

Tuesday, 6th October, 2020.

Dear Parents, Carers and Children,

Weekly Covid-19 Update Letter.

I hope this letter finds you well.

First, let me begin by apologising that I have not been in touch with you more over the last few weeks but this is because I was off school ill with coronavirus. I am fine now and back in school (after just over two weeks off, a negative test and no more symptoms). I want to assure you all that I do not think I caught the virus from work/school (but can't be sure as I do very little activity these days outside of work). As I share an office with several members of the Leadership Team (despite social distancing and visors etc) they had to self-isolate, to protect each other and your families.

This has meant that at times only one school leader has been in school (usually there are seven of us) whilst others have been working from home. A very big thank you to Mrs Varley and our Assistant Headteacher, Mrs Noble who literally was, at one point, our 'last person standing'! They have done a superb job in keeping the school running normally, in what have been very challenging circumstances. A small number of children had come into school with the virus (unknown to them - obviously) and we then had to send some of our bubbles home, including the staff who teach in them and any other members of staff who they had been in contact with. At one point we had over 30 staff off school (because of instructions from the NHS Track and Trace to self-isolate).

I must say here that the messages that we were getting from the NHS and Public Health England, at times, were very mixed indeed, so we aired on the side of caution and sent staff home who later were able to return once they had been questioned by NHS Track and Trace and given the 'all clear'. Better to be safe than sorry!

A few of you have been in contact with me and asked questions about the current situation in school. Here are the questions and responses.

Q1. Why are you now closing on a Friday afternoon for a 'deep clean' when I thought that you'd been doing that all along, every night?

Each night, after school, I have instructed the teaching and office staff to leave by 4pm. This means that the school now has a deep clean each night but on a Friday afternoon it has a specialist 'Covid-19' clean, when different chemicals and detergents are used that normally cannot be used in a school when children may be present the next day. The building is then ventilated fully.

Q2. It seems like Covid-19 has become 'rampant' at Peel Park. Has it?

No. We have had a very small number of cases but because people were working in largish bubbles then it meant that if we had a positive test then the whole bubble had to go home and self-isolate for 14 days. From the outside this may seem like a lot of people have coronavirus but in reality it could just be two or three people.

Q3. How did the virus get into the school in the first place? Surely your procedures aren't good enough!?

First, we have to remember that we are in the midst of a global pandemic. Many clinical settings with professionals trained extensively in infection control have not been able to control or stop the virus spreading within their institutions, such as the hospital in South Wales where 82 cases were reported last week.

However, we have examined where we think it first entered the premises (child X) and have traced, the best we can, from there and implemented and tweaked our procedures.

Q4. Why aren't you taking every child and teacher's temperature on their arrival at school?

There are many reasons for this but the main one being that it simply doesn't work. Most people who I know, including me, who have tested positive for the virus have not had a high temperature! It is only one of the possible symptoms.

As parents/carers YOU know your child(ren) far better than anyone else and you know if they are not feeling well. If they present with any of the well-known symptoms, such as a new continuous cough and/or a temperature of more than 37.8 degrees Celsius and/or loss of taste and smell then the chances are they may have coronavirus. But we must bear in mind there are other, less well known and not officially recognised symptoms that we must now also be on the look-out for, such as severe headaches and a sore throat (49% of adults report a sore throat and 40% of children). The second most common symptom amongst children is fatigue (with over half of all children with the virus suffering fatigue). *source - Covid 19 App.

I know this is not easy as we are coming into winter and children may complain of these types of things a lot - but we must share this information with you in order to keep you and the rest of our school community safer! If in doubt please call us here at school and discuss with us; we are here to help.

Q5. Don't the local authority (Bradford Council) have a Covid-19 secure 'kite-mark' type standard/thing that every LA school has to adhere to and abide by? Are they not sending their workers into every school to check you are up to standard on this? Surely if pubs and restaurants have to have this to open, schools should?!

The Local Authority do not have such a thing as every school and educational setting is different so it is up to the Governing Body of each school to complete a risk assessment for their building/school.

