Midsomer Norton Schools Partnership

www.midsomernortonschoolspartnership.com
Executive Headteacher/CEO: Alun Williams
Registered Address: Norton Hill School, Charlton Road, Midsomer Norton, BA3 4AD
Company No: 7365778

3rd November 2020

Dear Parents/Carers

I am writing to you to give further updates following the government announcement at the weekend of a further national lockdown. Whilst the numbers of those infected with COVID-19 in the South West remain relatively low, the rate of virus transmission has accelerated considerably in recent weeks.

MNSP schools will remain open and we will do our very best to maintain the current level of service we are offering across Trust schools. However, I anticipate that as more people are infected by COVID-19 or are required to isolate, we will need to make some adjustments to the ways schools in the Trust operate. It is possible that we may need to do one or more of the following if we see staff levels reduce:

- Combine classes within designated bubbles.
- Teach larger groups in bigger spaces in schools – assembly halls for example.
- Ask support staff to cover lessons.
- Increase our reliance on supply staff.
- Close early for some groups of children.
- Close certain year groups.
- Teach some year groups on a rota system.
- Close schools entirely.

The last 3 of these options would only become necessary if we feel the health and safety of children is at serious risk. For example, if there are not enough adults on a school site to supervise children safely.

From **Monday 9th November**, I would ask that parents of secondary school children provide them with a face covering to wear in corridors and other communal areas. This would seem a sensible move given the higher infection rates in BANES and Somerset. The wearing of masks may stop your child from contracting COVID-19 and then bringing it home to you. It will also help keep teaching and support staff in schools free of the virus and reduce the likelihood of virus transmission.

Can I please ask that face coverings are either plain material or disposable. We would not expect children in a primary school setting to wear face coverings because of the risks associated with putting on, removing and storing of masks/face coverings. Children over the age of 11 will need to follow the guidance on how to put on, remove and dispose of face coverings. Please click on the following link for government instructions on the safe use of masks and face coverings.
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own#maintaining-and-disposing-of-face-coverings

As a reminder, it is acceptable for children to come to school if they have the usual seasonal colds, etc. Could I also remind parents/carers that their children are expected to use hand sanitiser or wash their hands regularly during the day. This remains one of the most effective ways of preventing the spread of COVID-19.

It is requested that **ALL parents/carers wear masks** on entry to school sites (from the school gates) during drop off and pick up times. This is particularly important when there are large numbers of people present. Households should endeavour to avoid mixing during the lockdown period, including when collecting or dropping off children. The use of masks will protect you and others in the school community.

Some schools in the Trust are operating staggered drop off and pick up times. Please do try to keep to these arrangements, as it reduces the numbers of people on school premises.

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At this point, any wrap-around provision (breakfast and afterschool clubs) running prior to the half-term break will continue as normal and where possible. We will keep this decision under review as staffing levels alter or demand fluctuates. It is important that you book your child's place a minimum of a week in advance to secure provision.

When I wrote to you before the half-term break, I mentioned the need to keep windows open in schools for good ventilation. This will mean that schools may be cooler than normal, so children should wear extra (suitable) layers under their uniform if they are finding rooms cold.

Finally, I have taken the decision to cancel all school visits/trips until after the February half-term (15th-19th February 2021). This is to ensure staffing levels in schools remain sufficiently high to keep children safe, but also because of the potential mixing of groups from different parts of the country at trip venues. Schools will be in contact directly if this impacts a trip for your child.

We thank you for your patience and continued support, whilst we all try to provide continued good education provision for your children in these difficult times.

Kind regards

Alun Williams
CEO