



# Birches First School

**Believe, Grow, Succeed ...**  
**...to be the best 'me' I can be.**

Birches Avenue  
Codsall  
Wolverhampton  
WV8 2JG  
01902 297910

[www.birches.staffs.sch.uk](http://www.birches.staffs.sch.uk)  
[office@birches.staffs.sch.uk](mailto:office@birches.staffs.sch.uk)

10<sup>th</sup> July 2021

## Plans for September 2021

As you will be aware, ministers confirmed yesterday that England will move to the final stage of easing Covid restrictions on 19<sup>th</sup> July (Step 4 of the roadmap). The government will continue to manage the risk of serious illness from the spread of the virus. However, this marks a new phase in the government's response to the pandemic, moving away from stringent restrictions on everyone's day-to-day lives, towards advising people on how to protect themselves and others, alongside targeted interventions to reduce risk. This news will impact how our school runs from September. All children will return to education in September and from September there will be no bubbles at Birches. Guidance has been released outlining the measures schools must have in place and this as per the past 16 months will be followed.

Using the DfE (Department for Education) and PHE (Public Health England) guidance, we have been working on a plan which we believe will support the safety of our children as we return to 'normal'.

A thorough review of our rigorous risk assessment has been carried out and necessary amendments made ready for September. Risk Assessments are uploaded to the website for parents to view at their convenience.

Please see below an outline of the proposed provision for Birches.

### Returning to School

Children in Years 1 – 4 return to school on Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> September. New starters to Reception and Nursery will begin according to the induction arrangements shared with parents in their recent information packs.

### Organisation of Groups and Classrooms

In line with guidance, ***'it is no longer recommend that it is necessary to keep children in consistent groups bubbles'***. We will return to playtime and lunchtimes with all year groups mixing and socialising together once again. Children will be able to move freely within school and will not have to walk around the perimeter anymore.

Daily assemblies will commence from September with the whole school.

Classrooms will be ventilated however; staff will be mindful and balance the need for increased ventilation while maintaining a comfortable temperature for all.

## Protective Measures

Since reopening in March we have continued to implement many additional measures to maintain the highest levels of safety and minimise risk. These include;

Increased levels of cleaning

Catch it, kill it, bin it approach

Regular handwashing and sanitising

This will all continue to ensure that we are still vigilant and provide an education of good hygiene for all.

## Cleaning

We will continue the additional cleaning measures we have implemented. Classrooms will be kept as clear as possible to enable cleaning staff to clean surfaces. Resources that are shared will be cleaned after use/daily either with wipes/spray. Staff will wipe surfaces in their own areas as necessary during the day. Toilets will be cleaned at lunchtime and a full school clean will be carried out at the end of each day with a focus on touch points and surfaces.

## Toilets

There is no longer a requirement for classes to have separate toilets. Therefore, from September children from different classes will all be accessing the shared toilet blocks.

## Arrival and Collection

There will be no requirement to wear a face covering when on site from September.

**We will be introducing a new arrival and collection procedure from September.**

Year Group	Arrive	Where?	Collect	Where?
Nursery	8.30am	Playground	3.00pm	Nursery outdoor area gate
Reception	8.30am	Playground	3.00pm	Reception outdoor area gate
Year 1	8.40am	Playground	3.15pm	Year 1 cloakroom door
Year 2	8.40am	Playground	3.15pm	Playground door to corridor
Year 3	8.40am	Playground	3.15pm	Playground door to corridor
Year 4	8.40am	Playground	3.15pm	Mobile door

There will **not** be a one way system from September. Please as you enter and exit school, keep to the **left** to enable a smooth flow of traffic! Thank you.

The bell will signal at 8.30am only **Nursery** and **Reception** parents can come onto the playground and assist their children lining up. Teachers will greet them and take them straight to their classrooms. If you have siblings in Y1/2/3/4 they can line up in their class spot on the playground. Please wave children off and exit via the playground gate. Please note once Reception have settled they will follow the routine and timings of Year 1 to Year 4. I will write in due course.

**Y1/2/3/4** The second bell will signal at 8.38am please say a goodbye at the **playground gate** and the children will line up in their allocated place on the playground. Please ensure children

have their belongings in their hands as they walk up the path. Parents are to walk back down the pedestrian walkway. The children will be supervised on the playground.