Q6. What are you doing differently now to what you were doing 2/3 weeks ago?

We, just like the health and medical profession, are learning how to cope with and manage the coronavirus on an ever evolving basis. As a school we learn from what went before and tweak and change our practice in order to reduce risk and keep each other as safe as possible. This is what we have done in the last few weeks to tighten our procedures even further:

a. We have reduced the size of all of our bubbles to a maximum of 30 pupils. Nursery, Reception, Year 1, Year 2 and Year 6 were all in whole year group bubbles (90 children and 6 staff - approx) a few weeks ago due to the way we teach in these year groups and staffing levels. However, we have re-arranged some year groups dramatically in order to have maximum bubble sizes of 30. This will reduce the number of pupils and staff that we have to send home if we have a positive test in a class.

b. Covid-19 clean every Friday afternoon (see above). (Children will be provided with learning for the afternoon).

c. Asking ALL adults who come on to our school grounds/site to wear a face mask or visor - even if just outside. Please help us by adhering to this.

d. Reduced the number of non-teaching staff in the building at any one time. For example, we have Team A and Team B in the main office area and they work a week from home and then a week in school. Class Teachers also go and work from home when not providing direct teaching in class.

e. Invited in a Health and Safety specialist to examine and scrutinise our risk assessment and procedures and implemented any recommendations already, without delay (see points a, b, c and d, above).

Q7. What is supposed to happen about learning if a bubble closes? What can I expect to be provided for my child in the way of teaching and learning?

a. Every child will have an exercise book sent home. This is for them to write in and complete their work. We may send home other resources like 'Maths No Problem' books and 'Reach Curriculum' documents. These must be returned to school when your child returns.

b. Teachers prepare online learning and put this on our website.

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c. We are currently carrying out a survey of all our families to find out about the devices you have in your household that would allow children to complete their online learning. If you have not yet completed this, then Mrs. Watts will be in touch to find out this information. It is important that you help us find out this information so that we can help you should your child have to be educated at home.

d. We will be moving all our online learning to an APP called 'Seesaw' in the next few weeks. This will allow your child and their teacher to have greater discussions about any home learning. The app will also help the teacher to keep you informed about learning. We will contact you all with more information about this in the next few weeks.

e. If your child has to self-isolate but their classmates remain in school, then staff will direct you to online lessons that are being run by Oak Academy.

Q8. Are you sure you should be back at work Mr Mason-Edwards? Are you still infectious and could you be a risk to our children and the staff?

Apart from feeling quite fatigued (tired), I am now absolutely fine. For me Covid-19 was like a mild flu - I was one of the lucky ones. When I contracted Swine Flu ten years ago I felt much, much worse! I am grateful for the support of my colleagues (Mrs Hutchinson delivered food to outside my house for me!), family and friends and your messages of support too - thank you.

I have been advised by two of the GPs from my surgery (I rang for a second opinion) that I am indeed fine to return to work and not contagious. I also had a negative Covid-19 test result come through on Saturday just gone (03.10.2020), just to be on the safe side!

Over the next few weeks I will be keeping a low profile and remaining in my office until my fatigue wears off and my energy levels return but please do keep in touch or contact me if you need/want to: head@peelpark.bradford.sch.uk or 07792 402654.

A big thank you to all our very supportive parents/carers for bearing with us over the last few weeks, especially with the change to the start and finish times and Friday afternoons - I really do appreciate your understanding on the matter.

I will be keeping you updated with feedback each week from now on as I feel that in times like these people appreciate the extra communication and the ability to ask and have questions answered. Remember to please wear a mask from now on when you visit the school site and to be polite and kind to each other at all times - as one big Peel Park family 😊.

Incorporating the
BD3 Forest School



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Peel Park

Primary School
and Nursery

The Path to Success

Finally, a very big thank you to ALL of my superb staff team here at Peel Park. They really are the best that I have ever had the pleasure to work with! Their commitment to your children's welfare and learning is awesome! I hope you feel the same.

Yours Sincerely

Lloyd Mason-Edwards

Mr Lloyd Mason-Edwards
Headteacher

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