

Friday 18th September 2020



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A 'Testing' Week!

Message from the Headteacher

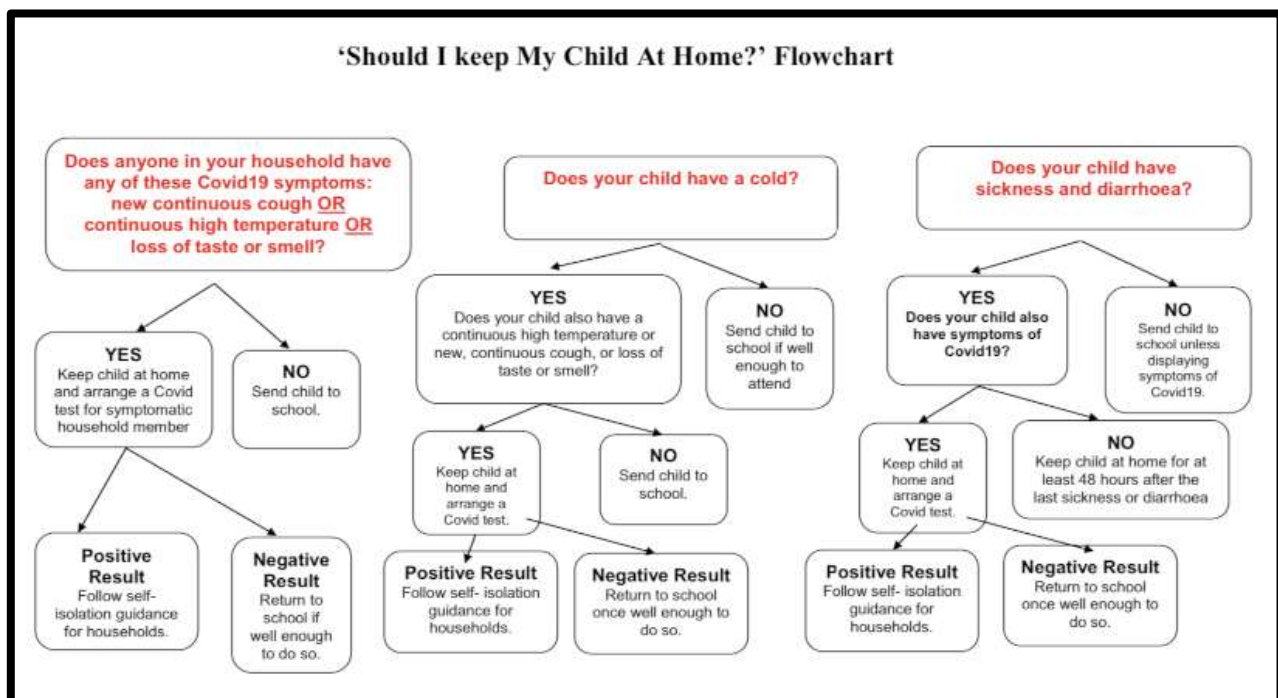
Far be it for me to stray into the world of politics, but we have had a very trying week due to the whole inadequacy of the test and trace system and its well-reported failings. This started on Sunday when Mr Castle contacted me to say that he had concerns about symptoms in some of his family and had been trying all day to book a test, as we have been told to do so by the government guidance for schools. He had no joy whatsoever in getting any appointments anywhere as all of the contact numbers were not responding and the web-based system just said "This service is currently very busy". The school had been sent 10 Home Testing kits and so he came into school on Sunday evening, swabbed the family back at home (so to speak), including himself, and posted the kits in a priority GPO post box later that evening. We were all left waiting on the results, with no indication of when they would be back and the instruction that the family must self-isolate whilst awaiting the results.



In total this week, we have had eight staff out due to Covid related reasons. Two are shielding and the other six due to Covid test results delays. Frankly, this is like trying to run a school with one arm tied behind your back. The Assistant Director of Hampshire Children's Services, Brian Pope has taken the feedback from heads in the county to the Department for Education and it is abundantly clear this situation needs to improve. By today, all have tested negative and have returned to work; some yesterday and the others today. If the full reopening of schools is to succeed in keeping us all safe, the Test and Trace system has to massively improve. I hope parents didn't notice this situation too much as we had put in a range of contingency plans. Check for my regular Tweets for breaking news and let's look forward to a less troublesome experience next week.

Keep Safe. Best wishes. Tony Markham

Absence: Helpful Decision-Making Chart for Parents



We sent this chart to parents earlier this week (and repeated it on our Twitter feed) with a view to helping parents to make decisions as to whether to send their child to school or not if their son or daughter is under the weather. We hope this chart will help and for further information, please take a look at the government advice in the link below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance>

Extra Safety Precautions – Top Path Near Year 3 Classrooms



As this top path is a particular pinch point for parents to social distance, we have added many more social distancing markers on the floor and on the fence. We have also more reminders to keep your social distancing of two metres displayed close to that area and have deployed more staff in hi-viz to monitor safe distancing. **We would like to strongly suggest that adults wear masks in this area**, even if it's just for the few minutes that you are queuing and waiting for your child to be released. We didn't suggest this at first as the 'R' rate (rate of infection) was below 1.0. Now that the 'R' is 1.1 – 1.4 nationally, a growth of 5% per day ([source: gov.uk 'The R number and growth rate in the UK'](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/the-r-number-and-growth-rate-in-the-uk)), we believe that this additional VOLUNTARY single measure could potentially make a huge difference to our collective safety.

Absences of Siblings

If your child has a sibling who has been sent home with Covid-19 symptoms by another school, please DO NOT send your child into Herne unless you have a NEGATIVE test result for your child. In addition, if your child is absent from school FOR ANY REASON, you need to call our office every day your child is away and give clear reasons for their absence in order to keep us all safe.

