



**Harwell Community Primary School**

The Styles,  
Harwell,  
OX11 0HX

Headteacher: Bryn Gibson

Telephone: (01235) 835337

Email: [office.2563@harwell.oxon.sch.uk](mailto:office.2563@harwell.oxon.sch.uk)

25th March 2021

Dear Parents,

As I said in my previous email, there are always positives, to use a much-used cliché, *every cloud has a silver lining*. There have been an awful lot of clouds recently! So thank you for joining me in looking for the shiny moments!

For example, while the LFTs can lead to possibilities of increased class isolation, it does mean that it is another asymptomatic person who has been prevented from inadvertently spreading the virus. I understand that increased cases in school can cause worries but this means that we can continue to reduce the R rate and come out of lockdown as planned.

The following link is to the [Oxfordshire COVID dashboard](#), which gives up-to-date information about cases in our area.

A further example of an event having a positive outcome is that next week, Year 1 will be learning in the hall and the barn area for the last three days of term and will use the changing rooms toilets exclusively.

On the positive side, the children will be able to spread out their learning (the spaces used by Year 1, will be used by them solely for this time) and the KS1 area toilets will start a mammoth makeover.

It has taken several years to bring the project to this point (including making sure we had sufficient funds to cover the sizable cost). The whole layout will be changed, making the area lighter and more spacious, with more hand washing facilities for the children to make use of and better cubicles for the children to use.

It will be a much-needed improvement in the facilities for the children, which will benefit classes for years to come. The plan is for it to finish before the end of the Easter holidays. We have worked hard to ensure there is minimal disruption for the children and that procedures are COVID safe.

Year 2 will remain in their classroom but as the current KS1 toilets are unavailable for use, they will use some of the cubicles within the Foundation Class washroom. This will be managed in a COVID safe way by having designated cubicles and children being accompanied by a member of Year 2 staff to ensure that no Foundation Class children are in the washroom at the same time. The washroom will be chemically fogged after school each day.

The Barn after school club will continue to operate from outside but if the weather is wet they will be located in rooms bordering the playground - the staff room, the Nest and the Lab, using the disabled toilet as their washroom. These areas will be steam cleaned at the end of the school day and then chemically fogged after the Barn use to ensure deep cleaning. The Barn will continue to use their own resources. Children attending The Barn will be outside at every opportunity. Parents using the Barn, please ensure that your children have coats to wear. When you collect them, please come to reception and your children will be brought to the gate to meet you.

So as we welcome back the classes that have been isolating, and look forward to the improved facilities, we can find positives in every situation.

On a different note, I wanted to address in general a couple of questions that have come my way, and the first is bubble mixing. For those of you who have read the school's risk assessment, you will see several references to mixing bubbles.

The classes belong to two bubbles - their class bubble and their phase bubble (i.e. Year 1 and 2 are a Key Stage 1 tier). These bubbles/tiers are to support our practical organisation of staff and to support our efforts to track and trace.

The children are not mixed. Staff are not able to mix at lunchtime and have designated areas of the school to use in their tiers to support our contract tracing.

Very occasionally, staff are moved across tiers, but we ensure that there is a gap between the time that staff are in different classes (typically 2 days in line with Public Health and track and trace measures). Any movement of staff is tracked so that contact tracing can be effective.

Please remember that I have a finite number of school staff that I can draw upon to keep the school running smoothly. Next term, staff may be deployed in two bubbles (particularly in the case of swimming, to make this possible for all year groups to access).

Another question I have had recently is about testing of primary age children with LFD devices.

I spoke to Public Health about this again on Tuesday and they are very clear in their guidance that Primary age children are not the target audience for LFTs. They should be taken for a PCR test, only if they show one of the common symptoms. I understand that classes isolating are a cause of worry but we are working with Public Health and our COVID practices have been thoroughly reviewed.

Each day schools receive updated guidance from The Department for Education and I have included at the end of this letter an excerpt from today's guidance which is specifically about Primary school pupils and rapid asymptomatic testing.

It is a short time to the Easter holidays and I know that we are all looking forward to making progress down the road out of lockdown. I want to thank the children, my staff and you for your continuing flexibility, empathy and support.

We hope that you have a safe and enjoyable break and that the sun shines on us all.

Warm regards,

Bryn Gibson

## Primary school pupils and rapid asymptomatic testing

On advice from Public Health England (PHE), pupils in primary schools and children in nursery settings are not included in the rapid asymptomatic testing programme.

PHE has advised that there are currently limited public health benefits to testing primary-aged pupils with lateral flow devices (LFD). In addition, primary-aged pupils, particularly younger children, may find the LFD testing process unpleasant and are unable to self-swab.

We are advising that primary-aged pupils should only be tested if they are symptomatic, in which case their families should follow the [guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection](#) and [book a PCR test](#) for the child.

You may also offer a PCR test kit to the parent or guardian of any primary school child who becomes symptomatic onsite, if they believe that the child faces significant barriers to testing through the usual routes. All schools were sent an initial supply of 10 PCR test kits before the start of the autumn term in 2020. You can replenish these kits when they run out by making an order through the [online portal](#). Rapid LFD tests should not be offered to individuals who develop coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms, regardless of their age.