



Bessemer Grange Primary School

Part of the Bessemer and Keyworth Federation

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Attendance update

Dear Parents/Carers,

During the last week, we have been working to clarify the advice we give to parents/carers regarding attendance to and absence from school. As you will know, the government announced that it is mandatory for all children to be in school, meaning that all children should be in school every day unless there is a valid reason for a child's absence. We have spoken to advisors from Southwark Council and medical professionals who have shared with us that normal school absence procedures should be followed and a high level of attendance to school is expected by everyone. However, we understand that this information might be confusing if and when a child is unwell when we are living in a world with coronavirus, and in terms of parents/carers knowing what to do if a child is absent from school and the timeframe for returning. We all know that children can become ill for a number of reasons and that many illnesses have similar symptoms to the coronavirus. Unfortunately, we are unable to give you a definitive response for every possibility regarding a child being ill but hope that the following guidelines help to give you some sort of clarification.

Coronavirus symptoms

The main symptoms of coronavirus are:

- **A high temperature** – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature);
- **A new, continuous cough** – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual);
- **A loss or change to your sense of smell or taste** – this means that you have noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell and taste different to normal.

Further advice about coronavirus can be found on the website below:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

What to do if your child is unwell

- If your child has at least one of the coronavirus symptoms listed above, they **must not come to school**. You should book a coronavirus test immediately and inform the school of the result of the test. All other members of the household must stay at home until the result of a test is confirmed.
 - If the test is negative and your child is feeling well, your child should return to school.
 - If the test is positive, your child will need to isolate for 10 days and all other household members should isolate for 14 days from the first day a child who tested positive started to have symptoms. **Please inform the school immediately.**
- If your child does not have coronavirus symptoms but is unwell, they should return to school as soon as they are able to. Normal procedure would be for children to return within a couple of days.
- If you are unsure as to whether your child has coronavirus symptoms, please contact your GP or call 101 for advice. Again, if you believe that your child's symptoms may be coronavirus-related, then I would recommend that you get a test.

Please note that these details may change in-line with government guidelines.

How to get a coronavirus test

You can order a test online using the link below or by calling 101. Please only order a test if you or your child has coronavirus symptoms:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing-and-tracing/get-a-test-to-check-if-you-have-coronavirus/>

Finally, it is extremely important that the school office is contacted if a child is going to be absent from school. Schools have a legal duty to know where every child is on any given day. Failure to contact Bessemer could result in senior leaders having to visit your home and/or a referral being made to the Local Authority.

Children have had an extremely disrupted education during the last 6 months or so and this may well continue going forward. We ask that parents/carers work with the school to promote good attendance so that we can ensure that all Bessemer children have the best chances of not missing out any further.

Kind regards,

Elizabeth Whitehead

Head of School