



LOVE ONE ANOTHER

SACRED HEART RC PRIMARY SCHOOL

WESTHOUGHTON



Sunday 17th January 2021

Dear families,

UPDATE

In the last week, as you are aware from our [communication](#) on each separate occasion, we have now had 5 separate cases of Covid-19 in our Reception bubble (the latest confirmed today, *with notification via this letter*), and a confirmed case in Y4. This indicates the speed and ease of transmission of the new covid-19 variant. There are likely further asymptomatic cases within our school community. The Infection Control Team have advised us that our procedures are robust, yet the virus is still able to transmit.

It is with this in mind that we are reminding everyone accessing key worker / vulnerable school places for their child of the need to follow all the measures in place, including:

- When dropping off your child, please always maintain social distancing, standing two metres apart if you are waiting. At pick-up, please stand at the coloured stars marked on the playground. Do not stand closer than 2m to anyone else on the school premises, or stop to talk to them.
- If you have a child who is asked to isolate by the school, this has been instructed by Public Health England when we notify them of a positive case. It means they must not leave the house in the same way as if NHS Test and Trace had contacted you. If you are therefore unable to deliver siblings to school without that isolating child leaving the house with you, we strongly advise that these siblings then move to remote learning also.
- If your child displays any symptoms which may be covid-19 related, please keep them at home and inform the school, [booking a PCR test for them](#).

Last week, the government announced that LFD home test kits would be made available for all staff in primary schools, with delivery of these tests expected over the coming week, along with instructions about the use, recording and reporting of these results. This is not the case for pupils, and therefore, we ask that all are particularly vigilant to minimise any threat of spreading the virus within our school community.

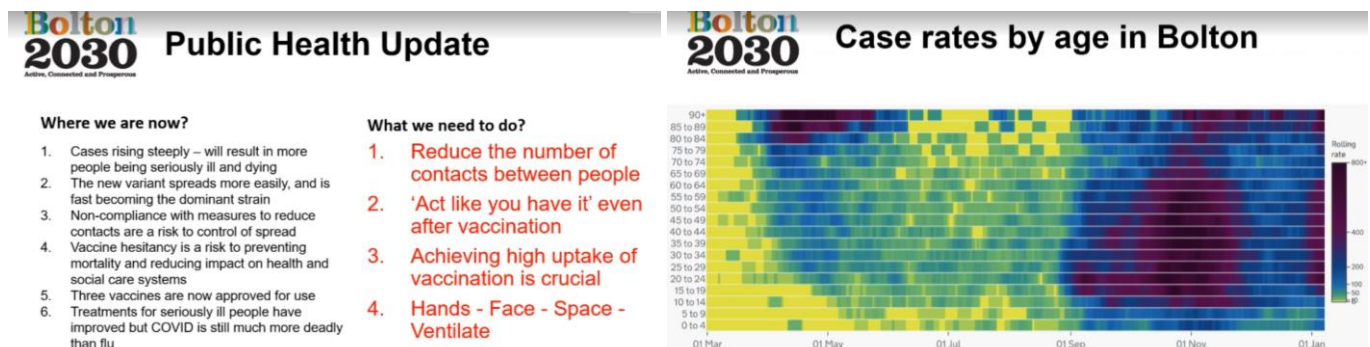
Amended [guidance for parents and carers](#) has been issued from the DfE. Significantly, this guidance now states:

*"Your child's school or college will speak to you to identify whether your child needs to attend. **You should keep your child at home if you can.** They may ask to see simple evidence to check whether you are a critical worker."*

The [guidance on critical workers and vulnerable children who can access schools or educational settings](#) has also been updated to clarify that parents and carers who are critical workers **should keep their children at home if they can** because, *"we now need to use every lever at our disposal to reduce all our social contacts wherever possible."*

Bolton Council further reinforced this in their [press release](#), last week, which was distributed to all families. Please consider whether you can keep your child at home to reduce the chance of community transmission of the coronavirus.

The Bolton Public Health advice, issued to all schools in a webinar last week, is to *'act like you have it'* when considering interaction with others. The case rates amongst all age groups have exponentially increased in Bolton over recent weeks.



REMOTE LEARNING & GOOGLE CLASSROOM: Thank you to all who are embracing their virtual classroom. We have contacted those small numbers who are finding access difficult and issued devices where this is necessary. The seven allotted devices from government arrived in school last week and are now allocated. We are also thankful to a neighbour and a parishioner who have donated laptops for this use, which will first be wiped and set up by our onsite technician. Thanks also to the Rotary Club of Westhoughton who have pledged to donate £540 to be spent on further devices to support home learning.

