



Dear Thomas Whitehead CE Academy Families

I hope that you and your family have remained well throughout the summer and that you have found some time to relax.

If you are a family joining the Thomas Whitehead family, either with a Pre-school, Nursery or Reception child or joining a year group across the school, then I offer you a very warm welcome.

I am writing to you with revised information about the return to school in September. We are planning for, and are very hopeful for, much more normality – life as we knew it before Covid-19, in many ways. However, some aspects we will introduce slowly, as there will be so much change for those pupils in Years 1 to 6.

Ongoing control measures

Whilst some measures will be relaxed currently, there are some measures that will remain in place.

We will:

- Ensure good hygiene for everyone, with regular hand-washing and sanitising. The 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach continues to be very important.
- Maintain appropriate cleaning regimes.
- Keep occupied spaces well ventilated and comfortable teaching and learning environments.
- Follow Public Health advice on testing, self-isolation and managing confirmed cases of COVID-19.
- The one-way system will remain at drop off and collection from the classroom door.
- Wear face masks when social distancing can not be maintained
- Keep larger gatherings to key stages or phases, whenever possible,

Attendance

School attendance is mandatory for all pupils of compulsory school age and it is a priority to ensure children attend school regularly and are punctual each day.

Where a child is required to self-isolate or quarantine because of COVID-19 in accordance with relevant legislation or guidance published by PHE or the DHSC, they will be recorded as code X (not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus). Where they are unable to attend because they have a confirmed case of COVID-19 they will be recorded as code I (illness).

We must fully understand the reason for any absence, and this must be telephoned into the school office before 8.30am. Any absence not reported will be recorded as unauthorised.

Below, I have informed you of the current health and safety procedures including contact tracing, actions to be taken when Covid-19 symptoms are identified, and what to do in the event of a positive case of Covid-19. Following this, I have detailed the school's operational procedures for the start of term. I am aware that I have detailed a good deal of information, but urge you to read it, and to refer back to it, to help all systems and procedures run as smoothly as possible.

Please know that all of this information is in line with current government and Public Health guidance. However, also in line to with guidance, if we find, as a school, we have met threshold infection rates which indicate we need to reverse some of our measures, will we do so in conjunction with Public Health advice.

Guidance for your reference

Below, I have summarised some of the main points from issued government guidance, but you may wish to refer to the full government guidance:

[Schools COVID-19 operational guidance](#) (updated 17th August 2021)

[What parents and carers need to know about early years providers, schools and colleges during COVID-19](#) (updated 17th August 2021).

Close contacts of a positive case of Covid-19 in education settings

Individuals are not required to self-isolate if they live in the same household as someone with COVID-19, or are a close contact of someone with COVID-19, and any of the following apply:

- they are fully vaccinated
- they are below the age of 18 years and 6 months
- they have taken part in or are currently part of an approved COVID-19 vaccine trial
- they are not able to get vaccinated for medical reasons

Close contacts will now be identified via NHS Test and Trace and the school is no longer expected to undertake contact tracing. NHS Test and Trace will work with the parent of the positive case to identify close contacts. Contacts from a school setting will only be traced by NHS Test and Trace where the positive case and/or their parent specifically identifies the individual as being a close contact. This is likely to be a small number of individuals who would be most at risk of contracting COVID-19 due to the nature of the close contact. NHS Test and Trace will advise all identified close contacts to take a [PCR test](#).

The school will continue to work with health protection teams in the case of a local outbreak. If there is a substantial increase in the number of positive cases in school or locally, or if central government offers the area an enhanced response package, Public Health might advise the school to temporarily reintroduce some control measures.

Testing when an individual develops symptoms of Covid-19

The most important symptoms of COVID-19 are recent onset of any of the following:

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

When an individual develops COVID-19 symptoms or has a positive test, pupils, staff and other adults should follow Public Health advice on [when to self-isolate and what to do](#). They should not come into school if they have symptoms, have had a positive test result or for other reasons requiring them to stay at home due to the risk of them passing on COVID-19 (for example, they are required to quarantine).

If a pupil in school develops [COVID-19 symptoms](#), however mild, they will be isolated and parents will be contacted to arrange collection. For everyone with symptoms, they should avoid using public transport and, wherever possible, be collected by a member of their family or household. The household (including any siblings) should follow the

PHE [stay at home guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection](#).

