



5 November 2020

Dear Parent / Carer

## **Re: Update to Covid-19 guidelines as a result of national lockdown**

Following the announcement that national lockdown resumes today, which was delivered by the Prime Minister on Saturday evening, I am providing you with an update so you know how this currently impacts on our school. The Department for Education finally provided guidance for schools yesterday afternoon, and I have used this information when making decisions about Christchurch Junior's approach.

Sections of this letter, reproduced in **red and in bold italics**, have been lifted directly from the guidance.

Firstly, we recognise that the benefits of being in school are huge. The looks of delight on your children's faces in September, when they finally returned to school, remain a highlight of my first weeks at CJS.

***Being at school is vital for children's education and for their wellbeing. Time spent out of school is detrimental for children's cognitive and academic development, particularly for disadvantaged children. This impact can affect both current levels of education, and children's future ability to learn. It continues to be our aim that all pupils, in all year groups, remain in school full-time. The risk to children themselves of becoming severely ill from coronavirus (COVID-19) is very low and there are negative health impacts of being out of school. For the vast majority of children, the benefits of being back in the classroom far outweigh the low risk from coronavirus (COVID-19) and schools can take action to reduce risks still further.***

In September, when schools reopened fully, I published a risk assessment and guidance on our school website, which still remains in place. This can be viewed here: <https://www.cjsdorset.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/CJS-risk-assessment-for-full-reopening-01.09.2020.pdf>

I must remind you that you should not come to the school office unless it is absolutely necessary. If you can email, phone, send a Class Dojo message or post and item through our letterbox, then this is preferable to entering the school building. If it is unavoidable, you must wear a mask. I know you will understand that I must protect my staff and the parents/carers wherever possible.

We continue to make the safety of your children our highest priority. For example, children wash and sanitise their hands frequently throughout the school day. Additionally, we also operate year group bubbles to limit the opportunity for contamination between different groups of children. I also remind you that we are ventilating rooms with windows and doors open wherever possible, so do please ensure your child wears their school jumper, and you may wish to consider them wearing a plain t-shirt or vest for extra warmth.

It is important that you stick closely to your allocated drop-off and collection time, as this helps us to limit the amount of foot traffic in our school grounds at any one time. Please do not loiter!

***Schools should continue to undertake risk assessments and implement the system of controls set out in this guidance. These measures provide a framework for school leaders to put in place proportionate protective measures for pupils and staff. If schools follow the guidance and maximise control measures, they can be confident they are managing risk effectively.***

I am working to ensure that our response to this pandemic is reasonable and proportionate, but I accept that there will be differences of opinion. An example might well be the use of face masks. I am not asking parents/carers who bring children to school or collect them to wear face coverings in our school grounds (although you are, of course, welcome to do so); instead I am requesting that social distance is maintained. It is, however, imperative that every person in our community – staff and parents – feel empowered to politely and courteously remind/challenge those who are getting too close. Unfortunately, not everyone will read this letter and therefore our most powerful approach is to have as many people as possible delivering this consistent message.

***Face coverings – in primary schools and education settings teaching year 6 and below, there is no change to the existing position. It is not mandatory for staff and visitors to wear face coverings. In situations where social distancing between adults in settings is not possible (for example when moving around in corridors and communal areas), settings have the discretion to recommend the use of face coverings for adults on site, for both staff and visitors.***

Regrettably, we must now halt our after school sports clubs (Funtastic will continue). This means that there will be no clubs taking place from the week commencing Monday 9<sup>th</sup> November until further notice.

***Where schools are offering extra-curricular activities (that is, before and after school clubs) they should only do so where it is reasonably necessary to support parents to work, search for work, or undertake training or education, or where the provision is being used for the purposes of respite care.***

I remind you that if anyone in your household has symptoms of coronavirus, the rest of the household MUST self-isolate for 14 days from the FIRST day the symptomatic person has symptoms. The symptomatic person must get a test. If it is your child who has any of the symptoms, they must not come to school. Tests can be booked online through the NHS website or by calling NHS 119.

The main symptoms of coronavirus 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.

You have pulled together as a community throughout this pandemic and I know you will continue to support one another, your children and CJS as we move through the next few weeks. Thank you for continuing to be kind to one another at what is a difficult time to negotiate.

Yours sincerely

Mr S Fuller  
Headteacher