



27th August 2020

Returning to school – September 2020

Dear parents and carers,

We are really looking forward to welcoming all children back in September for the new school year, in our four schools: Belleville Primary, Belleville Wix Academy, Churchfields Primary and The Alton School.

Over the last few months I have been impressed by and proud of the dedication of our staff, the high quality home learning we provided during the school closure period, the children's hard work and resilience, and the support of our parents and carers.

The start of this school year will be very different to the one before. There will be some new routines to get used to, but we are determined to ensure school remains a positive environment for children and staff.

We believe that returning to school is important for children's education and wellbeing. It is not possible to ensure that school is a totally risk-free environment, but each school has undertaken a thorough risk assessment and has put in place plans and measures that work for their own unique circumstances. All arrangements are in line with the government's latest advice for schools. Each school will provide you with full details through their own direct communications, but some common points are set out below.

- **Returning to school:** Attendance is required from the first day of term as outlined by the school. Please inform your school if your child is unable to attend, for example due to unexpected quarantine requirements.
- **Prevention:** No one should come to school if they have coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms, or have tested positive in at least the last 10 days. If children or adults develop symptoms whilst at school, they will be sent home. Each school has enhanced their cleaning arrangements, including frequent cleaning of high touch areas, shared areas and shared equipment. Children will be required to wash and/or sanitise their hands regularly and at key times in the school day. Water fountains are out of use. Children currently do not need to wear face masks to school, but may if they wish. PPE will be used in a small number of situations, such as when dealing with someone displaying symptoms.
- **Minimising contact:** Children will be grouped, which in most cases will mean staying in year group 'bubbles'. Contact between groups/bubbles will be kept to a minimum. Schools have adjusted their timetables to enable staggered start times, end times, breaktimes and lunchtimes to avoid groups mixing. Parents will not be able to come into school buildings, unless by appointment with the head. Any adults who work across groups (e.g. specialist teachers) will be maintaining social distancing. Larger gatherings and meetings, such as assemblies and staff training, will take place virtually.
- **Lessons and learning:** Each school has reviewed their curriculum and timetables, and made some initial adjustments. This may mean changing the way that specialist teaching

is provided, or allocating additional time to help children re-cap previous learning or catch up on things they might have missed. These plans are likely to be developed and adapted further during the year.

- **Wellbeing:** We know that children have been impacted in different ways by the pandemic. They will have a range of feelings about coming back to school and they need to feel secure and safe before they can learn well. Our schools will put aside time to talk to children about any worries they may have, and to address aspects of emotional and social development. We take this seriously and since the start of lockdown, 96 QIE staff have gained accreditation in first aid for mental health.
- **Managing cases or outbreaks:** We expect there will be instances where children are required to self-isolate, either individually or as a group/bubble. Schools have clear procedures for managing confirmed cases, working with the NHS test and trace process and with Public Health England. Local health protection teams will work closely with schools where required, to guide them through any actions they need to take, and we are developing our plans for ensuring all children are able to continue learning remotely during any such periods.

How you can help us

- Read the detailed guidance from your school to understand your child's new schedule, including pick up and drop off arrangements, lunch and break times, before and after school provision, clubs, what your child should bring to school and other details.
- Talk to your child about how their school day might be different.
- Remind your child of the need for regular handwashing and good hygiene.
- Make sure the school has at least two daytime telephone contact numbers for your family.
- Please support us by continuing to follow government and NHS advice. Please engage with [NHS test and trace](#), and inform the school immediately of any test results. If possible, avoid using public transport to get to school, and minimise the number of childcare providers you use outside of school.

You may also wish to visit [gov.uk/backtoschool](https://www.gov.uk/backtoschool) for information and practical guidance to help you plan for your children's return to school.

We thank you in advance for your continuing support as we work hard over the coming weeks and months to ensure all children have a happy and successful start to the new school year. We look forward to seeing you and your families very soon.

Yours,

John Grove (Executive Head)