



# Midsomer Norton Schools Partnership

17<sup>th</sup> September 2020

Dear Parents/Carers

I thought I would write to you with some recent updates regarding schools across the Trust. We have now been back for nearly two full weeks and all schools are running smoothly. Thank you so much for your support, as this has made opening schools fully far easier.

### Pupil attendance:

Attendance across schools in the first week has been high and averaging 96%, which is roughly similar to that prior to lockdown. However, this week attendance in some schools has fallen. I have received guidance from the DfE about managing attendance. It is clear that parents/carers should look carefully at any symptoms their child/children are experiencing to be really sure that they are displaying COVID-19 related symptoms and not simply those associated with common coughs and colds. Keeping your child/children off school if they are not displaying the key symptoms will lead to them falling further behind at school, something we are anxious to avoid. **If you would have sent your child to school before lockdown with the symptoms they are exhibiting, then the general advice from the government is you should still send them to school now.**

To be clear, the key symptoms (taken from the Government website) to look out for are:

- **a high temperature** – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature).
- **a new, continuous cough** – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual).
- **a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste** – this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal.

To reassure you, we have not had any positive test results from children in the Trust since the start of term and there are approximately 10,000 children across the Trust Schools.

Please see [Appendix A](#) – parental flow chart located at the end of this letter to help you with home diagnosis. Additionally, the COVID-19 testing phone number is 119.

### Testing for COVID-19:

The Government has issued guidance to schools on Wednesday asking us to make parents and all those in the school communities aware that testing sites and on-line booking systems are struggling to meet demand. Therefore, as noted in the paragraph above, it is vital that we are absolutely sure that the symptoms being displayed by anyone are the key symptoms associated with COVID-19. Otherwise we will find those that potentially have the virus cannot organise testing, which will impact on the tracing system leading to the virus being spread. So please ensure you check the symptoms carefully before trying to book a test for your child/children.

### Face coverings:

In some of the Trust secondary schools, the design of buildings means it is necessary to wear face covering at certain times of the day – lesson changeover for example. Individual schools will contact you directly, if they feel this is required. Please also remember that your child **must** wear a face covering if using school or public transport.

### Trust charity of the year:

You will be aware of the global focus on tackling prejudice and unconscious bias following the tragic death of George Floyd in the United States. As a Trust we have always worked hard to eradicate prejudice in all forms, as well as educate





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our children to be tolerant and respectful of everyone in society. As a result of this awful event in the United States and the protests here in the UK, we have decided to adopt a charity for the year which is focussed on tackling prejudice, but also supporting children to overcome disadvantage. I am pleased to announce that we have chosen the **Stephen Lawrence Charitable Trust** as our charity of choice this year. We have selected this charity because of the excellent work they have done to support disadvantaged children, but also tackle prejudice and discrimination. We hope to run a number of events to fund raise, as well as increase awareness of the issues associated with prejudice, fairness and disadvantage - <https://www.stephenlawrencetrust.org/>

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely

Alun Williams  
MNSP CEO





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## APPENDIX A – Parental Flow Chart

