



Sir Graham Balfour School

Member of Sir Graham Balfour Multi-Academy Trust

Our Ref: LDB / VM

18th September 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

Update

At the end of the third week back in school, I want to thank you for all your efforts in helping us to help your children settle back down in school. As you know, and as they will have told you, school does look and feel different to how it was pre-lockdown, but we are all doing our best to get used to these changes, which means we can then focus on the important bits of school: learning, growing and developing.

School is calm and orderly, and the vast majority of students are adapting really well and quickly to their year group bubbles, to the rules regarding entering and leaving the building, to hand sanitising and to wearing their face coverings – with regard to the latter, the students have been just brilliant, with only a tiny minority forgetting to bring one in. They are getting used to not moving around, lesson to lesson, but staying in the same classroom. One sad loss is the opportunity to participate in practical activities in science, music and technology. As soon as we are able to, we will re-commence these activities, but there is currently no indication of when this will be.

We hear with some dismay of the growing number of positive cases of Covid-19 nationwide, but with your help, we will do all we can in school to minimise the risk of it spreading in our community. To aid us in this, please will you help with the following:

- Ensure that your child has a clean (ideally washable and re-usable) face covering everyday (and ideally a spare just in case they lose the first). They should put their face covering in a plastic bag when not in use and keep it safe until they have to wear it again throughout the day.
- For those children without face coverings, we have a store in Reception. As you will be aware, disposable face coverings are expensive and we simply cannot afford to give them out free of charge. They cost us 50p each, which is the price we are charging students if they forget theirs. We are making note of the names of students who are asking for face coverings, so please do not be surprised if we get in touch with you asking for repayment. We will never refuse to give a child a face covering, in order that they can contribute to keeping everyone safe.
- Please do continue to impress on them the importance of washing their hands and/or using the hand sanitisers which are obvious and readily available around school. Again, the vast majority need no reminders now – there are just a few who do.
- If your child uses school transport or public buses, please do remind them that it is vital to wear their face covering for every moment they are on the bus. To not do so by choice may result in their bus pass being revoked. Again, we are talking tiny numbers, but it is important that we all get used to this, given there is no way of knowing how long this requirement will be in place.

- Please do speak with your child to make sure they are being aware and courteous when coming to school or returning home. If on bikes or scooters, they must be aware of pedestrians and to slow down or get off if they are approaching other people. If in a big group, the same; separate out and allow others to pass safely, socially distanced.
- Finally, a reminder not to send your child into school if they are exhibiting any of the signs of Covid-19 (a new, continuous cough, high temperature (feels hot to touch on chest or back), a loss or change in taste or smell). Instead, keep them home, seek a test and wait for the results. If your child shows signs of the above whilst at school, we will contact you to come and collect them as soon as possible, as per the guidance from Public Health England.

As I write this, I am aware of the difficulty faced by those seeking a test. There is nothing I can suggest other than to keep trying. I recognise the inconvenience this causes those of you having to self-isolate whilst awaiting a test for your child or yourself, but thank you for following the rules and doing your bit to help reduce the risk of transmission.

I sincerely hope that the testing system improves rapidly, reducing the disruption to school and to all our lives. It is also my hope that, having gone to the lengths we did over summer, and seeing the magnificent response from our whole school community upon our return, that school remains fully open from now on. What is clear from other parts of the country, however, is that if schools are affected by confirmed Covid-19 cases, we will have to move very quickly in our response. Our plans are now fully in place to deal with any eventuality, from having to send a whole year group home to dealing with a full lock-down. Should this happen, you will be informed as a matter of urgency; please note, there may be very little notice between a positive confirmation and your children having to stay at home and work remotely.

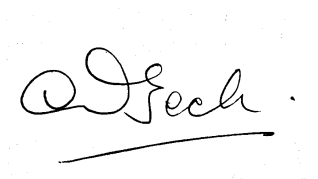
For those children currently self-isolating, we are working hard on pulling together units of work that children will be able to access from home. This will be fully operational via Office 365 by Friday 25th September. Up until that point, we will continue to do our best to send home work via individual teachers and the email system.

For parents of Year 7 children only:

Your children are due to receive their 'flu immunisations next Friday (25th September). Please look out for the communication coming from school shortly; we will require confirmation from you before the jabs can take place.

As ever, I thank you for your support of the school, particularly during these quite difficult times. I send my best wishes to you and your families.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L Beck', with a horizontal line underneath it.

Lesley Beck
Headteacher

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