

Dear Parent and Carers of Oak Trees Multi Academy Trust Schools,

I am writing in regards to this week's announcements by the Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, and Minister for Education, Gavin Williamson, in relation to how schools are to manage Covid-19 in the coming months. This has been an incredibly challenging few weeks for our schools, staff and families, and I am sure that you have welcomed the news that restrictions are to be relaxed in the coming months.

Your school will write to you individually in the coming weeks with further information on the September arrangements, but I thought that it would be best to share with you the following key points from the announcements that we will **take effect from September 2021** (not immediately, as some parents have suggested).

1. Schools will no longer be required to place children in bubbles, and children will be able to mix freely at playtimes and lunchtimes, before and after school clubs and in assemblies.
2. Schools will also no longer be required to stagger start and entry times to the school day.
3. Parents and staff will not be required to wear facemasks when visiting or travelling around schools, although we will have no objection if anyone wishes to continue to do so.
4. If a child in a class tests positive, there will be no need for the rest of the class pupils or the class teacher to self-isolate.
5. Schools must continue to control risk through increased cleaning and ventilation to classrooms as well as good hand and respiratory hygiene measures.
6. School trips and residential stays will be permitted as normal.

Whilst this is positive news for us all in terms of having the children in schools and enjoying the full range of activities that our schools can offer, there are a number of key points that I need to stress moving forward:

1. **Children should not attend school if they have symptoms of Covid-19, and our schools have the right to ask parents to keep their children at home if they show symptoms in school.**

(The main symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) as of July 2021 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
2. **In the event of a local outbreak, our schools may need to reintroduce previous measures such as bubbles and self-isolation if we are advised to do so by public health.**

I am sure that, like me, you are hopeful that these measures will lead to greater numbers of children in school in the autumn term. In the past few weeks we have had significant numbers of pupils and staff testing positive for Covid-19, and this has led to an alarming number of children being at home and not in school, which is neither good in the long term for their academic progress and mental health and wellbeing, nor for parents and carers who have to remain at home with their children.



As a Trust, we will do everything we can to continue to maximise safety in September whilst following the new relaxed guidance. I urge parents to continue to be patient with us in September as we work to the new guidance. It is highly likely that there will be cases of Covid-19 in our schools next term, and we will do everything we can to keep as many children as possible in schools, but it is vital that parents support our schools if their children have symptoms or if we have a local outbreak. The ultimate goal is to keep the children safe, happy and learning in school.

Thanks for reading, and I hope that you have a lovely summer.

Tony Lacey

CEO

Oak Trees Multi Academy Trust