

9th September 2021

Dear Parents

I hope you had an enjoyable and restful summer and that many of you were able to have the holiday of your choice.

I am writing to explain how Keswick House Nursery will be operating from the start of the coming Autumn Term following updated Government guidance. The key message is that our school, with thorough risk assessments and continued measures of control in place, will continue to work hard to keep our school community safe and reduce the risk of transmission of Covid-19.

The updated guidance advises Early Years settings to return to regular routines and practices but with a continued emphasis on hygiene and ventilation.

‘Bubbles’ and drop off/collection:

The guidance states: **‘we no longer recommend that it is necessary to keep groups apart as much as possible’**. This will mean that from this term despite the Lower and Upper Nursery having separate classroom areas, we may feel it beneficial both educationally and socially to mix these 2 groups at certain times e.g. assemblies and lunchtime. The government no longer recommends implementing ‘bubble’ systems. Please note our risk assessments are regularly reviewed and contingency plans are in place in case the Nursery had to manage a Covid-19 outbreak. In this case a ‘bubble’ system may need to be reintroduced.

This means that all children may arrive between 8.45 a.m. and 9.05 a.m. at the main gate and are delivered by parents directly to their child’s classroom. However at midday dismissal and 3 p.m. (same collection time for all classes) Lower Nursery will exit via the side gate and Upper Nursery via the main entrance door as this speeds up the collection process and, as it was a welcome measure during the pandemic, we have decided to continue as before to continue has been a welcome measure during the pandemic which we will continue.

We recommend that parents/carers are still mindful of social distancing during drop off and collection times.

Contact Tracing and Isolation:

The guidance states: **‘Close contacts will now be identified via NHS Test and Trace and education settings will no longer be expected to undertake contact tracing’**. This responsibility has now been assumed by NHS Test and Trace, although schools may be contacted in exceptional cases. The guidance states **‘contacts from a setting will only be traced by NHS Test and Trace where the positive case and/or their parent or carer specifically identifies the individual as being a close contact. This is likely to be a small number of individuals who would be most at risk of contracting COVID-19 due to the nature of the close contact. You may be contacted in exceptional cases to help with identifying close contacts, as currently happens in managing other infectious diseases’**.

The guidance continues to say that in terms of self-isolation **‘Individuals are not required to self-isolate if they live in the same household as someone with COVID-19, or are a close contact of someone with COVID-19, and any of the following apply:**

- they are fully vaccinated they are below the age of 18 years and 6 months
- they have taken part in or are currently part of an approved COVID-19 vaccine trial
- they are not able to get vaccinated for medical reasons

Instead, they will be contacted by NHS Test and Trace, informed they have been in close contact with a positive case and advised to take a PCR test. We would encourage all individuals to take a PCR test if advised to do so

Children who are under 5 years old who are identified as close contacts will only be advised to take a PCR test if the positive case is in their household'. The guidance continues to state: 'Staff who do not need to isolate, and children who usually attend the setting, and have been identified as a close contact, should continue to attend the setting as normal.'

Face coverings:

The guidance states: **'The government has removed the requirement to wear face covering in law but expects and recommends that they are worn in enclosed and crowded spaces where you may come into contact with people you don't normally meet. This includes public transport'**.

With this in mind the wearing of face coverings will be optional for staff. However we recommend that parents wear face coverings if talking in close proximity with a member of staff.

Hygiene Practices:

Hand hygiene:

The guidance stresses the continued importance of good hygiene as follows: **'Frequent and thorough hand cleaning should now be regular practice. You should continue to ensure that pupils clean their hands regularly. This can be done with soap and water or hand sanitiser'**.

Hand sanitisers are available for the children to use as well as sinks in each classroom.

Respiratory hygiene:

'The 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach continues to be very important'. Dedicated bins are provided.

Staff will continue to use full PPE for personal care and when dealing with a suspected case of COVID -19.

Keeping occupied spaces well ventilated:

It is important to ensure that when the Nursery is in operation it will be well ventilated. A balance will be necessary for the need of ventilation and maintaining a comfortable environment. Poorly ventilated areas would be identified and actioned upon in our risk assessment.

When an individual develops Covid-19 symptoms or has a positive test:

The guidance on this remains the same. **‘Pupils should not come into school if they have symptoms or have had a positive test. Any pupils who develop Covid-19 symptoms, however mild, will be sent home and should follow public health advice.**

The symptoms of Covid are:

- **a high temperature**
- **a new, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot, for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours**
- **a loss or change to sense of smell or taste – this means they cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal’**

We are looking forward to planning and enjoying a full and exciting curriculum this term although we must remain cautious, adhering to Government guidance and any updates.

We are attaching our health charter and a link to what a parent should do if there is a suspected or confirmed case of COVID 19.

We must remind parents that if your child is ill for any reason they should simply not attend school. Any illness requires a recovery period and a school is a busy place where children need to have a good level of energy. If you have had to give Paracetamol or Ibuprofen to your child before they come to school, they should remain at home.

Please do feel free to approach either Mrs Lisa Christou or me if you have any COVID related queries.

Best wishes

Gabriella Emery