



## Midsomer Norton Schools Partnership

25<sup>th</sup> November 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

I am writing to explain some of the arrangements for school events and trips over the coming few months. It has become clear that Covid rates continue to rise and keeping our schools open and functioning fully has been a challenge over the past few weeks. Some schools have had nearly half of their staff absent and a similar proportion of children away from school. As a result of this, we have been advised to do the following:

- 1) Reduce the number of assemblies in school halls and conduct these virtually where possible
- 2) Reduce the mixing of pupils of different ages where possible
- 3) Re-introduce the wearing of face-coverings for staff in certain environments and, for some secondary school children.
- 4) Undertake further risk assessments for curriculum-based trips/visits and adjust practices accordingly. For example, we have increased the number of vehicles on trips to allow greater social distancing
- 5) Cancel or postpone certain events for staff: face-to-face training, for example
- 6) Prevent, where possible, the mixing of parents and carers and pupils in large numbers.

As a result of these measures, we have decided to postpone some trips in schools. Your child's school will notify you if this has an impact on any trips pupils were due to be part of before Christmas. Additionally, we have also decided to alter how we had planned to run Nativity Plays. In normal circumstances, we would have the whole school involved in this important celebration with parents and others able to watch Nativity Plays in school halls. This year we are keen for Nativity Plays to involve children from across the age-range in our schools and therefore have decided that these events will either be streamed live to parents and carers via video, or recorded for viewing. The alternative also on offer is to hold the Nativity outside, where parents and others will be able to watch the performance live and in person. I am sorry that once again we find ourselves in this position, but hope that you will understand that we do not want children or staff to be unwell over Christmas, or pass on infection to vulnerable relatives at home, etc. Additionally, I want all staff back in schools fit and healthy for Term 3, so that schools can re-open fully and therefore parents and carers can also return to work without the worry of childcare because a school is closed or partially closed.

It is probably a good opportunity to also make you aware that different schools may well be operating different restrictions depending on the circumstances they are facing with regards to Covid. We are subject to Public Health England advice, but also that from BANES Public Health and the DFE. These organisations all have slightly differing advice, as they have a different perspective on the Covid pandemic and its impact.

Thank you for your continued support over the past few weeks and months. I know has been a difficult time for all of us in the community.

Yours sincerely

Alun Williams - CEO

