

**Children, Families and
Education**

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Dear parents and guardians,

We hope your family is settling back into the school routine now we are a few weeks into the new term. Thank you for all you have done to help get the school year off to a good start.

We have been delighted to see children coming back so eagerly and settling quickly back into school life. It has been especially good to see children reconnecting with their friends and playing and working alongside each other in the classroom again.

You will no doubt have seen how hard schools and teachers have been working to have in place coronavirus safety measures. Thank you for your flexibility and understanding in adapting to new routines and systems at your school.

Overall, coronavirus infection rates in Portsmouth remain relatively low, but it is vital that we all do what we can to keep these numbers as low as possible. Please do remain vigilant and continue to follow all the school's safety advice, as well as national guidance, to help keep our schools healthy.

There is lots of information, advice and support available to families if you do have questions or concerns. Schools will be happy to answer any queries or help find the support you need - looking after the health and emotional wellbeing of pupils is their top priority.

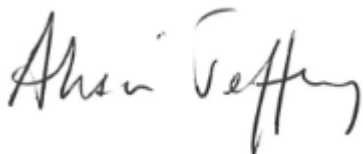
You can also find useful resources at [portsmouth.gov.uk/welcomeback](https://www.portsmouth.gov.uk/welcomeback) including advice on what to do if someone in your household develops coronavirus symptoms. There is also a guide on when to use which NHS services. If your child is unwell please refer to the NHS website and your school's attendance policy for advice. GPs are not generally able to provide advice or letters on whether or not a child can attend school.

To help address the high demand for coronavirus tests it is important to remember to that only those with coronavirus symptoms should be tested. Following the correct procedures will mean we are all doing our bit to protect NHS services for the most vulnerable. If someone in your household is displaying symptoms, (a new continuous cough, a high temperature, or a loss of, or change in, your normal sense of taste or smell), you can call 119 or visit [gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test](https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test) to arrange a test.

As well as supporting coronavirus safety measures, we've also been pleased to see many families embracing a healthy start to the year by walking, cycling or scooting to school. Doing so has huge benefits for children's overall health and mental wellbeing and research clearly shows that it exposes them to less air pollution than driving. Getting into the routine of actively travelling to school now helps to set good habits for the rest of the school year and means children arrive alert and ready to learn.

As we move into the months ahead, schools will continue to focus on providing a happy and healthy learning environment and giving each child the tools and support they need to thrive. More than ever we can see how important it is for the whole community to work together so thank you for everything you do to support your school.

Yours sincerely,



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