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Dear Parents and Carers,

Many of you will be aware that the local area has seen a significant rise in the number of Covid-19 infections. Until recently our school has been incredibly fortunate, with a limited number of isolated cases of Covid-19. In the past week, a number of positive cases have been reported to us and we are seeing an increase in the number of children and family members who are self-isolating due to a positive PCR test. At the present time, we have several children who are self-isolating as a result of Covid-19 and we have now met the threshold for an “outbreak”, as defined by current Department for Education (DfE) guidance.

I have spent my morning on the phone to the DfE Covid-19 helpline and carefully reviewing our risk assessment procedures. Following guidance from the DfE, we will be introducing some additional measures for the remainder of this term to safeguard our school community:

Year Group Bubbles

We have been advised to reintroduce bubbles in order to reduce contacts across the school. From Monday 20th November, we will once again be working in year group bubbles. On a day-to-day basis, this should have a minimal impact on your children due to the way that our school operates. The most significant change is that children will not be mixing with other year groups at playtimes and lunchtimes and will spend these times with their own year group. We will also be separating children at lunchtimes so that year groups do not mix in the school hall.

Reducing Contacts Indoors

Wherever possible, we will reduce the opportunities for classes to mix with other classes indoors. Where classes do mix, for example during year group assemblies then we will ensure that a large, well-ventilated space is used and encourage social distancing between classes.

A Reminder About National Guidance

I cannot stress enough the importance of following national guidance. If your child has a symptom of Covid-19, ie a new cough, temperature or a loss of their sense of taste and smell, they should not attend school. Individuals with these symptoms should self-isolate and book a PCR test immediately. Children are able to attend school if a negative PCR result is received.

Responding to Confirmed Cases of Covid-19

We will continue to inform families when there is a confirmed case of Covid-19 in their class, year group or club. This is now the responsibility of Test and Trace but we will share the

most recent guidance for close contacts in the eventuality of Test and Trace not getting in touch.

Close Contacts of a Confirmed Case of Covid-19

A large number of family members are currently isolating due to Covid-19. When a family member tests positive for Covid-19, we will ask families to follow Test and Trace guidance and book a PCR test for their child. Wherever possible, we are encouraging families to keep their child at home until the PCR result is received. Daily lateral flow tests are encouraged for close contacts.

School Events

We have many events planned over the next few weeks and we are absolutely determined to ensure that these go ahead safely. We are all very aware that children have missed a lot of opportunities over the past two years and all of these extra-curricular activities are an important part of our curriculum offer. Class Christmas parties, trips and curriculum visitors will go ahead as planned.

Clubs will continue to operate for year groups. I have worked with all of our club providers to risk assess activities to ensure that these can go ahead safely.

Our **Christmas performances** will be recorded this year. Under current DfE guidance, we have now been asked to reduce the risk of Covid transmission by reducing crowding. We want every child to have the opportunity to perform in a Christmas play. Whilst a recording cannot replace our usual performances, this will ensure that all of our children have an opportunity to perform this year.

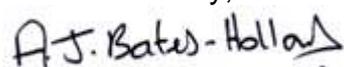
Light Up Hassocks will go ahead as planned. We will complete a thorough risk assessment and communicate this to families in advance of the event. The risk is mitigated significantly by working outdoors. Our choir are busy rehearsing and are set to put on a fantastic performance. To ensure the safety of all, choir will take place outdoors if the weather allows this. If it is not possible to practice outdoors, we will use a large, well-ventilated space such as Holly Class or the hall.

Visitors to the school

We will try to organise meetings virtually and over the telephone wherever possible. Where meetings take place on-site, we will be strongly encouraging visitors to take a lateral flow test before their visit. In addition to this, we will be recommending the use of face coverings inside the school when it is not possible to socially distance.

We are saddened that we have had to impose these additional restrictions after a more normal start to the school term. Please be assured that the staff team are working exceptionally hard to ensure that we continue to offer a high standard of education for all of your children and a more “normal” year. This is incredibly important to all of us and our top priority. As ever, I would like to thank all of you for your support in helping to ensure that our school is as safe as it can possibly be at the current time.

Yours Faithfully,



Adrian Bates-Holland
Headteacher