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5th January 2022

Dear Parents/Carers

Happy and healthy New Year to all our Magor Primary School Community. I hope that you all enjoyed a well-earned Christmas break. I long for the day when I write to you all without mentioning Covid-19 restrictions and can focus on the wonderful teaching and learning that is taking place in our school. Unfortunately, once again the beginning of term has been disrupted and this letter details the mitigations we have put in place to reassure you we are doing everything we can to keep our school community safe and our school open.

Welsh Government issued the latest guidance to schools at 6pm on New Year's Eve following concerns about the impact of rising coronavirus numbers. It also issued a checklist for schools outlining key areas we need to consider for the forthcoming term. Along with operational arrangements at 'Very High' level of the schools' framework, these areas include a contingency plan for staff capacity, plans for remote learning and provision for children of Critical workers and vulnerable learners. Over the last two days we have worked closely with the Local Authority, our cluster of schools and within our team to understand what this means for our school.

I have attached a flow chart from NHS/TTP that clearly explains any actions you should take as a positive case or a contact. TTP are responsible for identifying close contacts, not school, and we follow their advice. However, they have provided us with letters to issue to parents should there be a confirmed positive case in a class. A letter will be sent if there is a confirmed case asking you to be vigilant for symptoms, a second letter will be sent if there is a second confirmed case in the same class within 7 days of the first. This letter will advise your child does a lateral flow test every day for 7 days. If there are further confirmed cases within the 7 days, no further letters will be issued.

Please do not send your child to school if they have any of the 3 main symptoms:

- ❖ A new continuous cough
- ❖ Fever or high temperature
- ❖ Loss, or change in, taste or smell

Thankfully, we had kept many of the mitigations in place and continue to:

- ❖ Have separate gates for year groups to enter/exit the school at the start and end of the school day
- ❖ Teach within phase groups to minimise contacts
- ❖ Wash/Sanitise hands regularly
- ❖ Wear masks in communal areas (staff)
- ❖ Keep phase groups separate for Breakfast Club/lunchtimes/breaktimes
- ❖ Cooked dinners are eaten in the school hall and home sandwiches in classrooms to allow learners more space in the hall

- ❖ Keep windows and doors open to ventilate the classroom. It would be advisable for your child to wear an extra layer of clothing during colder spells.
- ❖ Maintain distance where possible (staff)

In addition:

- ❖ Staff may wear masks in the classroom when it will not have a negative impact on learning such as direct teaching with groups, classes with children with specific needs where a mask would make it difficult for them to hear or see facial expressions. We have to balance mask wearing with the impact on learning and well-being.
- ❖ Please use the correct pupil gates i.e. Nursery – nursery entrance, Reception – gate before the bridge, Year 1 & Year 2 – lower yard gate (Year 2 will continue to leave at the end of the day from the middle yard gate), Year 3 & Year 4 – middle yard gate, Year 5 & Year 6 – yard gate near the park.
- ❖ Welsh Government guidance states parents should limit any visits onto school site. If you need to speak to a member of staff, please telephone/email the office and the staff member will get back to you outside of teaching hours.
- ❖ If you need to enter the school site, you must wear a face mask unless exempt. This includes anyone dropping off or picking up your child outside of school times and Nursery parents at drop off/pick up. We would also appreciate it if masks are worn in the school vicinity at drop off and pick up.

We are yet to fully understand the situation that we will be facing in the coming weeks. Although there are no plans to close schools, that we are aware of, we have been asked to plan for various scenarios should our staffing levels fall to such a point that we are unable to open all of our classes. If this is the case we may, in consultation with the Local Authority, close a specific class/classes for a short period with a move to online learning and establishing school-based provision for Critical workers. Hopefully we will not get to a position where we will need to implement these plans.

I am pleased to say that at the time of writing we are delighted to be open on Thursday 6th January 2021 with almost full staff capacity. Throughout the pandemic we have strived to cover any staff absences with supply staff or internally and will endeavour to do so moving forward to avoid closing any classes. As a result, your child may be taught by a member of staff from another class/year group. I'm sure you appreciate the situation is constantly evolving and often at very short notice and therefore we have a number of contingency plans in place should we experience significant staff absence. These include:

- ❖ Use of supply staff
- ❖ Redeployment of current staff
- ❖ Closure/partial closure of some classes
- ❖ A move to home learning
- ❖ Establishing school-based provision for children of critical workers and vulnerable learners

In order to help with this contingency planning, we will need to ascertain the numbers of children who may need a critical worker place. If you believe your child/children may need to access this provision, please complete the following survey for **each child** who would need to attend. Please only use this provision as a last resort.

<https://forms.office.com/r/rpZvPhjuVj>

Previously we have been able to support families with IT devices in the event of school closure. In order for us to plan for this could you please complete the following survey link. Over the next few days can you please check your child is able to log onto their google classroom/seesaw particularly if they have had new devices recently.

<https://forms.office.com/r/7x72v7gmK1>

Breakfast club will continue to operate from 8:30am. This enables us to meet Welsh Government guidelines on Breakfast Club provision whilst allowing the staff time to set up at the beginning and clean down at the end as the room is used for other groups throughout the day. Please escort your child to the main entrance using the pedestrian ramp or steps and stay with them until 8:30 when school will take responsibility for their care.

Welsh Government guidance to schools follows *'the fundamental principle that the most effective way to prevent transmission of Covid-19 in our schools is to stop infection being brought into the school'*. I hope you understand that whilst school mitigations are often stricter than that for public spaces and buildings and the wider community, we must follow the school guidance.

Could I please remind you that routine messages in relation to changes in picking up or absence from school should be telephoned, the school number is 01633 880327. If your child is off school with an illness or a medical appointment, please leave a message on the dedicated absence line with the specific reason for your child being unable to attend. Thank you for your support with this matter.

We are really looking forward to our learners coming back to school tomorrow and sincerely hope we don't have to put any contingency plans into action. The best place for our learners and staff is in the classroom. I would like to thank you, once again, for your continued support, patience and understanding during what continues to be unprecedented times with ever changing advice and guidelines for us all to follow.

Cofion cynnes

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "S. Hamer". The signature is written in black ink on a white background.

Mrs S. Hamer

Headteacher