### Collection

At **3.00pm** Nursery and Reception parents are asked to collect from the outdoor areas then walk back to the main playground and exit the playground gate. Again if you have older siblings, please wait on the pedestrian walk way for the **3.15pm** bell. I do not anticipate the wait to be too long once you have collected YN/R children. If this becomes an issue I will reevaluate routines. If you have other siblings in older year groups could I kindly ask that you collect your child in Reception first when Reception timings change to **3.15pm**.

### Y1/2/3/4-3.15pm

Year 1 parents please walk round to the Y1 door at the back of the school to collect your child. Please then make your way back to the playground and exit at the gate.

Year 2 parents please come onto the playground where your children will be waiting for you exiting the main door onto the playground.

Year 3 parents please come onto the playground where your children will be waiting for you exiting the main door onto the playground.

Year 4 parents please come onto the playground and your child will be dismissed from the mobile doors.

### Being Ready for the Day

Children will be expected to wear their school uniform according to the school policy.

Children are asked to bring a Birches book bag to school with them- nothing bigger as there is no need as it will only contain their spelling book, reading book and diary. They should also bring their packed lunch unless having a school dinner. Water bottles are to be brought filled with water only held in their hands- not in Book Bags due to any leakages.

Children will need their PE kit in school in their draw string bag each week. It is advised that children bring it to school on Monday and we will send it home to be washed on Fridays.

Children will be having games with Coach Chris. On these days children may come dressed in their Games Uniform. Red Hoodie, White embroidered T-shirt, Grey joggers and trainers. If your child cannot tie their own laces please provide trainers with Velcro.

Guidance now allows the sharing of some resources, however, many items should still be for individual use only. I am sure you will appreciate that it is not possible for us to supply every child in school with their own glue stick, scissors etc. Therefore, we will provide a white board, white board pen and pencil for every child. We ask that each child please brings to school with them a **small**, simple pencil case (easily wipeable and no 'fiddly bits' please!) containing pencils, scissors and a glue stick. Their pencil case should be clearly named and will remain in school. There is no need for crayons and felts- these will be returned home if they are brought into school. The pencil case will need to fit in their tray as such, if it is too large this will also be returned.

We will resume sending reading and phonic books home from the start of term. Set books and any comments will be recorded in Reading Diaries. We ask that parents write a comment to

confirm the book has been completed before children change their books. Please read with your child regularly and change their book at least weekly.

### Curriculum

We will continue to plan for and deliver a broad and balanced curriculum to all children. We will also be carefully planning how to address the missed learning, particularly in Maths and English, resulting from the school closure as well as support those who are ready, to make further progress. As I outlined in a previous communication, as school staff and parents, we must recognise that this 'recovery' will happen over a period of time rather than being a short term 'catch up'. We will also continue to plan opportunities to support children's wellbeing. School visits will be planned for all year groups in the academic year.

### Lunchtimes

Children in Nursery will eat their school dinner (provided as part of their lunchtime care provision) in the Hall, supported by Nursery staff. Children in Reception to Year 4 will also eat in the hall. Lunchtimes will be a social occasion where children may now sit with other children from different year groups. If your child chooses to have a packed lunch, they will also eat this with their peers in the hall.

Children bringing a packed lunch from home will store their lunchbox in their class trolley. Please ensure children are able to manage opening items in their lunches independently. A reminder that we are a Healthy School – no fizzy drinks or sweets please.

### Playtimes

Y1-Y4 will have playtime together. Reception will join Y1-4 when they have fully settled into school. The adventure playground will continue to be used by all year groups on a rota basis. In addition the EYFS playground will also be accessed by EYFS and Year 1.

Children will be going outdoors in almost all weathers so please ensure your child has a waterproof coat (and scarf, hat and gloves in colder months) in school **every day**. On a very wet lunchtime, children will be placed in mixed groupings and supervised in classrooms. We do our utmost to keep children outside, as it is important that children get some fresh air and physical activity during the day.

### Birches' Before and After School Care

Club will be open from 7.30am and until 5.15pm

Arrival/Collection: Please buzz on the keypad at the pedestrian gate to gain access. A member of club will meet you/bring your child to the main entrance.

Before and after school care will be in the school hall as always. Children attending club will mix freely with activities they choose to access. No restrictions. Please provide snacks that they can eat at 3.15pm and 4.15pm.

