Once more unto the breach, dear friends

Once more unto the breach, dear friends, once more;

Or close the wall up with our English dead.

In peace there’s nothing so becomes a man

As modest stillness and humility:

But when the blast of war blows in our ears,

Then imitate the action of the tiger;

Stiffen the sinews, summon up the blood,

Dear All,

On this day where we have heard that the Oxford/AstraZenca vaccine has been approved, and we await the directives from Gavin Williamson, I thought you might find it helpful for us to consider together what our next steps will be.

It remains the fact that Hands Face Space Replace needs to be the mantra of our lives!

My personal opinion is that the chance of any individual St Mary’s child being able to attend school on site without interruption between now and February half term is zero. The nature, causes and lengths of these interruptions will be many and varied but they are, to my mind, inevitable. To that end I have made plans relating to ‘When we are in school’ and ‘When we are learning from home’. You will just need to apply whichever one is relevant to you on any given day. They would apply equally to a one day illness, or a full school closure and anything in between.

When we are in school

Most of what happens in school will be the same. Staff will be wearing face coverings more often, including in the classroom, and keeping lots of space between each other. In addition we are asking that children and parents do the following.

Children

- **Hands**: Keep up high levels of vigilance on hand washing. Please do provide your child with some hand cream to protect their skin in the cold weather.
- **Face**: All children to be asked to wear face-coverings when inside. This is in line with practice in primary schools in Canada – Miss Greenwood and I have checked this with our Canadian nephews – but is of course not mandatory here, just a very strong request!
- **Space**: Firm reminders to all children about the importance of keeping distance
- **Replace**: The classrooms are going to be VERY well ventilated. School uniform to be suspended until at least half-term to enable all children to wear flexible layers of warm clothing. You are of course free to use the school uniform as the ‘base layer’ but no shorts this term!

Parents

- Comply with ALL government COVID guidance
- Keep children at home if they are showing/reporting even the slightest signs of being unwell. *(all the of the positive cases in children reported so far started off with a slight headache and upset stomach – or had absolutely no symptoms)*
- Feel free to keep siblings at home if one child is isolating
- Support children in engaging with online learning
- **Wear face coverings anywhere in sight of the school boundary**
- Maintain a 2m+ distance from all other adults
- Only send one adult to site to collect children
When we are learning from home

This will continue as before for individuals who are isolating with their families. It is crucial that all families check that they can access this. If you have any problems please contact the class teacher in the first instance. We still have a limited number of Chromes for Loan so if Father Christmas didn’t sort you out with devices do get in touch chromesforloan@stmarysprimary.org

Where a whole bubble is isolating, in addition to the general online provision:

- Every child isolating in year 2-6 will be offered one 15 minute 1:1 tutoring session with a teacher per week, to focus on specific gaps and to encourage engagement
- Every parent of a child isolating in Rec/year 1 will be offered one 15 minute 1:1 support session with a teacher per week, to focus on specific gaps and to encourage engagement

In the case of a longer or fuller school closure we will put on some support sessions for parents both for learning and for dealing with children generally whilst working from home. Believe me, with around 70% of my staff with school age children and/or pre-schoolers we will be sharing your pain!

Keyworkers

Support for keyworker children on site (where the bubble is isolating) will be provided by a member of staff from the bubble. This will be very limited access to front line NHS/carers/Police/Paramedics) It is ONLY for the days when YOU are working outside the home AND there is no other adult who can supervise your child at home.

If you wish to register for a keyworker place please email keyworker@stmarysprimary.org as soon as possible so that we can set up our contact list. Please note that since we are in Tier 4 the expectation is that virtually all adults will be working from home and that demand for this will be extremely limited.

COVID Infections

I hope you and your families have remained well over the Christmas break, but am already aware of some families who contracted the virus over the holiday period. We have set ups a specific email address covidcase@stmarysprimary.org which we would alike all families and staff to use to inform us of any cases now, and in the future.

We will need to know:

- Name of child and class
- Day of test – which was subsequently returned as POSITIVE
- Day symptoms first showed
- Confirmation that they were in school in the two days prior to symptoms showing
- Contact name and telephone number

    And you, good yeoman,
    Whose limbs were made in England, show us here
    The mettle of your pasture; let us swear
    That you are worth your breeding; which I doubt not;
    For there is none of you so mean and base,
    That hath not noble lustre in your eyes.
    I see you stand like greyhounds in the slips,
    Straining upon the start. The game’s afoot:

This is going to be a challenging few weeks for us all, but we can do this! Sarah Lewis