

Farington Infant School

Part of the Farington Learning Trust

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Future of Farington; Including all; Supporting everyone to grow

16th September 2020

Dear Parents /Carers,

I am writing to you, as there is some confusion over the guidance on absence and when children should be isolating. I am sure you can appreciate that we are also trying to understand and interpret the DfE guidance ourselves and then base our decisions on our school context and the information that we have.

We have been made aware that there has been some social media discussion around the different messages that are being given. We are continuously working very hard and having to make multiple decisions to keep our school community as safe as possible. To do this, we are reliant on parents/carers being open and honest with us, and being willing to communicate with us directly. Any advice given by school can only be based on one of the following things;

- **Our observation of a child in school**

If your child begins coughing in school, we will observe this over a period of time in order to establish whether this is presenting as a continuous cough. Some occasional coughing is associated with a common cold, or is triggered by eating, drinking, exertion or even playing outside. Asthmatic coughing, relieved by an inhaler is also to be expected at times.

If we do observe a continuous cough for over an hour, then we will contact you and ask you to take your child home where you can monitor whether this persists or ceases. If the cough persists or other COVID symptoms develop, then you should seek a COVID 19 test.

We are not taking temperature checks in school but if we observe that a child is particularly hot and flushed (not just as a result of running around!) and particularly if they seem at all unwell with this, we will contact you to collect your child and ask you to monitor and check their temperature.

- **Information shared by parents or carers about their child**

If you tell us that your child has a persistent cough, has or had a temperature or has any loss of taste or smell, then government guidance is clear that you should keep them at home and seek a test. If a test is negative then they can return to school as soon as they are well enough to do so. If a test result is positive then they will need to self-isolate for 10 days, and the members of your household will need to self-isolate for 14 days.

If you tell us that your child has a common cold but does not have a temperature, continuous cough or loss of taste or smell, then we will advise that you decide whether they are well enough to be in school. You may decide that they are well enough for school or you may think that they need some rest and recovery time before returning to school within a normal time frame (usually just a day or so).

Please do be honest with us – if, for example, you have needed Calpol to reduce your child's temperature, they must not come to school.

- **Information shared by parents or carers about members of your child's household**

If you tell us that someone in your child's household has a persistent cough, has or had a temperature or has any loss of taste or smell, then government guidance is clear that you should all remain them at home and seek a test for that household member. If a test is negative then everyone can return to school and work as soon as they are well enough to do so. If a test result is positive then the person with symptoms will need to self-isolate for 10 days, and the other members of your household will need to self-isolate for 14 days.

We understand how difficult it is for you, as parents to make decisions about your child's health, when things are so uncertain for us all and when the NHS testing service has not been able to meet the demand for tests since term began. Unfortunately, we are not medical professionals so are faced with equally difficult decisions and judgement calls. Please feel free to make contact with us in school via the school office on 01367 240655 if you need to discuss your child or family's circumstances.

Finally, we are all trying our very best to get through a difficult, challenging situation to keep everyone safe. We need and appreciate your support in helping us to avoid the virus taking hold in our school and causing us to have to instigate any form of lockdown.

As ever, we encourage you to treat one another and our school staff with kindness, empathy and understanding as we all adapt to a new normal. We can only protect our community by sharing responsibility and working together.

Take Care and Best Wishes,

Mrs Sally Robins

Head Teacher