



Friars Primary School & Nursery

Part of the Portico Academy Trust

Principal - Mr C. McClay

Vice Principal – Mr S. Roche

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CEO – Mrs C. Woolf

Tuesday 15th December 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

So here it is, Merry Christmas! We are almost at the end of our autumn term and the conclusion to 2020 is fast approaching. What a year it has been.

This time last year, we could not have foreseen the events of early 2020 and the impact the coronavirus would have on the world and our school. It was with huge sadness that we were forced to close our doors on March 20th to almost all children. We had no idea how long that would be for and as we now know, it ended up being for a considerable amount of time. During the school closure, we were proud to do our bit to support key worker parents by providing childcare. Our staff even agreed to continue this childcare offer over the Easter break, which was simply fantastic.

With there being no school, we needed to look to online learning. Seesaw was introduced at the point of lockdown and it provided a way for us to share learning and give feedback to the children at home. We loved seeing everyone's fantastic efforts on Seesaw and many examples of the work are now on display in one of our corridors. Facebook made us smile too... our staff did a number of videos and how can we forget the wonderful video that included pupils. We enjoyed reading all of the comments on each post we did. We read that you missed us and, it goes without saying, we missed you.

In early June, we reopened partially for children in Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6. By the end of June, we also had Year 2 children back with us. Although we really wanted to welcome back children in Years 3, 4 and 5 this simply was not possible. Keeping children in bubbles of 15 meant we had neither the space nor the staff to accommodate this. We would have to wait until September to see those year groups back in the school building. For reasons we understood, not all parents wished to send their children back before the summer; such was the continued anxiety around the pandemic.

Before the summer break we organised transition 'get-togethers' for the children that had not returned. These were opportunities to say hellos and goodbyes to current and new staff. As the get-togethers were outside, we crossed our fingers for good weather and we had exactly that. We were blessed with warm sunny days and many smiley faces that we had not seen for such a long time.

Roll on September and the full school reopening. There were certainly a few nerves about coming back, however, it did not take long for us all to get used to the new normal. After only a few days, Friars felt like Friars again. The children transitioned brilliantly back into school and it was clear that they were pleased to be in class and with their friends. Those pupils who had not been in school

since March had missed 71 days of school in total, yet they did amazingly well to quickly readjust to school life. From September through to December, we have gone from strength to strength.

We must say huge a thank you to everyone in our school community. Thank you to the staff for working tirelessly to do their very best for every child despite the challenging circumstances. Thank you to parents and carers for the full support you have shown us. Thank you to the children for being the incredible young people they are.

We are heading into the Christmas period with the virus picture worsening locally and nationally but at the same time, we do have lots of hope for the New Year.

Have a wonderful, safe Christmas and we will see you on Monday 4th January.

Please can we ask you to take the time to read the important information on the following pages.

Best wishes for Christmas and have a very happy New Year!

C. McClay

Mr. C. McClay
Principal

S. Roche

Mr. S. Roche
Vice-Principal

Information for parents regarding COVID19 Contact Tracing over the Christmas holiday period

We hope that the following information clarifies the expectations around reporting cases of COVID19 and undertaking contact tracing over the Christmas holiday period.

As you know, schools have played a vital role in reducing the spread of COVID19 over the last 9 months. One way in which they have done this is by undertaking contact tracing on behalf of the Essex Contact Tracing team. Schools identify any individuals who have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID19, during the time that is considered the contagious period. This is from 2 days before the person's symptoms are displayed. Those individuals are then required to self-isolate for 10 days (this changed from 14 days on Monday) because they are at risk of having contracted COVID19 and being contagious themselves.

This contact tracing will not be taking place in the usual way during the Christmas break when schools are closed and there is less chance of school-based contacts existing.

Please follow the guidance below if your child is affected by COVID19 during the Christmas break.

Scenario 1: Your child develops symptoms of COVID19 within 48 hours of being in school.

You must seek a test for your child and the household must isolate at home until the test result is returned. You should let the school know that this has occurred. See below.

The quickest way to obtain a test is to book a test at your local testing centre via <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>. Please do not use postal tests unless absolutely necessary as these take longer.

If the test result is positive for COVID19, you must inform the school, and we will identify if there are any other individuals within the school community who are impacted by this. You must engage with NHS Test and Trace and follow the advice given by them: www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing-and-tracing/

If your child has a positive test result, please contact the school as soon as possible at covidhotline@friars.southend.sch.uk

You must provide the following:

- Your child's full name
- The date the symptoms started
- It would be helpful to also include the best telephone number to reach you (in case we need any clarification)

Scenario 2: Your child develops symptoms of COVID19 more than 48 hours after their last day in school.

You must seek a test for your child and the household must isolate at home until the test result is returned.

If the test result is positive for COVID-19, having developed symptoms more than 48 hours since being in school, (this would be Monday 21st December onwards) you must engage with NHS Test and Trace and follow the advice given by them: www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing-and-tracing/

You should contact the school at covidhotline@friars.southend.sch.uk if your child will be absent, in time for the first day of the new term.

You must provide the following:

- Your child's full name
- The date the symptoms started
- It would be helpful to also include the best telephone number to reach you (in case we need any clarification)

Scenario 3: Your child has no symptoms of COVID19 but tests positive within 48 hours of being in school.

It is important to follow the guidance around accessing a test only when the individual is showing signs of COVID19 or as part of 'community testing'. If your child is asymptomatic and returns a positive test result within 48 hours of last being in school, please let the school know straight away. We will identify if there are any other individuals within the school community who are impacted by this. You must engage with NHS Test and Trace and follow the advice given by them: www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing-and-tracing/

You should contact the school as soon as possible at covidhotline@friars.southend.sch.uk

You must provide the following:

- Your child's full name
- The date of the test
- It would be helpful to also include the best telephone number to reach you (in case we need any clarification)

Scenario 4: Your child has no symptoms of COVID19 but tests positive more than 48 hours after their last day in school.

It is important to follow the guidance around accessing a test only when the individual is showing signs of COVID19 or as part of 'community testing'. If your child is asymptomatic and returns a positive test result, please let the school know if your child will be absent, in time for the first day of the new term. You must engage with NHS Test and Trace and follow the advice given by them: www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing-and-tracing/

You should contact the school at covidhotline@friars.southend.sch.uk.

You must provide the following:

- Your child's full name
- The date the symptoms started
- It would be helpful to also include the best telephone number to reach you (in case we need any clarification)

Scenario 5: You are contacted by the school because your child is identified as a close contact of someone who has tested positive for COVID19.

In this instance, your child will need to self-isolate for 10 days. The rest of the family does not need to isolate unless they have COVID19 symptoms. Your child should only have a test if they develop symptoms. If your child has symptoms and then has a positive test result, they must isolate for 10 days from when the symptoms started. This will mean they will be isolating for longer than 10 days altogether.

Thank you for your cooperation and ongoing support. If you have any questions about this guidance please call the school before the end of Thursday.

Yours sincerely,

C. McClay

Mr. C. McClay
Principal

S. Roche

Mr. S. Roche
Vice-Principal