



**West Moors Middle School**

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Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> February 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

Following the Government's announcement for schools to open more widely to all pupils from 8 March 2021, we are looking forward to welcoming all of our children back to school as we have really missed them. The two week notice period that the Government have given us has meant that we are able to ensure all preparations are in place.

The Government's advice and guidance has changed since we first experienced a wider opening, and so the school's Covid Risk Assessment has been amended to make our school site as Covid secure as is possible. This has meant that some changes are necessary in some of the practical arrangements. We are not able to promise that we will be Covid free however with the measures that we have implemented in school and your help and support, we are proud of how well we have done so far. As we move forwards, we will still need your support to help to keep our school community as safe as we can.

All **staff will be tested twice a week for COVID 19** and so too will **children in Key Stage (KS) 3 only**. It is the Government's plan for the majority of Lateral Flow Testing (LFT) to be carried out at home however to help train and support the children, the first three tests will be carried out by staff at school. Yesterday, the Department for Education confirmed that schools may start testing children before Monday the 8<sup>th</sup> March 2021 if they would like to do so. We would like to maximise upon this opportunity so that we test children before they join their tutor groups on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> March 2021. We will therefore book children into timetabled slots throughout the day in which their year groups are being tested, with **Year 7 children being tested on Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> March 2021** and **Year 8 being tested on Friday 5<sup>th</sup> March 2021**. We will therefore contact all parents/ carers of children in KS3 tomorrow to book a slot, enabling us to stagger the testing time slots throughout the day. Following each test, the children will then go home and attend school on Monday, joining their tutor groups as normal, unless your child has a positive test result. The Government will send parents/ carers a text with the result after we input the test data and we only contact parents/ carers if your child's test result is positive.

The remaining two testing dates for children in Key Stage 3 are:

**Monday 8<sup>th</sup> March 2021**

**Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> March 2021**

During each test, the children will be trained step by step in what they need to do with the aim being that by Monday 15<sup>th</sup> March 2021 they will feel confident to carry out the tests themselves at home. Home testing kits will be distributed to the children in KS3 after their third on-site test. For parents/ carers who are supporting their children to carry out LFTs, we do appreciate that this may be hard and so we do have staff in place to support you with this so please do not worry. What is important is that we all work together, to establish weekly testing procedures at home every Monday from 15<sup>th</sup> March 2021, reporting results to minimise the risk of any cases that lead to closures.



**Headteacher: Dr D Craddock PhD MA BSc (Hons) NPQH**  
**Deputy Headteacher: Mrs D East BSc (Hons) PGCE SENDCo**



Alongside this, the Covid safety measures we have in place remain with an emphasis on hand and respiratory hygiene with the need to continue all social distancing measures. In honesty, the "Hands, Face, Space" message has never been so important and together by reiterating this to all of our children daily we will be doing all we can. The Government has also stipulated that adults, and secondary aged children (Year 7 and Year 8), are to wear face coverings on site in all indoor environments, including classrooms, for a limited period until Easter unless they are exempt from wearing face coverings in accordance with the Government's guidance. We completely understand that this is not easy but it really does help to minimise risk and so your support with this will be greatly appreciated.

### **Remote Education Provision**

Firstly congratulations to children, parents/ carers and staff for all your hard work and efforts, engaging with our remote education provision via the ITS Learning Platform. We are very proud of what we have achieved, enabling our children to follow their timetabled lessons with live lessons, via Microsoft Teams, from Day 1 at the start of term in January 2021. This view is reflected in our recent survey of parents'/ carers' feedback which revealed that our remote education package supported 86% of children to complete all work set in line with the Government's guidance of a minimum 3 hours per day for children in KS2 and four hours per day for children in KS3) with 73% parents/ carers sharing that their child had adapted well to remote learning. 92% parents/ carers We received so many positive comments that received it was difficult to choose from but here are a few to share:

*'I think you have all done a wonderful job, ever since the first lockdown when live lessons were put in place. The teachers and staff have worked extremely hard to ensure that the children's' education has continued.'*

*'We are so appreciative to all staff at WMMS for all your continued hard work in supporting our children and families during this pandemic, we are all extremely fortunate to have you working with and teaching our children.'*

*'The teachers have been amazing and helped my child when she hasn't understood having live lessons means she can ask the teacher if she is finding it difficult or doesn't understand something of the task given...'*

*'What's been provided by West Moors Middle school in comparison to other children of family and friends is exceptional. The efforts to provide as similar educational experience to normal school life are a credit to the entire team.'*

