

6th September 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope you all have a great Summer Break and have been able to enjoy some of the sunny weather we've had in Devon. I'm delighted to welcome back pupils today and a special warm welcome to our new starts joining us in our Early Years Reception Class, welcome to ASM. It was lovely to see so many beaming faces (parents and pupils!) as children came into school this morning, what a gorgeous sight it was. The start of the school year is always such a special time and this is certainly true for me this year as I become part of the incredible ASM school family.

I feel privileged to join you all in supporting children to thrive and I know how important 'Building lifelong foundations together' really is. I know that COVID restrictions on schools prevented me from spending quality time at ASM before the summer break and many of you are probably wondering who I am!

To ensure we get the chance to get to know each other I will be sending out invites over the next week to some 'drop in' sessions after school. This will be an informal opportunity to say hi and to ask any questions we have for each other. I am so looking forward to meeting you all.

As we look forward then to this year, I wanted to take this opportunity to reassure parents about the measures, we have in place to prioritise high quality face to face education for children, whilst **minimising risks of any COVID- 19 transmission.**

We will continue to have our System of Controls which include: regular handwashing, good ventilation, enhanced cleaning as well as following **Government rules on testing and isolation which all parents need to be aware of:**

- Children should not come to school with symptoms but book a PCR test via <https://www.nhs.uk/ask-for-a-coronavirus-test> or by calling 119. The most common symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) are recent onset of:
 - a new continuous cough
 - a high temperature
 - a loss of, or change in, your normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia)
- If the PCR test is positive, the child must isolate for 10 days and parents will be contacted by NHS Test and Trace who will identify any close contacts and support with next steps. Schools will no longer have responsibility for contact tracing. But please do let us know so we can support with Remote Learning and be extra vigilant for any spread at school.
- Other household members will be advised to take a PCR test but can attend school unless they themselves have symptoms or have a positive PCR test.



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TOGETHER WE EMPOWER EXCELLENCE



If we do have positive cases in school, under Government rules on self isolation, we will no longer be sending whole bubbles home. Instead, we will send parents of children in that year group a 'Warn and Inform' letter with information so that they can be extra vigilant too.

Rates of COVID-19 in the South West are high and the whole of the region has been designated Enhanced Response Area. This means we should be vigilant and play our part in minimising any risks. Devon's COVID-19 rates remain high.

There are things we can all do to reduce the risks and I would encourage our whole community to work together, as you did so brilliantly in the Summer, to do this:

Do

- Wear face coverings in enclosed and crowded spaces, where you may come in contact with people you don't normally meet: Please wear face coverings at school drop off and collection.
- wash your hands with soap and water often – do this for at least 20 seconds
- use hand sanitiser gel if soap and water are not available
- wash your hands as soon as you get home
- cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when you cough or sneeze
- put used tissues in the bin immediately and wash your hands afterwards
- Participate in twice weekly LFD testing following national guidelines (recommended for 11 years and over). Adults encourage you to log your results here: <https://www.gov.uk/log-test-site-covid19-results>

The Government continues to encourage all over 16 to ensure they are vaccinated to protect themselves and others. Devon Council have been working hard to ensure people can easily access these by calling their GP, the national booking service <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/book-coronavirus-vaccination> or calling 119.

Our school staff continue to work on minimising the risk by LFD testing twice a week, wearing face coverings in any crowded shared areas of the school as well as when on the school gates. Like all schools, we will have an outbreak management plan which would be put in place, with support from Public Health England, should an outbreak occur and this would see 'tighter' measures.

A few restrictions we have previously had in place will now be removed to allow us to resume some of the important aspects of school. This includes getting back to whole school assemblies and worship in the hall. We will of course keep this continuously under review to ensure we are all safe.

In the past we have also asked that pupils do not bring school bags to school. Sometimes juggling water bottles, packed lunches etc can be tricky so therefore we are happy for children to begin bringing school bags again.

This morning you may have noticed that the playground is looking a little unfinished!! The shiny new playground should be completed this week. There have unfortunately been delays in the



construction of this due to COVID. We will ensure all children have a chance to run around and enjoy some fresh air during the school day.

Today the new lunches begin. We are lucky to have an incredible catering team who work so hard to provide our pupils and staff with healthy and tasty meals. Please remember to order lunches on the MYEd (Edu Spot) by 6pm the day before the meal is required to enable our teams to plan.

Finally, I thank you all in advance for working with us to keep the whole school community safe during these challenging times.

I look forward to meeting you all over the coming weeks.

Yours Sincerely

Mrs L Secker

Head of Academy