...And Let's Keep Handwashing a High Priority

As we witness a European-wide rise in infections of Covid-19, we have once again brought handwashing right to the top of our priority list for the children and staff. We found this lovely child-friendly reminder for the children and have given an A3 poster of this to each teacher to talk to the children about and display in EVERY CLASSROOM.

Why not go through this with your child at home? If you'd like a physical copy of this, we have a number of them available under our canopy for parents to come and help themselves to throughout next week. We particularly love step number 3!

Reminder of Drop-off and Collection Times

As we have tweaked the times for dropping off and collection, we thought we'd just remind parents of the times we are now operating by:

Drop-Off 8.15 – 8.40

Collection 3.15 – 3.45

If you find that the time you are collecting is rather busy, why not try a slightly different time when it could be quieter? These times will remain the same until the end of October, after which we will be slightly adjusting them in order to gain a few more minutes of learning time in the school day. Watch out for our Flyers in October, which will highlight this change ready for November.

Library and Link Books

Starting next Friday, children will be able to start bringing home a book from their class bubble box. These will come home on Fridays and can be returned on Fridays. We will quarantine these books for 72 hours when they are returned to school. If you have lots of boxes at home and do not want a class bubble book, please let your classteacher know. Thank you.

School Trips

We have been receiving feedback about the new arrangements for our school day trips, some of which have highlighted a concern that parents may have to take time off from work to help transport their child. Our intent is to ensure school day trips continue as far as humanly possible and all we have been trying to do is see if these trips can go ahead with a little help from some parents. We have decided that where there are not enough parents coming forward, that we will use our two minibuses. However, we can only transport half the children on a minibus, as it is an enclosed space. This is to protect the school staff who will be driving/escorting.

We do understand that many parents won't be able to drop-off or collect from the trip venues and that where possible, if enough parents CAN help, then we should be able to run a trip using the half-capacity of our minibuses. If we can't make up the shortfall for a class, then we may have no choice but to cancel a trip for that class, which would be a dreadful shame. We are aware that some year teams took the decision to leave out the minibus provision because they thought that many parents may well have chosen to not offer help if we could take them (which would be understandable!) Looking ahead, want to discount the trip price for parents who are able to help with transport. Watch this space!

Residential Trips for 2021



Sadly, as mentioned previously on our first Flyer on August 28th, government guidance has dictated that we cannot run any residential visits this year for either Years 5 or 6. The fact that there will be many families facing increased hardship at this time has also been a factor in us calling this decision at this time. We share your disappointment about this news, but unfortunately, we have no choice in this matter.



International Flags

Hopefully many of you will have spotted the school flying the 'Gay Pride' flag during the last two weeks. This flag represents our commitment to celebrating diversity, which includes gender, race, orientation and ethnicity. As an outward demonstration to this hugely important commitment and in the light of challenging racism head-on, we invite families to contact us so that we can fly the flag of your child or family's country of origin. If we do not have the flag of your 'home' country of your child or your country of origin as a parent, we will buy the flag and make sure we fly it during the year, especially when there may be a special reason to fly that flag. Having said all of that, we know that you have made the UK your home, either temporarily or permanently, and parents and children need to know that we celebrate that too. Just because Brexit is only a few months away, it doesn't change our attitude at Herne about welcoming you all into our hearts. ☺



Parent Governor Applications



As mentioned previously, there are two positions vacant for parents or carers to join our governing body. We are delighted to say that we already have two applications. If you think you would be interested and would like to talk to our Chair of Governors about the role, please contact us here in the school office. The deadline for applications is **Monday 12th October 2020**. If we receive further applications, this would then trigger an election towards the end of October.

ELSA at Herne

Sonja Balmer, who is our Pupil Support & Guidance Manager (and ELSA – Emotional Literacy Support Assistant), is trying to work out how best to begin working with children again, who may need some emotional support/TLC. It is unlikely that these will be normal structured ELSA sessions at the moment, due to the limitations of bubbles and being aware of social distancing. However, she is very keen to be able to support as many children as possible during this time and hopes to resume 1:1 support of children, with the help of a couple of our amazing LSAs, within the next week or two. We will refer to these sessions as 'Wellbeing Time', rather than ELSA sessions, until these are possible again. We hope that this will hugely support our children during these troubling times.



FREE SCHOOL MEAL ENTITLEMENT AND ADDITIONAL FUNDING

If your child is entitled to free school meals we ask that you register them for this, even if they do not want to have a school meal, as it means the school qualifies for additional funding. This additional money is called 'Pupil Premium' funding and equates to currently **£1,320** for each eligible child. With the school having to fund all the extra safety and hygiene measures to protect the children without any additional money from central government, it is therefore vital that we ensure that we get all money to which we are entitled, so that we can give all our children the best support possible. If you think you might be entitled, please visit the below web address to register.



<https://www.gov.uk/apply-free-school-meals>

...And Let's Not Forget Our Environment!

We finish today's Flyer with a lovely message by Erin Jones and her grandad, who wrote this poem together:

About endangered animals
And man being cruel
It's all for greed
Money is his fuel

The tusks of elephants
Horned rhinos too
The only safe place
Is it a zoo?

Gracious sea turtles
North Atlantic whale
Both being hunted
For man's pockets to swell

The gorillas, the leopards
And tigers too
Has man no compassion
Not thought this through?

The lemur, the panda
Ivory billed woodpecker as well
God's beautiful creatures
Soon not tale to tell

What has man done
To the great polar bear?
Even the African wild dog
Killed without care

Let's all come together
Appreciate what God has create
To stop the killing
Before it's too late!

STAY ALERT ▶ CONTROL THE VIRUS ▶ SAVE LIVES