



Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

### **Additional Covid-19 measures, following advice from Croydon Public Health**

Yesterday afternoon we received a letter from Rachel Flowers, Director of Public Health for Croydon. The letter outlines the response recommended by Public Health, following analysis of the high number of Covid-19 cases in Croydon and a marked rise in cases among school-age children. While, at this time, our school community is not experiencing the number of cases seen in many schools locally, it is necessary for us to follow the recommendations from Public Health to ensure that transmission is minimised and cases do not rise, especially just before Christmas.

The recommendations include all the precautions we have been following since the start of term; for instance, encouraging good hand hygiene, detailed cleaning regimes, good ventilation, all adults in school wearing face coverings in all communal areas (this is also strongly recommended in the school playground for parents collecting and dropping off) and following recommendations regarding lateral flow (home tests) for all adults and secondary school students on at least a bi-weekly basis.

In addition, the guidance now requires us to monitor even more closely symptoms of pupils in our school and take additional precautions within the organisation of our school day to reduce contact between groups.

As a result, we will be reintroducing a bubble system for pupils, with classes remaining separate within the school day. We will **not** be reinstating staggered starts and finishes at this time, as we anticipate that pupils will enter school and travel directly to their classrooms in the morning and, at the end of the school day, will be dismissed from their class bubble directly to their parent and encouraged to leave the premises appropriately socially distanced. Measures we will be taking are:

- Staggered break and lunchtime play in zones to reduce contact between class bubbles.
- Altered lunch sittings in the hall to reduce the number of children sitting together.
- Additional limitations on staff contacts; for instance, a return to a reduction of numbers permitted in rooms.
- No face to face meetings until the end of term (staff and parents).
- Since extra-curricular clubs are mixed year, these will unfortunately have to cease immediately.
- In our wrap-around care provision, Breakfast and After School Club staff will organise pupils in socially distanced tables according to year group.
- We will change the organisation of our mixed class phonics teaching groups to single class groups until the end of term.

The advice strongly recommends that inside performances in groups are not held. Therefore, we have changed arrangements for our visit today by Image Theatre, and will not be able to have a live performance with the whole school present. Instead, we will be streaming a performance by Image Theatre into each classroom.

I met on Zoom with our governors yesterday evening to discuss the implications for other upcoming public events; namely the Friends of Margaret Roper Christmas Fayre and the Infant Nativities. Bearing in mind the restrictions now placed on us the governors have decided that, with great regret, these will have to be cancelled. We feel terribly disappointed that this needs to be the case, but we need to be consistent with the guidance issued which applies to all education settings in Croydon, regardless of their current level of cases.

We are currently contingency planning for what we can do to mitigate this. As far as the Christmas Fayre is concerned, I am discussing with our Chairs what elements we might be able to retrieve and run outside on the playground in the following two weeks; perhaps having some stalls outside towards the end of the school day so that all the work carried out by the Friends of Margaret Roper is not lost. I will update you on this once we have formed a plan. Thank you so much to all the parents who have done so much to work towards our fayre and especially to Jo and Daniela.

With regards to the Infant Nativity, we cannot have the public performances scheduled for next week in the school hall. Rehearsals will also be affected as we cannot mix the class bubbles from Reception, Y1 and Y2 to rehearse, so the team are currently re-planning how it will be organised. We do want to provide an element of live performance, however, so we propose to run the performances outside at the times and dates as advertised; on the afternoon of Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> December and the morning of Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> December. While we won't be able to have the children in their costumes, as it would be too cold for them, we want to perform the songs from the show to you live. I'll get back to you regarding timings for this as soon as possible, but it is likely to be 2.15 or 2.30pm on the Wednesday and just after 9am on the Thursday. We will also film the Infant nativity as we had planned to and make this available to you free of charge.

Our Carol Service on Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> will continue, as this was always planned to be outside and the regulations allow this.

While all this is very hard, and extremely disappointing, I know you will appreciate the importance of maintaining our core activity; avoiding school closures and a return to distanced learning, and the importance of following the clear guidance issued to us by Public Health consistently and sensibly.

I will write to you again as often as necessary to update you. Thank you for your support and understanding.

Dermot Mooney  
Head Teacher