Schools have [statutory obligations and expectations](#) with regard to remote education:

- Set assignments so that pupils have meaningful and ambitious work each day in a number of different subjects. We are committed to the entitlement of every child to a broad, rich, high-quality education, including during this pandemic. Daily remote learning covers at least Maths, English, RE and another subject. PE activity is provided by our Key PE Sports coach and remote French lessons, led by Madame Harrison, are accessible from Y1-Y6. Everything we know about what a quality curriculum looks like still applies. The remote education curriculum is aligned to the classroom curriculum as much as possible. And, just like the classroom curriculum, it is carefully sequenced and ensures that pupils obtain the building blocks they need to move on to the next step. Curricular goals are made as explicit remotely as they would be in the classroom. To ensure a consistent and progressive approach, our staff are watching recordings of live input delivered in each year group as part of our virtual staff meetings. Last week we all engaged with the Y5 offer, and will this week watch some Reception input.
- Set work that is of equivalent length to the **core teaching** pupils would receive in school, and as a minimum (note revision of time from 3-4hrs / day for KS2 pupils):
 - Key Stage 1: 3 hours a day on average across the cohort, with less for younger children
 - Key Stage 2: 4 hours a day.
Our younger children have greater teacher input, with older pupils expected to be writing independently for longer sessions. The teacher is available throughout the day, via Google Classroom, to respond to their questions.
- Provide frequent, clear explanations of new content, delivered by a teacher or through high-quality curriculum resources or videos. Every day, all classes have a registration/wellbeing session that reinforces the previous learning sessions and sets out next steps in learning. These are backed up, where relevant with pre-recorded video instruction that may be viewed at suitable times and some live instruction.
 - Have systems for checking, at least weekly, whether pupils are engaging with their work, and inform parents immediately where engagement is a concern. Work is marked and 'returned' individually, daily, with any children not engaging being contacted unless we are aware of specific reasons. Children are asked to stay in the virtual classroom if they have specific questions or a 1:1 classroom is set up.
 - Gauge how well pupils are progressing through the curriculum using questions and other suitable tasks, and provide feedback, at least weekly, using digitally facilitated or whole-class feedback where appropriate. Feedback is provided in live sessions and individually on a daily basis. Catch up support is facilitated and delivered by Mr Stubbs to identified pupils.
 - Enable teachers to adjust the pace or difficulty of what is being taught in response to questions or assessments, including, where necessary, revising material or simplifying explanations to ensure pupils' understanding. Daily feedback and tasks enable the teacher to adjust the lessons based on their assessments. Some differentiated work is provided.

READING: In addition to Rapid Read, we have now invested in a subscription to [Oxford Owl](#) which becomes live tomorrow. All children accessing the reading scheme are now able to access reading books remotely. **Further information will be given by your child's teacher.**

The work that our school has done since the start of the pandemic to ensure that pupils have access to their educational entitlement, whether at home or at school, has been incredible. To everyone who has helped to protect education during this challenging time: thank you – you are a credit to the children and community you serve. Delivering and responding to remote learning via Google Classroom is often taking our teachers well into the evening and I thank them for this. Home learning is not easy for families – we are appreciative of the work you are doing to support us in our role as co-educators. If you have any problems at all that we can help with, please contact us via the main office.

KS2 SATs: The Secretary of State confirmed in a response to a question in the House that Key Stage 2 SATs will not be proceeding in 2021. STA will be confirming the detail on primary assessments to schools shortly.

SCHOOL SOCIAL MEDIA: We will continue to post learning from home and school during this lockdown. The whole point of the social media stream is to enable parents to open learning conversations with their children. This enables those key workers who do not know what has gone on in school to know a bit more.

MEALS: The DfE has amended [guidance on providing school meals](#) during the current lockdown and has confirmed that meals should be available free of charge to:

- all infant pupils
- pupils who meet the benefits-related free school meals eligibility criteria

We retain the offer for families to collect a meal bag from the school office. Please let us know if you plan to do this, so that our catering service has the bags ready. Longer term, the national voucher scheme is to be reintroduced, and school will inform you when we are equipped with the necessary information. Eligible pupils will receive FSM to the value of £15 per week.

We finish with the prayer shared at our virtual staff meeting:

We pray for ourselves. Help us to come to terms with the challenges that this lockdown situation presents to us. Enable us to be courageous educators, remembering the importance of our role of service for the common good and transformation of society.

Our words, Lord, will inspire a generation to be your hands, voice and eyes in the world today.

In these incendiary times, words do indeed matter. The words we use have meaning and power. We will choose our words carefully and wisely, and always in a way that meets our core values, to hold trust on behalf of children.

We keep in our prayers the community of Sacred Heart, Accrington, who mourn the loss of their Headteacher, and all who have lost those special to them.

Thank you for all your support. We pray, stay with us Lord on our journey. ‘Most Sacred Heart of Jesus: I place all my trust in you...’

Yours sincerely,

M Johnson

Mr M Johnson
Executive Headteacher

S Middleton

Miss S Middleton
Deputy Headteacher