children are



unable to go outside, then we will put films on in the classroom and try to take them outside at some stage, weather permitting.

If a child displays symptoms of Covid-19, we would ask that they stay home from school as a precaution and take a test. In the case of a positive result, please inform school as soon as possible so that we can take any necessary action.

If a member of a household tests positive for Covid-19, children should isolate at home for 14 days.



For any children who need to isolate for any reason, work will be available each week, either via Dojo or Google Classroom, depending on your child's year group. Staff have received some training for Google Classroom so that we are prepared for this, and children have all been given login details and accessed it during their computing sessions. CGP books have already gone out, but please do not complete these unless instructed by the class teacher as they may be needed later on in the year. KS2 children can login to complete CLIC and SAFE tests each week. The children have also been given their login details for Myon as well as Accelerated Reading so they can complete their quizzes online when they have finished their reading books.

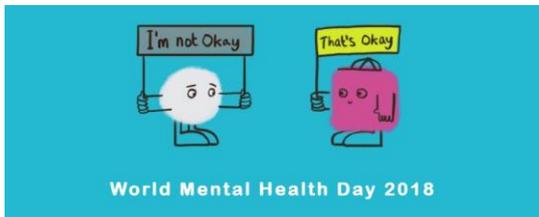
Staff have worked hard to adapt their practice, and do everything with the safety of your children in mind. Contact between staff will be minimal and meetings will be virtual, so that again, bubbles can be kept as separate as possible. Staff are cleaning their own areas throughout the day, as well as communal areas such as toilets and computers. Each area is cleaned thoroughly after school by our team of cleaners.

We do need to also keep in mind the safety of our staff and families too, so we would ask that should you need to speak to your child's teacher, then please contact the school by phone or use Dojo to reduce face-to-face interaction. Dojo has worked brilliantly for us, particularly over the previous lockdown and most staff feel that having that open communication with parents is really beneficial.

For the same reason, our Parents' Evenings will be in the form of a phone call later this month, to keep our staff, parents and carers as safe as we can.



As well as safety, our other main focus is mental health and wellbeing, which is a key priority, considering the challenges that so many people have faced this year. Last half term we focused on building relationships, settling the children in to school routines and learning once again. We have spent time getting to know them and talking to each other.



While we learn about our mental health during assemblies and PSHE (as well as taking part in events such as World Mental Health Day last month) it is also embedded across our whole school curriculum. It is something that our staff has worked hard on developing and we consider it to play a vital role in children's learning. Mental health can affect anyone and there is always someone here who will listen, to children and to families who might be struggling. We will always support however we can.

We are constantly listening to advice and reviewing our measures and our risk assessment has been updated several times and we will continue to do so as and when required! We will try to keep you informed as best as we possibly can.

As always, we are here to support our pupils and their families too. Contact details are below should you have any more questions or need further support.

If you have any comments, concerns or questions - why don't you email us at:

office@st-johns.walsall.sch.uk

...or call 01543 452197

