



Sholing Infant School

Newsletter: **November 2021**

Welcome back to Autumn 2 - this is an extremely busy half-term with Christmas fast approaching, as well as lots of learning through our new topics!

COVID risk assessment

We have seen a growing number of positive COVID cases in school in the past three weeks, as have all schools. As a result we have updated our risk assessment, following the guidance provided by the DfE and by our academy trust. This risk assessment will be reviewed **every two weeks** and control measures to prevent the spread of infection stepped up or down depending on case numbers.

This risk assessment is published on our website for your information, but key changes in place as of today are:

- We will be moving into year group bubbles to prevent mixing both inside the building and out as far as possible.
- Assemblies will be in year groups- we will not be having whole school assemblies, and for the time being, we will not be able to invite parents in for celebration assemblies.
- The scheduled Y1 trip will go ahead as planned on 3/11/21
- The pantomime will go ahead but we will adapt the programme so that children are in year groups for the performance, not altogether.
- Lunches will continue to be in the hall but children will be eating in year groups and the tables etc cleaned between sittings.
- Children in Y1 and Y2 will play in their own designated spaces in the playground. YR will continue to play in their own playground.
- Clubs will continue as pre-arranged for this half term, but we will try to run as many as possible outdoors.
- Staff will wear masks in communal areas
- We will only have essential visitors in school and will move to online events rather than face to face for the time being. This means that parents evening, which was cancelled for Robins class due to staff illness, will be via telephone rather than face to face.
- The maths meeting for KS1 parents which was due to take place on 4th November and the KS1 English meeting due to take place on 10th November at 9am, will now be videoed and shared virtually with parents.
- Please continue to use the class emails to communicate with your child's teacher if possible. If you need to speak to the teacher directly, please maintain a 2m distance and wear a mask.
- Ongoing control measures, including ventilation and enhanced cleaning will continue.
- Although the risk of infection outdoors is minimised, please feel free to wear your mask on the premises in congested areas e.g. when waiting for your child to go into/come out of school.

These control measures being reintroduced are hopefully not in place for too long, and will be relaxed once case numbers decline, however we would rather be cautious after the half term break mixing, and move back to normal operations later in the term later.

Staffing

We will be saying goodbye to a number of members of staff shortly. Mrs Jeffery will be taking up a post as a HLTA at another school and Mrs Middleton will be leaving us to return to her nursing role. We wish them the best of luck in their new posts and thank them for their hard work at Sholing and their commitment to the children.

Mrs Rice has secured a new post as SENCO across both our school and Sholing Junior School. This means that she will be able to support parents and children with SEND throughout their primary school journey. Mrs Rice will work two days at the infant school and three at the juniors, reflecting the higher number of pupils at the juniors. This does mean that Mrs Rice will no longer be available as a class teacher here at the infant school. We have appointed Mrs Wilmott as a replacement teacher and she will, from January teach in Owls on Thursday and Fridays and in Hedgehog on Mondays. Mrs Wilmott has taught extensively this term in YR and already knows the children and staff.

Attendance

Our attendance is currently significantly below our normal percentage as so many children were ill before the half term. You can check your child's attendance on MCAS. If your child is below 90% they are categorised as a 'persistent' absentee and will be entered onto our attendance audit with the Education Welfare Officer. If your child is in this PA category, we will monitor attendance carefully over the next half term, to identify any support needed as we aim to improve attendance. Please remember that term time holidays are not authorised and that a penalty notice will be applied by the local authority should a holiday of five or more days be taken.

Phonic screen

Year 2 pupils will be doing the statutorily required Phonic Screen check the week beginning 22 November, as this Year 1 check was missed in the last academic year. The check comprises a list of 40 words and non-words which the children know as 'alien' words. Your child will read one-to-one with their teacher. They will be asked to 'sound out' the word and blend the sounds together to read the word. The words will be presented as a booklet with up to 5 words per page. Non-words will be presented with a colourful picture of an alien. The children will be asked what the alien's name is by reading the non-word. This will make the check a bit more fun and provides the children with a context for these non-words. They are included because they will be new to all pupils, so there will not be a bias to those with a good vocabulary knowledge or visual memory of words. Pupils who can read non-words should have the skills to decode almost any unfamiliar word. Half the words cover phonic skills which are usually covered in Reception and half the words are based on Year 1 phonics skills.

We will inform parents of their child's results. The results of the screening check will assist teachers to identify which children will need further support with decoding. If children do not score the required 32/40 words correct, they will receive further support with their reading and will have an opportunity to take the screen again in June 2022, alongside our Year 1 pupils.

There are a number of things that parents can do to support early reading skill development.

- Let your child see you enjoying reading yourself – they are influenced by you and what you value!
- Make time for your child to read school books to you regularly – encourage them by pointing to the words and ask them about the story they are reading.
- *Help your child to practise the words that will be sent home next week, which are typical of the words children will meet in the screen.* Communicate with your child's teacher through their Home/School reading log if you are concerned about your child's reading and would like more support.

Safeguarding

If you have any concerns regarding the safety or well-being of our children, please contact the school to speak to Mrs Houghton (Designated Safeguarding Lead). The safety of our children is the responsibility of us all. Our 2021 Child Protection policy has been updated in line with the September 2021 guidance. It is published on our website for your information.

Applications for School Places

Please remember that the application process has opened if you have a child starting Year R or Year 3 in September 2022. You must apply on line before 15 January 2022.

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