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8<sup>th</sup> July 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

I sincerely hope you are all keeping safe, happy and well in these strange times and are becoming increasingly accustomed to the changes in our daily lives as we move through the next phase of this challenging journey. As you know induction to Howley has had to look completely different this year. Miss Holden has really enjoyed calling you all and hearing all about our new children, if she hasn't been in contact yet, don't worry you will hear from us soon!

I would like to say a huge thank you for your patience with regards waiting for news on induction and start dates for your little ones, we really do appreciate it. We received the necessary guidance last week and are now busy making plans for September. It is so very important to us all that your children have as smooth as possible introduction to their journey here at Howley. We want all of our children to feel happy and confident and totally understand that starting 'big school' can be a time of mixed emotions for children and their families!

We believe that the below timetable for induction balances the need for our little ones to visit us and have the opportunity to meet everyone and get used to their new environment with need to join us full time.

| Date                                 | Visit Time                   |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Tuesday 8 <sup>th</sup> September    | 10:00-11:30                  |
| Thursday 10 <sup>th</sup> September  | 9:15-11:30                   |
| Monday 14 <sup>th</sup> September    | 9.15-12.00 (including lunch) |
| Wednesday 16 <sup>th</sup> September | 9.15-12.00 (including lunch) |

For all visits, please drop off and collect your child from outside the main school entrance as this will enable you to wait in a socially distanced manner.

From Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> September your child will be in school full time and you will be able to drop off and collect via the classroom door.

As with all aspects of our daily lives, things at Howley will be a little different. Apologies for the length of this parentmail (you may need to settle down with a cup of tea in order to read it!) but I want to give you as much information as possible so that everyone is as confident as they can be with regards to the measures we are taking to make sure our school is as safe as possible.

The protective measures that all schools will have in place are known as the 'System of Controls'. These are divided into two sections: 'Prevention' and 'Response to Infection.' Many of these are similar to the 'Hierarchy of Controls' that Howley has had in place since the wider re-opening on June 1<sup>st</sup>. In providing places for 150+ children, we have learnt a lot, not least how amazingly adaptable and resilient our children are. I understand you may have concerns and worries. If I can offer you any comfort from our recent experience, it is that the children who have been able to attend have picked up the new routines very quickly and are very happy and well settled in school.

Below you will find an outline of the 'System of Controls', followed by some of the steps Howley is taking to ensure these measures are in place.

## **Prevention**

**1. Minimise contact with individuals who are unwell by ensuring that those who have coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms, or who have someone in their household who does, do not attend school**

In order to prevent the risk of transmission, anyone who has [coronavirus \(COVID-19\) symptoms](#), or has tested positive in the last 7 days must not come into school. If anyone in the school becomes unwell with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature, or has a loss of, or change in, their normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia), they must be sent home and advised to follow '[stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection](#)', which sets out that they must self-isolate for at least 7 days and should [arrange to have a test](#) to see if they have coronavirus (COVID-19). Other members of their household (including any siblings) should self-isolate for 14 days from when the symptomatic person first had symptoms.

## **2. Clean hands thoroughly more often than usual**

All children and staff will wash their hands when they enter school, before and after breaktimes, after they have been to the toilet, if they cough or sneeze, before and after eating and before they leave school. Our youngest children will be supervised to do this. Staff will recap the correct hand washing technique and posters around school will remind children of this. Hand sanitisers will be available in all classrooms and at key points around school.

## **3. Ensure good respiratory hygiene by promoting the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach**

Tissues will be available in all classrooms and children will be instructed to put them straight in the bin after use. Teachers will reinforce good respiratory hygiene and posters are in place around school to remind children and staff of the 'catch it, kill it, bin it' approach. Classrooms will be well ventilated at all times.

## **4. Introduce enhanced cleaning, including cleaning frequently touched surfaces often using standard products, such as detergents and bleach**

It is inevitable that surfaces and resources will be touched throughout the day. We have increased the amount of times frequently touched surfaces and toilets are cleaned during the school day. Our classrooms look very different at the moment as we have removed soft furnishings and resources that are tricky to clean. Each child will have their own resource pack which will limit the sharing of equipment. If there is no option but to share equipment, then it will be limited to use within their bubble and will be thoroughly cleaned before it is used by other groups.

## **5. Minimise contact between individuals and maintain social distancing wherever possible**

Throughout the guidance it is widely acknowledged that children, particularly our younger ones, cannot socially distance from staff or each other. We will encourage them to do so, however our main focus will be on maintaining distinct groups that do not mix. This approach reduces the possible transmission of coronavirus and in the event of having a positive case in school, it will make it easier to identify those who need to self-isolate and keep that number as low as possible. In order to limit social contact, each year group will form a protective bubble with children staying within their class group wherever possible.

