



# St Patrick's Catholic Primary School, Dipton

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Headteacher: Mrs J Burgess  
*We follow in Christ's footsteps*

Friday 12<sup>th</sup> November 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

## **Parents information regarding additional measures in school to reduce the spread of COVID-19 transmission.**

There has been a large increase in the number of children and young people in County Durham testing positive for COVID-19 and the highest case rates are in school age children. This is leading to spread of COVID-19 within families and into older age groups.

The increase in COVID-19 cases in children is disrupting their education, affecting schools and has an impact on the wider community.

Schools across Durham have received recommendations from Amanda Healy, Director of Public Health and Jim Murray, Head of Education and, as a result of the picture across Durham as well as a rising number of cases within our school, we have decided to re-introduce measures to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission. As you know, we have already made changes for our Year 1 pupils. Due to a quickly changing situation, the bubble arrangement will now be extended across our school. We will review this position at the end of November. We take this action as we believe it is important to be proactive. Our priority remains to maximise the number of children and young people in face-to-face education and minimise any disruption. We are in a position now where we intend to take additional measures to mitigate the COVID-19 risk.

**From Monday 15<sup>th</sup> November, the following measures will be introduced:**

### Staggered start/finish times

| Year group | Start time | Finish time | Assembly/<br>drop off point  | Collection point |
|------------|------------|-------------|--|------------------|
| Reception  | 9.10       | 3.00        | Children to assemble in the school playground at their drop-off time (unless booked into breakfast club) | Little yard      |
| Year 1     | 9.05       | 3.15        |  | Big yard         |
| Year 2     | 9.05       | 3.15        |  | Big yard         |
| *Year 3    | 8.55       | 3.10        |  | Big yard         |
| *Year 4    | 8.55       | 3.10        |  | Big yard         |
| *Year 5    | 8.45       | 3.05        |  | Big yard         |
| *Year 6    | 8.45       | 3.05        |  | Big yard         |

Children should not be playing/mixing in the yard before or after school.

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\*Please note, if we have requested that your child comes into school at a specific time for phonics intervention, this is still the case.

#### Breakfast club

Breakfast club will continue. As the whole school will be working within a bubble situation again, we are now able to allow our Y1 pupils to return. Within breakfast club, children will be organised into year groups.

#### Staggered lunchtimes and playtimes

We will revert to the arrangements which were in place previously with Reception, Y1 and Y2 eating in the dining hall and Y3, Y4, Y5 and Y6 in their classrooms. Morning break will also switch back to stagger access to the yard.

#### Postponement of after school clubs

It is with great disappointment, that we will also have to postpone these clubs. I appreciate they have just got underway but, as they involve different year groups we will have to put these on hold. We hope this will be for a limited period only.

#### School trips

Educational visits and trips will also be postponed for the time being. This means we have had to make the decision to cancel the Y2 visit to the Discovery Museum to give adequate notice to our transport provider and to the venue.

#### Swimming

We are suspending swimming for the next two weeks.

#### Assemblies/Collective Worship

Within school, gatherings will be either be virtual or within year group restrictions.

#### Face masks

We ask that you contact school via phone or email. If you do speak to a member of staff in the school building, we expect that both staff member and visitor will wear a mask.

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## PCR testing

PCR testing is recommended for all adults and pupils if they are a close contact of a positive case.

*People who have tested positive with a PCR test within the last 90 days should not be encouraged to test unless they develop new symptoms*

## Lateral Flow testing

Lateral flow testing is recommended at home for 7 days for any adult or pupil in key stage 2 (Year 3 or above) who is a household contact of a positive case and is exempt from isolation and continues to attend school. The testing of primary age pupils is at parental discretion. Testing should start from the day the household member has symptoms or, if they don't have symptoms, from when they tested positive.

Please see information at the end of this letter as to how to obtain lateral flow test kits. If you have any difficulty with this, please contact school and we will help.

I know we have shared a diary of events including all Christmas activities. We will review this situation at the end of November but, realistically, we may have to be prepared for these whole-school events to be altered or held/shared virtually.

To keep as many of our children in school as possible, and to reduce the transmission of COVID-19 within the wider community, we need to proceed with caution and act within the advice of Public Health.

Thank you again for everything you are doing to support your child and our school and in helping to keep our wider family and community safe.

I know, in advance, you will be disappointed. We are too, however, we always have to consider safety first.

To summarise, these arrangements will be reviewed in due course. When we are in a position to do so, we will reassess the situation and consider whether these restrictions can be lifted or need to be extended. We will decide on our range of Christmas activities nearer the time.

I would also like to remind you that school will be closed all day on **Friday 26<sup>th</sup> November** for staff training. For a full list of holiday and term dates for this year, please view our school website:

<http://www.dipton.durham.sch.uk/>

Yours sincerely

Mrs Burgess  
Headteacher

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Please be reassured that for most people, coronavirus (COVID-19) will be a mild illness.

## LFD Testing advice

We would recommend you have a supply of LFD testing kits at home in the event you are requested to use them. You can order home testing kits to be delivered to your home here [www.gov.uk/order-coronavirus-rapid-lateral-flow-tests](http://www.gov.uk/order-coronavirus-rapid-lateral-flow-tests)

Or you can collect LFD kits at Community Collect sites across the County. To find your nearest collection point please enter your post code here [maps.test-and-trace.nhs.uk](https://maps.test-and-trace.nhs.uk)

If you pick up tests from a pharmacy, you may be asked for a 'collect code' this helps the NHS match your details to the tests. To get a 'collect code' please visit [test-for-coronavirus.service.gov.uk/collect-lateral-flow-kits](https://test-for-coronavirus.service.gov.uk/collect-lateral-flow-kits)

Please register the result of your home test at [www.gov.uk/report-covid19-result](http://www.gov.uk/report-covid19-result)

## What to do if your child develops symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) or tests positive for COVID-19

The most common symptoms of COVID-19 are recent onset of:

- new continuous cough and/or
- high temperature and/or
- a loss of, or change in, normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia)

If your child does develop symptoms, they should get a PCR test and remain at home at least until the result is known. Book a free PCR test at [www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test](http://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test) . If positive, your child should isolate for 10 full days after their symptoms appeared.

If you are concerned about your child's symptoms, you can seek advice from NHS 111 at [111.nhs.uk/](http://111.nhs.uk/) or by phoning 111.

If your child has a positive test result but does not have symptoms they should stay at home and self-isolate for 10 full days from the date the positive test was taken. This isolation period will be extended if they go on to develop symptoms by counting 10 full days from the day following their symptom onset.

You must always register the result of your home test at [www.gov.uk/report-covid19-result](http://www.gov.uk/report-covid19-result)

## Help, support, and further information.

To help you comply with the requirement to self-isolate, the County Durham Together Community Hub can provide access to essential supplies, financial support and emotional support as well as other services. Please visit [www.durham.gov.uk/covid19help](http://www.durham.gov.uk/covid19help) or call the Community Hub on 03000 260260 for further details.

There is also support available the coronavirus section via [durhamlocate.org.uk](http://durhamlocate.org.uk)

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