



.....putting Every Child Matters into Action

South Gloucestershire Council
Longwell Green Primary School
Ellacombe Road, Longwell Green, Bristol, BS30 9BA
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Headteacher: Mr D Brown

5th January 2021

Lockdown overview as well as keyworkers.

Dear Parents and Carers,

What just happened?

The announcement last night honestly took us all by surprise, having been told up to an including yesterday that closing Primary Schools was a very last resort and something they did not think would happen. This was out of our hands. We, like you would rather that all children were in school.

Despite what has been said, remote learning is not as simple as "*just do learning at home*". We know it puts strain on families, it is difficult at home at times. It is significantly more difficult for teachers who themselves have to work in an entirely new way, which takes increased time, while also having to be in school to teach keyworkers and vulnerable children (and ensure that work is planned, delivered and feedback given for both groups). Most of all, we know that this is not the ideal model of learning for any child.

However, this is out of all of our hands. As a school we acknowledge that this has been done to protect us all and **we ask that each person play their part**; to follow the lockdown as closely as possible, avoid any contact with others unless absolutely necessary and only leave the house when there is no other option. I for one would rather have a short number of weeks in full lockdown and come out the other side not needing to lockdown again, than to have people bend the rules and the lockdown continues, or we come out and go back in again.

Following the announcement at 8pm, the Senior Leadership Team met for quite some time to finalise arrangements for those of you at home and also for those pupils due to be in school. Following this, the entire staff met remotely to ensure we had structures to still run school for all who need it (vulnerable pupils and keyworkers) and also ensure that each class had remote learning. I thank my staff for working late into the night, many of whom worked into the early hours of this morning to ensure that we were able to open school this morning for those who need us.

Remote learning

In terms of remote learning, despite the media coverage, remote learning is not as simple as clicking a button and the planned lessons translate across to digital work. Lessons take a significantly different form and need a lot of development to make them suitable to use at home.

We could follow the route of simply sharing external resources such as websites (e.g. BBC) that are generic. This is much easier for schools and some schools are doing this. We want to provide personalised, targeted learning for each of your children and this means that the work involved is much more significant. Please see the remote learning letter for an overview of our newly developed and upgraded remote learning provision.

What if someone in my household tests positive for Covid or show symptoms?

You must get a test if you suspect you or someone in your household has any symptoms. Please do this as swiftly as possible as this will help to contain and manage any local outbreak.

If your child has **not been attending school**, please continue to let us know if this happens and follow the advice given to you by Public Health.





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If your child has been attending school as part of the keyworker / vulnerable bubbles, then we need to work as we have done so far to close the bubble; this will impact keyworkers who are frontline and have the potential to spread the virus, so the sooner you let us know the better.

Can my child come to school if they find remote learning tricky?

The purpose of the lockdown is to limit this rapid spread of this new variant. School is only open to those who have no other choice. Being in your own home is the most safe place to be. The travel to and from school, the mixing with others (both on the pavements during the start and end of the day, but also for your children in school) increases the number of people they meet and this increases the risk. I ask even of those who are eligible, please only use the space if you have no other choice. If you are not eligible, then for this reason, we will not be able to take your child into school. We are sorry, but we have a duty to keep the pupils, Longwell Green families / community and indeed my staff safe.

Contact

Please know that we are still easily contactable. The class teacher can be reached via Class Dojo and through the usual school channels and my team and I can also be contacted this way. We will be on hand to support you with your child's home learning during this hopefully short period. Please see below about reasonable expectations on teachers in regards to hours of work.

I am a keyworker, but I am not sure if I want my child to come to school. Can I choose on each day?

As we have said all along, keyworkers undertake a vital role to keep us safe and to keep essential aspects of our lives work. We thank each of you for all you do. Some who were keyworkers during the last lockdown are no longer, or have found other ways to ensure childcare (such as their partner undertaking childcare). We have also had a number of new keyworker families. We will support all families who need us to do so.

The aim is to have as few people on site as possible. Each extra person is a chance that the virus comes into school and in turn, raises the chances that we need to close an entire bubble. Closing a keyworker bubble is something we are all trying to avoid as we all need keyworkers to continue essential aspects of all of our lives.

If you only work 3 days a week in for example the NHS and you have no other childcare within your household on these days, then please only bring your child on those 3 days. This reduces the numbers on site. **Only come on the critical care days that you need.** Thank you.