The school day has been re-organised to enable activities such as breaktimes, lunchtimes, start and end times to take place without one bubble coming into close contact with another. This does present some logistical challenges, especially around lunchtimes. We have organised it so that Reception children will be eating in the hall and then having a little play outside. It would help enormously if all children please bring a drink of water or squash with them each day.

In line with the guidance we will be staggering our school day start and end times as we believe this will enable our families to drop off and collect children in as safe a manner as possible. From Thursday 17<sup>th</sup>

September, Reception children will be dropped and collected at their classroom doors. Please see below for drop off and collection times.

| Groups  | Drop off  | Collect   |
|---|-----------|-----------|
| Reception families with more than one child attending Howley. | 8.50-9.00 | 2.55-3.05 |
| All other Reception families.                                 | 8.55-9.05 | 3.00-3.10 |

We ask that only one parent or carer brings/collects their child/ren and that drop offs and collections take place in a prompt, timely manner to make way for the next group of families. Our pathways in and out of school are wide so please respect social distancing as you arrive and depart. We would also ask that if at all possible, could families with children in Reception, please use the Frankley Avenue entrance. In the first instance, we will be unable to offer any out of hours clubs. This will be kept under review and we will update you with any changes.

## **6. Where necessary, wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE)**

The majority of staff at Howley will not require PPE beyond what they would normally need for their work. PPE will only be needed in a very small number of cases, including:

- where an individual child or young person becomes ill with coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms while at school, and only then if a distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained
- where a child or young person already has routine intimate care needs that involves the use of PPE, in which case the same PPE should continue to be used

## **Response to any infection**

### **7. Engage with the NHS Test and Trace process**

Whilst we hope to not have to engage with the NHS Test and Trace process, it is important to understand that your help may be needed with testing, self-isolating and providing details of close contacts should you be contacted by NHS Test and Trace. Staff and pupils must not come into the school if they have symptoms, and will be sent home to self-isolate if they develop them in school. All children can be tested, including children under 5, but children aged 11 and under will need to be helped by their parents/carers if using a home testing kit.

I would just like to share the benefit of recent experience. As Head, I am advised by Public Health to inform parents and carers if someone from their child's bubble has shown symptoms of coronavirus. The message you will receive from me is a standardised version from Public Health and I know it can cause worry and alarm when it is first read. Please be assured that I will be in close contact with the family concerned and will update others from the bubble as soon as I possibly can.

### **8. Manage confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) amongst the school community**

We are hopeful that we will not have to manage a confirmed case in school, however we have to be prepared that this may happen. Should there be a confirmed case, we will liaise directly with the local health protection team and follow their advice with regards to further action we need to take. This is likely to include sending home those people who have been in close contact with the person who has tested positive, advising them to self-isolate for 14 days since they were last in close contact with that person when they were infectious. Howley will provide home learning for any children who have to self-isolate.

## **9. Contain any outbreak by following local health protection team advice**

If we have two or more confirmed cases within 14 days, or an overall rise in sickness absence where coronavirus (COVID-19) is suspected, then it is deemed that we may have an outbreak. In this unlikely event, we will continue to work with our local health protection team who will be able to advise if/what additional action is required. We will keep you all fully informed should this be the case.

As the Howley family reunites, we would like all children to come to school in their school uniform - we greatly appreciate your support with this. Our children will also need their PE kits in school. They are allowed to bring in bags from home and can take books etc. between home and school, although unnecessary sharing should be avoided.

We know that our children will feel very differently about starting school; some will be excited and happy, other may be apprehensive and worried. Our initial focus will be to support everyone as they settle into life here at Howley. If you are worried, please do not hesitate to contact us and we will do all we can to help. Attendance will return to being a statutory requirement from September.

For the first few weeks, we will be building our curriculum around the book 'Here we are' by Oliver Jeffers. This book promotes looking after, and being kind to ourselves, each other and the world around us, sentiments which are always important, but especially so at the moment. Throughout September, once our children are settled and happy, we will be using a range of assessment strategies to identify where each child is in their learning and identify their next steps. Once our assessments are complete, we will be sharing this information with yourselves so that we can continue to work together to support our children.

Thank you for taking the time to read this parentmail. I understand all of this information is a lot to take in, but I hope it has helped to address some of the questions or concerns you may have. If you need any further help with anything, we are always here. Please call or contact us via email on [info@howley.dudley.sch.uk](mailto:info@howley.dudley.sch.uk).

Thank you once again for choosing Howley Grange as the school for your child. We are committed to ensuring each and every one of our children receives an exciting, fun-filled education in a safe, happy environment. Should you have any questions, queries or require any further information or support please don't hesitate to contact us.

Sent with my very best wishes to our Howley families.

Miss Lewis