### Extra-curricular Clubs

As you are aware that Mrs Burkitt's/Mrs Lawley/Miss Lawley/Miss Hulme Football Club/Multi skills will begin again in September. Our keyboard tuition/lessons will also begin again. The offer of other clubs will be reviewed throughout the Autumn term.

## Children's Wellbeing

We recognise that for some children, returning to school will be a big transition after the six weeks. We will, as always, do all we can to support the children as they adapt. Some children may be feeling very anxious. Please contact myself or your child's class teacher to discuss their return to school and individual strategies to support this should you feel the need.

Supporting all children as they adapt and return to the routines and expectations of school will be an ongoing priority for us as a school. We will be discussing with the children this week what the plans are and how school life will once again be altered- this time for the best!

## Communication with office/staff and School Visitors

We request that parents continue to contact the office via email or telephone wherever possible. Visits to the office in person should be avoided.

In the mornings and at collection, staff will welcome and dismiss children from the playground and designated door. As parents are no longer coming on to the playground in the morning we ask that if parents need to speak with their child's class teacher they email them directly or call the office to arrange a mutually convenient time to speak.

## Attendance

As from March 2021, school attendance is mandatory for all children. Should your child not be in school for any reason, our usual school policy applies. Please let us know on the first day of absence why your child is not in school. If we receive no message, the office will call to ensure everyone is safe and well.

## Vulnerable/At Risk Groups

The advice to shield has ended, clinically extremely vulnerable people must continue to follow the rules that are in place for everyone. Children who live in a household with someone who is clinically extremely vulnerable are not advised to shield and should return to school.

The Government are advising clinically extremely vulnerable people to continue to take extra precautions to protect themselves.

Where children are unable to attend school due to clinical or public health guidance, remote education will be available and pupil's engagement with these tasks will be monitored.

Where a child has not been able to attend school due to clinical or public health advice, absence will not be penalised.

## Illness

If a child has displayed any of the identified symptoms;

A high temperature,

Continuous, new cough

Loss of taste and/or smell

They (and any siblings) **should not** attend school. A PCR test should be arranged as soon as possible. If a positive result is returned, parents should notify us as soon as possible and follow the guidance:



<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/self-isolation-and-treatment/when-to-self-isolate-and-what-to-do/>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection>

To safeguard all, we will have a zero-tolerance approach to children who cannot adhere to Catch it, Kill it, Bin it as this is a risk to others. Where we believe a child is coughing or sneezing frequently, parents will be asked to arrange collection. As such if your child has hayfever, please do give them antihistamine as we may be concerned about symptoms which may overlap with Covid-19 symptoms. Please communicate this to us and if your child suffers significantly with hayfever we as a school will administer antihistamine medicine to your child that has been signed in via the office.

If your child is ill with any 'non-Covid-19' symptoms we ask that parents keep them at home if they present a risk of making others unwell. To enable us to sustain our staffing levels we must be vigilant and minimise risk of them becoming unwell and therefore unable to work.

### **Confirmed Case in School**

Our procedures if we have a suspected case of COVID-19 will remain in place and in line with guidance. Designated spaces have been identified if isolation is necessary. Any child or member of staff displaying suspected symptoms should be tested as soon as possible. If a confirmed case occurs in school, we will take advice as to the required action from Public Health.

### **Remote Learning**

We are incredibly proud of the home learning staff provided January to March. If remote learning is required in September, we will return to our TEAMS teaching as supported by the parent feedback survey.

I hope the information outlined here has helped answer some of your questions regarding the return to school in September and has reassured you. I appreciate that there is a lot to digest and I hope you are not overwhelmed! Plans are, as always, subject to review and may change in line with Government guidance. If there are any adaptation during the six-week holiday I will contact you.

If you have any further questions, queries or concerns about your child and their return to school, please do email [office@birches.staffs.sch.uk](mailto:office@birches.staffs.sch.uk) and we will respond as soon as we are able to do so.

I would like to reassure you that every decision is made through the eyes of both school leaders and parents, with the best interests of our children, staff and school community at its heart. As a staff we are very much looking forward to welcoming the children back to school after the holidays and will continue to work as a strong team to ensure this return is as safe and positive as possible for all.

S Varricchione

Headteacher