



School House
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Wednesday 3rd September 2020

Dear Children and Families,

A huge welcome back to this Autumn Term; for most children it will be to their next class. We are also delighted to welcome children new to the area and our youngest learners in Reception and Nurseries.

We are very pleased and relieved that the time has come to be able to welcome ALL children back to our three schools. The staff at your schools have worked really hard to make school safe AND inviting for you all. I know they are all very excited to get back to our new normal. We hope the school holiday has been successful and safe for you all but now we are ready to really motor on with our core purpose of educating.

At the end of last term, you received detailed information about each schools routines and procedures. Please remind yourself of them and chat to your children about them too. We are working hard to strike the right balance between safety measures and making school welcoming.

It is inevitable that this term, and most likely this year will bring challenges for our community and the country. To keep our community as safe as possible we need staff, families and children to abide by the basic protective principles and practices:

- social distancing as appropriate – we know young children will not do this
- regular handwashing/sanitising
- self-isolating and testing if COVID symptoms are present and informing the school
- Use Catch it - Kill It - Bin It to promote respiratory hygiene
- Allow necessary cleaning measures to take place

We will endeavour to keep you up to date with any changes; many of you will be aware these can happen at quite short notice with no prior warning for schools, so we ask you to be patient with us and we will try and be as effective as possible with our communication with you.

Face coverings/masks

The government guidance states:

'In primary schools where social distancing is not possible in areas outside of classrooms between members of staff or visitors, for example in staffrooms, headteachers will have the discretion to decide whether to ask staff or visitors to wear, or agree to them wearing face coverings in these circumstances.

Based on current evidence and the measures that schools are already putting in place, such as the system of controls and consistent bubbles, face coverings will not be necessary in the classroom even where social distancing is not possible. Face coverings would have a negative impact on teaching and their use in the classroom should be avoided'. (Gov.uk 28th August)

I recognise that there is huge range of opinions and views about the wearing of masks. There is not enough time or indeed evidence to explore this here; however I felt it would be something you and your children would like clarity on for our schools.

Currently, we DO NOT require families to wear masks when they come on to site UNLESS they are meeting **INSIDE** with a member of staff. Any parent or visitor is asked to stay behind the screens in place at the office **if visiting schools is essential**.

Children are not required to wear masks inside school or outside. Any child or family member choosing to wear a mask must have a secure plastic zip up bag to keep the mask in and know how to safely manage this. Staff will not be able to assist or handle children masks unless it is in the event of an emergency. For obvious safety and hygiene reasons we will dispose of any mask that is not safely contained. At the moment we are not encouraging children to wear masks in school.

It is at the discretion of individual staff if they choose to wear masks and I'm sure you will understand that it would not be appropriate to provide justification about individuals as this would breach their right to privacy. If however, you have specific concerns because of any speech language and communication needs your child has, please feel free to make an appointment to discuss.

Education Education Education

Whilst our primary role is to ensure we equip all children with academic skills and knowledge, across our three schools we strongly believe the development of the whole child is equally important. Without personal development and growth, learning is much harder.

We do this by trying to build trusted professional relationships between staff and children and staff and families. I would like to take this opportunity to reassure families that we will strive to create a school and classroom ethos that enables your child, and **ALL** children to thrive and flourish whatever their needs, personality or interests.

In the first weeks of the new year we will help your child/ren settle back to school or get to know their new school by making our high expectations for learning and behaviour really transparent and clear for children. This helps them feel secure and confident which in turn enables them to learn.

Please be assured that we know and recognise that school life will feel a little different and children will not be 'in trouble' for making mistakes, genuinely forgetting a procedure or rule or not understanding. We will help them with this in the coming weeks and months ahead.

Changes

Each of the school headteachers will communicate with you if there are changes to arrangements in individual schools.

In the coming weeks you will also hear from them about the main focus for school improvement this year so we keep moving the schools forward. In summary, across the year we are collectively looking at focusing on ***high expectations, being brilliant reading communities, knowing how to be good learner and having an aspirational curriculum looking at being an artist and scientist.***

We warmly Mrs Julie Westamacott who will be our new interim Chair of Governors across Bignold and Angel Road Federation. She knows the school communities and has background in social care. Julie will shortly be write to introduce herself.

I want to wish you all a brilliant start to this year and encourage us all to work in genuine partnership to overcome difficulties as they arrive and to support the children to be the best young people and learners they possibly can be. They fill us with hope for the future. I very much look forward to working with you all.

BJ Neate-Evans

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Executive Principal

Bignold Primary, Angel Rd Infant and Nursery and Angel Road Junior School