I respectfully ask the following things:

1/ **If you are a keyworker who intends to use school, then please let us know now** (see below) With the way we now run remote learning, all staff are engaged in creating, teaching, marking, giving feedback and essentially working to the same degree they would be in school, but with their classes at home. Each staff member we have in school means they are not able to do this for their class at home. This is something we can plan for, but if we have more children than we have registered, then we need to call staff in from home at the last minute, meaning that there will be no remote learning on that day for everyone in their class. If we know in advance, we can timetable this to ensure no child goes without learning.





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2/ Only take the spaces if you do need them. We have a much greater demand on staff than in the first lockdown. We are more than happy to support everyone who needs us, but we still have a finite number of staff and of resources (as well as hours in the day!)

3/ Please only come to school if you have already told us that you are. (See below.) If you arrive without telling us, it is highly likely that we will not have staff to support your child. We are only having the exact number of staff needed in school. This is to protect them and to minimise the spread of the virus. It is also because they now all have a significantly increased workload linked to remote learning.

I am now a keyworker, but I was not during the last lockdown, what do I do?

Please email the office to obtain a keyworker form. This will need to be returned no later than Thursday 7th January. We need to know no later than Thursday so that we can properly plan the in school staffing needs for the coming week. If you arrive without telling us, we may not be able to accept you, as we may not have the space / enough staff available in school.

Who are keyworkers?

Critical workers

Parents whose work is critical to the coronavirus (COVID-19) and EU transition response including those who work in health and social care and in other key sectors outlined below.

- 1/ Health and social care
2/ Education and childcare
3/ Key public services. This includes:
those essential to the running of the justice system
religious staff
charities and workers delivering key frontline services
those responsible for the management of the deceased
journalists and broadcasters who are providing public service broadcasting
4/ Local and national government
5/ Food and other necessary goods
6/ Public safety and national security
7/ Utilities, communication and financial services.

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision

We have received this from the Local Authority:
the reason schools are now only open to critical workers and vulnerable pupils, is that rates of infection have increased and therefore schools have been asked to limit the numbers of children in to those where it is absolutely essential.
If a child has two critical worker parents, then they will require a place, equally if a child has a single parent who is also a critical worker they will also require a place. Where there are two adults/parents within the household, where only one is a critical worker but the other is not, then if the one who is not a critical worker is able to provide educational childcare then this is the preference; as this can then reduce the numbers of children in attendance, minimising risk of any virus transmission.

All of our intentions must be to minimise contacts of all kinds to reduce the spread of the virus. Your child does not have to attend school, in fact if there is any other way of looking after your child, please use this before using school. We need to stop the spread of the virus and can only do so if we all work together.





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For all keyworkers.

Please let us know your intentions by the Thursday of each week for the following week. We know that some of our keyworkers who for example work in the police have a rolling 3 week rota, so may only know at relatively short notice. However, changing rotas for us means changing staff on site and impacts remote learning, so please do let us know each week no later than Thursday. Thank you!

Free School Meals.

We will be making contact with those families eligible for free school meals to ensure that food packages are sent home. Nothing yet has come centrally from the DfE / Government, so at present as a school we will provide this. We will await further guidance on the longer-term DfE strategy for those eligible for free school meals, but please note that Mr Johnson made reference to the fact that eligible pupils will be supported by central government, so watch this space.

General.

Once again, this is not something any of us wanted and was a shock to the primary education system. We are sorry and like yourselves, we wish for things to return to normal as soon as possible.

There is no point worrying about things that are out of our control. The government will make their decisions and we will respond to them.

As a school and a community, we can however control certain things. We can limit how many people we come into contact with. The fewer the better. If we all follow the new lockdown rules fully, we have the best chance of the lockdown ending swiftly. The more people that bend the rules, the more chance we have that this lockdown will continue. Let's all work together as the great community Longwell Green is to protect each other, those we love, those who live and work near us and to finally beat this virus!

As regularly previously stated, if as a school we can help in any way, please let us know and we will do all we can to support you, or if it is out of our sphere of expertise, we will often know the best places to direct you to get the support you need. Being locked down does not mean you are isolated, and as a community, we support each other.

Kind regards to you all,

D Brown and everyone at Longwell Green Primary School.