Confirmatory PCR tests

Pupils with a positive LFD test result should self-isolate in line with the [stay at home guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection](#). They will also need to [get a free PCR test to confirm if they have COVID-19](#). Whilst awaiting the PCR result, the individual should continue to self-isolate. If the PCR test is taken within 2 days of the positive lateral flow test, and is negative, it overrides the selftest LFD test and the pupil can return to school, as long as the individual doesn't have COVID-19 symptoms.

Handwashing and hygiene

It is essential that everyone maintains good hand hygiene. Hands will need to be cleaned often by washing hands thoroughly for 20 seconds with running water and soap and drying them thoroughly, or by using alcohol hand rub or sanitiser ensuring that all parts of the hands are covered.

Hand washing and use of sanitiser will be supported and supervised. <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthybody/best-way-to-wash-your-hands/>

Hands will be washed/sanitised:

- on entry to the classroom
- after sneezing or coughing
- after going outside
- before and after eating

Children will be reminded not to touch their mouth, eyes and nose.

Staff will be asked to reinforce good respiratory hygiene by promoting the 'Catch it, bin it, kill it' approach.

Uniform and dress code

Full school uniform is expected at all times from the start of term. This includes a white polo shirt (KS1) shirt and tie (KS2), a royal blue cardigan or jumper, mid-grey skirt/shorts/trousers/pinafore and black shoes (not boots).

All hair longer than shoulder length must be tied back.

Nail varnish and dyed hair is not permitted.

Children should only wear plain gold/silver stud earrings; no other jewellery is permitted.

For a full list of updated uniform please see the school website.

Transporting pupils to school

Parents and carers are strongly encouraged to walk to school whenever possible. You will know that the neighbouring roads become very congested and can be unsafe when cars are not parked responsibly, so please can I ask for everyone to be considerate to keep families safe. Children may cycle or scoot to school, but they must not be ridden on site.

Mobile phones

Children in Years 5 & 6 are allowed to bring their phones to school only to support independence in walking unaccompanied. Any phone brought to school must be handed to the class teacher and a consent form completed. Children in Years 5 & 6 are also permitted to walk home unaccompanied by an adult once the necessary consent form has been completed and returned.

Fruit and vegetable snacks

The government free fruit scheme will commence for Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 children at the start of term.

Children in Years 3 to 6 can bring their own fruit or vegetable snack from home.

Please note that nuts are not permitted in school.

Medication and Medical Needs

Please can parents update the school office, via email, of any medical changes at:

office@twa.dsamat.co.uk with the subject heading **Medical Needs**.

Only prescribed medication, that needs to be taken **four** times a day, can be administered in school. Parents must complete an indemnity form where necessary, which is available from the school office. If your child needs medicine three times a day, school will not administer this as it is deemed that one dose can be given before school, one on return from school and one before bedtime. We are unable to administer Calpol or other pain killers. Parents, or a designated adult, is welcome to come to school to administer medication to a child if you wish.

Please can parents bring necessary medication to school e.g. inhalers and epi-pens, and hand these to a member of staff.

Contact details

Please ensure that the school office has your up to date contact details – phone number, email address, home address and emergency contact. If these have changed, please email the school office at: office@twa.dsamat.co.uk with the subject heading **Pupil Contact Details**

Parents' Consultation Evenings

Having used School Cloud online meetings successfully during the pandemic, we will be continuing with the system, at least, for the November 16th & 18th consultations.

Educational Visits

Educational visits will be able to take place in due course. Full and thorough risk assessments will take place for any proposed visits and will follow Public Health advice, such as hygiene and ventilation requirements.

Pupil wellbeing and support

Some pupils and adults may be experiencing a variety of emotions in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, such as anxiety, stress or low mood. Please see this link to Every Mind Matters which offers support around this matter <https://www.nhs.uk/every-mind-matters/>

Thank you for your continued support, this will be much needed as we work together to support all of the children to return to more usual routines. I am very much looking forward to a new school year and hope, more than anything, that it will be smoother for everyone than the last.

With best wishes

Mrs V Britnell
Headteacher