



Federation of Angel Road Schools & Nursery  
Angel Road  
Norwich  
NR3 3HR  
Infant: 01603 427113  
Junior: 01603 425494  
[office@angelroadinfant.norfolk.sch.uk](mailto:office@angelroadinfant.norfolk.sch.uk)  
[office@angelroadjunior.norfolk.sch.uk](mailto:office@angelroadjunior.norfolk.sch.uk)  
[www.angelroadinfant.co.uk](http://www.angelroadinfant.co.uk)  
[www.angelroadjunior.norfolk.sch.uk](http://www.angelroadjunior.norfolk.sch.uk)

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Dear Families

Welcome back to our school communities. It has been so lovely to hear the chatter of children and see how keen they have been to return. I have been around all three schools this week and peaked my head around many class doors. I have been very, very impressed with the way all children, young and older alike, have adapted and are behaving safely inside and outside. The classes have felt calm and purposeful. You should feel very proud of them. It is testament to you as parents, to have them so well prepared and also to the school teams for managing the extraordinary changes that we have had to implement. I have seen families really following the procedures we have had to put in place and this really is appreciated by the staff in school. It has been an excellent and safe start which we are thrilled about.

At the moment, there is a lot of information to give you so that you understand the way we are working and why we are making the decisions we make. I will try and keep this to the point as I know you will be getting other information too.

### **MASKS**

At the moment we are only asking parents to wear masks if they have to come into school for a meeting. We have not yet asked that parents wear masks on the school grounds. If we see an increase in possible or confirmed cases it is likely we will do this. At the moment, we are reliant on families to:

- strictly adhere to social distancing
- ensure children wash their hands before and after school
- keep your child (and any siblings) away from school if they have any symptoms (high temperature, new persistent cough, loss of sense of smell/taste) and informing us.

## COVID CASES and COMMUNICATION

We have standard letters to keep you informed of suspected/possible/confirmed cases, if your child needs to self-isolate or if we have an outbreak. Public Health England provide us with advice and support.

It is highly likely that we will have to use these letters a lot. We need the letters to be noticed and adhered to. If we send ALL parents letters each time there is a suspected case, we believe it will lose impact and may make some families anxious and result in keeping children away unnecessarily. We think that trying to get as many children back into the routine of regular learning is a top priority so we need attendance to be the best it can be. I want to remind and reassure families that each school has been organised so that they are operating in defined bubbles. We are strongly discouraging interaction between bubbles. Staff that cross bubbles are extra vigilant and try hard to adhere to social distancing with children.

We will send letters to groups/whole school as follows:

**Suspected Case** - a letter to families of children in the same bubble; **all symptom free children should continue to come to school until informed otherwise**

**Confirmed case** - a letter to the whole school **but you do not need to self-isolate because of school case unless directed by us to do so**

**Self-isolation** - a letter to families of the children in the same bubble as the confirmed case; **everyone else should still come to school.**

**Outbreak** - a letter to the whole school

**Negative result** - a letter to families of children in the same bubble

These letters will be emailed to you **unless** you have requested hard copy. It is important that you get into the habit of checking for updates daily. We will not be able to allow children on site if they are in a bubble that has been asked to self-isolate because a letter has not been read. I am sorry to sound so brutal, but this is a very difficult time in the management of schools, and I believe that the clearer the information the better it is for families so that relationships between school and families are good and not fractured by misunderstanding. We recognise how disruptive self isolation requests are families too.

In the event that your child is asked to self-isolate, there will be some learning activities provided. We are awaiting more IT equipment and will develop this as fast as we can.

We know the testing process can be a challenge and we are hearing about this daily.

## TIRED CHILDREN

A number of staff informed me that some children were quite tired. Lots of children say they are still keeping later lockdown bedtimes. There is a lot for children to take on board at the beginning of the normal year. This year there is even more. The processing of information is very tiring. I'm sure many of you who may have had to make workplace adaptations find this 'new behaviour' tiring too. We are not the parent of your children and therefore can only make recommendations and observations. There is good evidence to show how sleep aids learning and healthy development. For your information I have included a link to NHS sleep recommendations:

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/sleep-and-tiredness/how-much-sleep-do-kids-need/>

## GENERAL INFORMATION

At the beginning of each year, as a leader of schools it is my habit to share with families a few general points that help schools work effectively with families so that children can learn successfully.

- Our actions, thinking and decisions are always based on what we believe, in our professional judgement, is best for the children. We recognise and accept that individuals may not always share our views. Diversity is brilliant. We would like our families to **TRUST** our professional judgments and try and support the work of the school.
- We welcome **feedback** and comments that help us improve the school. We ask that they are communicated at an appropriate time and done in way that is courteous and respectful. We hope all feedback is given with good intent and free from malice. Honesty is fine! We are learners too.
- **Good communication** is the bedrock of good relationships. We will endeavour to get this right. At times we may not get this right. This year in particular we are making a lot of adjustments and learning what works and what doesn't. Please be patient with us.
- We will not tolerate any **abusive conduct** towards staff, other parents or children. This includes physical and verbal abuse and any behaviour that is perceived as threatening or intimidating. If we are concerned about parental conduct, the school reserves the right to restrict access to individuals whose conduct prevents the safe and smooth running of the school.

There are so many aspects and messages about your child's school we would like to share but we are very aware of the volume of information we need you to read at the moment; so enough for me to say, we are hopeful and excited to have the lively chatter, the creativity, the bundles of ideas and spirit that children bring to school. Let's make this year a happy year of learning in school or at home by working together for the future of our children.

Regards

*Binks Neate-Evans*

BJ Neate-Evans

Executive Principal

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

Direct dial: 01603 980541

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e: [information@evolutionacademytrust.co.uk](mailto:information@evolutionacademytrust.co.uk) t: 01603 981210