When everyone has worked so incredibly hard, your feedback, words of gratitude and kindness has meant the world to our school community- thank you. We have also sought feedback from children and in survey data we have received to date, overwhelmingly, our children have valued the live lessons they have received as well as the support from their teachers. There were so many positive quotes received, including:

*'I like the Its Learning platform it just makes it feel like we are doing normal school work on a normal school day...'*

*'I value the rights respecting assembly since it makes all cultures feel very welcome. The work challenges me ALOT, but it is definitely increasing my intelligence and out of my comfort zone.'*

*'It helps having the teacher there to explain when I don't understand things...'*

*'I rather have a link in the corner where it tells me straight away there is this lesson going on...'*

Again, it is rewarding for staff to know how their hard work and efforts have met the needs of children who have appreciated their live lessons, live registration periods, independent, supported study with online support, 'live' PE fitness lessons, live Science lessons and live assemblies. My thanks goes to not only all staff who have supported your

children's learning but also to you as parents and carers for whom, I know, it has often been a challenge, managing your own work as well as supporting home learning.

Just as we had a survey for children, parents/ carers, so we have also explored staffs' qualitative feedback. The things staff had enjoyed included:

- The challenge of learning new techniques to deliver lessons and provide feedback
- Trying new resources / ways of working to see what works well and could potentially be incorporated into their day to day teaching practices
- Daily live registration, tutor times and assemblies
- The positive response from the vast majority of children

The challenges have included occasional Wi-Fi issues; the need to chase up any missing work from some children; and the need to follow up some students missing their live lessons and/ or forgetting to submit their work. We have been tracking attendance daily and sending reminders to children individually to complete and/ or submit their work however we would be glad of your support in helping to alleviate these. Where we have a concern staff will note this as a concern on our tracker so that you are alerted quickly and we can also see any patterns emerging across subjects when a child is struggling.

What we do not want is any child falling through the net of support so if you have particular concerns please tell us so that we can help in any way that we can.

Thank you once again for all you've done over the past months in a really trying situation. Your patience, resilience and hard work is hugely appreciated and I know will have helped to make sure that when your children return, they will be ready to join in classroom life again.

### **Reconnection and recovery**

We know that many parents are worried about "catch up", "gaps" or "falling behind". Our experience of the return after the first lockdown has shown us that teachers are experts at identifying learning missed and helping the children cover them. We found that the children made excellent progress when the routine of the school day was back. Please don't worry - we'll sort the learning out.

Your children will be most successful if they feel confident, secure and supported. Before great "catch up" can happen, our staff will be working on helping the children understand and deal with the social and mental health aspects of lockdown. We know they've missed their friends, we know that they might be feeling anxious about coming back to school and we know it will take time "to get back into the swing of things" after being out of school for so long. Even those who have been in school, will find it different with their friends and peers joining them. It took a while to get used to being in lock down - it will take a while to get used to being back in school.

And you too, as adults, I am sure will find it strange as well. Some of you might really miss your children not being with you. Even if you are looking forward to them being back at school, you'll have no doubt got used to a way of working that will upset the rhythm you've got into. It's important you give yourself time to get used to yet another "new normal". If you are at all concerned, your first port of call is your child's year group tutor. We're here to help and we will do what we can.

## Staggered Times

As a result of separate school entrances for children in KS2 and KS3, our staggered start of day and end of day timings to ensure that children stay in their year hubs are as follows:

Year	Morning Drop off Time	End of Day Pick Up Time
5	08.15	15.15
6	08.25	15.25
7	08.25	15.25
8	08.35	15.35

## School Uniform

On return to school, children should wear their full school uniform as normal. As before, please can children wear their PE kit on the days in which they have PE timetabled as the changing rooms and lockers are not in use at this time. For further information about school uniform please [click here](#) and uniform items can be bought online at [www.stevensons.co.uk](http://www.stevensons.co.uk) with any item delivered to the school free of charge.

## School Meals

Our school kitchen will be fully open and providing meals for pupils including those eligible for free school meals.

With the recently published COVID statistics, we are all feeling hopeful that we can return to normal life soon. However, our vigilance, adhering to our Covid measures to keep our school community and beyond safe, remains our priority so your ongoing support is truly valued.

In the meantime, please continue to take good care and keep safe- and if there is anything that we can do to help, please do not hesitate to contact us. We hope that you continue to enjoy our daily contributions to our school's Twitter feed with some amazing photographs added, including a link to our television debut on BBC South Today on Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2021- see, Twitter [@west\\_moors](#) to keep up to date with all the latest news.

Thank you once again.

Warmest Regards,



Dr Deborah Craddock