

26th March 2021

Coronavirus and Bubble Closure Updates

This week began with the news on Monday morning that another member of staff had tested positive for Coronavirus and this very frustratingly resulted in the closure of two of our Year R bubbles. Coming so soon on the back of the previous isolation for Year R children, this has understandably been a very bitter pill for many of our families to swallow. These are devastating circumstances for members of staff too who desperately want to get on with their jobs, rather than isolate for a second or even third time.

Last week we were required to isolate a Year 1 and a Year 3 bubble due to circumstances unrelated to this latest closure. This means, we have not yet had a day since December where every class bubble has been open. This is something we are obviously very hopeful will soon be able to be put behind us and we move into a more stable time with regards the impact of Coronavirus. Unfortunately, even a cursory glance at the latest news suggests that this may not be quite how things play out.

For parents and families affected by these closures, there is of course challenge and considerable inconvenience to contend with. For the children, there are further gaps in their in-school education. Irrespective of how strong we are able to make our remote learning provision, it cannot match the learning enjoyed in the physical company of friends and teachers. As we know from the national lockdown, this disruption is having a negative impact on wellbeing and engagement.

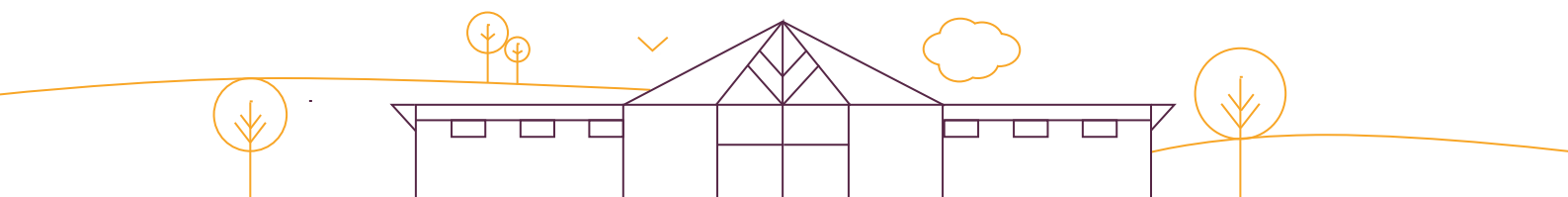
Understandably, some parents have raised concerns regarding the school's actions in these circumstances and the processes in place to keep everyone safe and to prevent bubble closures. I just don't believe there are any quick or obvious fixes for where the pandemic crisis has reached. I can state with total certainty that the approaches and decisions we take are fully in accordance with the Government guidance. Despite this, our school community currently seems to be more greatly affected than many others; whereas, for the first 10 months of this pandemic the opposite was true. I don't ever recall in my eight years as headteacher at Berrywood explaining a situation to parents as being unlucky, but it has felt like trying to dodge raindrops these past two months. With the full blessing of the members of staff concerned I would like to share a little part of what we have recently had to contend with...

Two members of staff were quite recently able to get vaccination appointments which they gladly attended a couple of weeks apart from each other. Both experienced mild reactions to the jab and came into work. The symptoms persisted and within a few days worsened. They rightly sought advice from 111 and 119 and both followed the guidance to go for a Covid19 PCR test in order to "rule this out". Unfortunately, both test results came back positive with both situations resulting in bubble closures and the members of staff concerned becoming really quite poorly. Thankfully, nearly all of our staff have made good recoveries – but for some there is still some journey left; and we send them all our very best wishes.

NEW and Exciting Building Project at Berrywood

Many parents will of course know that Sunday 14th March was the anniversary of Brooke Leavey's tragic passing. Tomorrow, Saturday 27th March, is the anniversary of her funeral. The legions of Leavey friends have provided fantastic support during this time and the family are in good spirits and doing well. I recently met with Dan and Lisa to discuss our plans for a building and improvement project which includes a performing arts studio which we will name the '*Starburst Performance Studio*' in celebration and memory of Brooke's life. I am thrilled to say these wonderfully brave parents were delighted with the idea and thought it will make a great tribute to a talented little girl who simply loved to sing, act and dance for an audience.

This building project includes: -



- Starburst Performance Studio
- An art and crafts studio & gallery
- A teaching kitchen
- An additional SEND room
- An additional teacher workroom
- The relocated staff room

There is some medium scale new building work involved, but the project mainly utilises and repurposes the existing spaces and rooms at the opposite end of our main atrium to the school reception. This includes the current music room, staff room and the small kitchen area. Some Berrywood families will be aware that the school has previously embarked upon plans to create very similar facilities to the ones being envisioned in this project. The difference between this project and previous plans is that the latter were based around the creation of a new stand-alone building, whereas the new plans are not.

We are very pleased to have appointed Studio 4 to act as the Principle Design Consultants for this project. They are incredibly enthusiastic about bringing the vision into reality within our target completion period of the coming 12-13 months. They are currently undertaking the task of producing the **initial design concept ready for presentation to the school community** during the first week of May. We have great confidence that these ideas will be massively welcomed by parents as an achievable and fantastic development for the school. I look forward to sharing the details in May.

Extra-Curricular Clubs

I would first like to thank the many wonderful parent volunteers who have support the after school physical activity clubs which have been taking place for Year 5 & 6 children these past few weeks. You have helped contribute to over 400 hours of activity for children so far, and we still have a week to go! Any of the parents that have helped out so far are welcome to join us on any of the three nights that the clubs are running next week – even if this means attending on a different night. We believe this will help create a really good atmosphere just prior to the children going off for the Easter holiday. Here is the important reminder that the timetable for these clubs now changes because next week is shorter: -

Monday	TR6	CGLP6	CBAP5	KR5
Tuesday	TR6	JB6	CBAP5	NC5
Wednesday	JB6	CGLP6	NC5	KR5

This timetable is for the week commencing 29th March

We are currently in the process of making arrangements for extra-curricular clubs to begin for all age groups of children after Easter. Some details will be published next week. These clubs will not begin until the second week of the summer term and will be restricted to specific year groups for Covid19 safety reasons.

New Menu's

This is a reminder that when we return after the Easter break HC3S will be starting their new menu which runs until October half term. The menus can be found on our website by visiting www.berrywood-pri.hants.sch.uk

INSET Day and Good Friday Reminder

Next week is the final week of the spring term and is much shorter due our INSET day on Thursday 1st April, where school is closed to all children. We then wish you all a very happy Easter break beginning with Good Friday the following day.