

**From the offices of Millfield Primary School
and
Littleport Community Primary School**



23rd November, 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

We thought it would be helpful to write one letter to all parents of both Millfield and Littleport Community Primary Schools as we are part of one community. At the bottom of this letter is a section relevant only to your child's school.

At the start of this school year, everybody was hopeful that the worst of Covid would be behind us and we could all return to some degree of normality. The strict national guidance and statutory requirements placed on primary schools was eased significantly and, with it, the sorts of things we had all grown used to during the unprecedented times, came to an end or were revised. Since September, the guidance for schools has been much less restrictive and increasingly aligned to the national picture. However, our safeguarding duty to the communities we serve still remains, which we feel can cause confusion and frustration for those who aren't actually working in schools, especially when additional measures need to be taken for the safety of the whole school community. As Headteachers, we are guided by the local Covid rates as well as advice from local Public Health and the local authority. In addition to this, we have to consider factors that are school specific, such as any staff and pupils who might be particularly vulnerable as well as staff absenteeism.

As Headteachers, all of the expectations placed upon us around educational provision and entitlement have returned to as they were pre-Covid, such as: ensuring the children access a broad and balanced curriculum; ensuring provision is consistently good or better so that children make good progress; ensuring children who have been adversely affected during the pandemic 'catch up'; engaging with Ofsted inspections, which have returned to their previous full format.

As throughout this pandemic, we have to keep an eye on ever-changing local guidance and Covid rates whilst ensuring all these educational expectations are in place. Critical to this is doing everything we can to keep staff in school and to mitigate situations where they are at an increased risk of exposure to Covid whilst at work. As we have experienced, if staff are absent from school with Covid, it can be for many weeks. Unfortunately, with many schools in similar positions and cover staff in high demand as a result, it is increasingly difficult to find suitable supply teachers and moving staff around within school to cover the absence means people are spread very thinly.

Recently Cambridgeshire and Peterborough were designated by the Government as an ERA (Enhanced Response Area), along with only a handful of other areas across the country. This is due to the rising rates of infection combined with, in some areas, a low take up of the vaccination. This week we have been informed that infection rates across the county in the Early Years is increasing, and this increase is expected to continue.

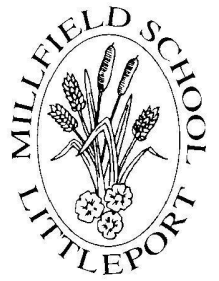
Given the ever changing rates of infection, alongside the need for us to ensure educational provision is as it should be, there has been the need for us to change things that have been planned in our schools; for example a school disco or a Christmas event. The plans we made at the start of the term were arranged in good faith. Decisions to cancel an event are not taken lightly, especially as we near Christmas because we know how much an extra bit of magic is needed right now. However, the last thing we want is a non-essential school event resulting in a number of families contracting Covid over the festive period.

We would ask you to 'bear with us' if we need to make changes to the school calendar and we hope this letter, if somewhat lengthy, has helped to put a context around it. We would like to thank you for your continued support and understanding during these challenging times for us all.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs D. M. Hannaford - Millfield Primary

Mr A. Rivett – Littleport Community Primary



For parents of children at Millfield:

I should like to thank all of you who have children in Reception for your support and understanding when we had to close the two classes the week before last- I know this cannot have been easy for you and I should like to reassure you that the decision was not taken lightly. I should like to make a 'thank you' mention to Mrs Papworth and Mrs Kennedy who stepped into Reception on Monday and Tuesday last week to help out. Mrs Weller and Mrs Blythe returned last Wednesday, Mrs Hopkins yesterday and Ms Smit today; although none of them are feeling 100% better.

The very strong guidance now coming into schools is that we should not be having groups of visitors into school, to reduce the risk of transmission. With this in mind, it has been decided that the School Nativity will not take place in the usual sense. Last year, because the regulations were so strict, the Reception staff worked with all the children to put together a video of the Nativity- I know many schools did something similar. Whilst I know many of you with children in Reception will be disappointed, I know you will enjoy the short film. What we found last year was that the children had a really worthwhile experience being part of this dramatisation; in many respects many of the children had far bigger parts than if they were doing it on the stage; they were not struck by stage fright and they had the fun of using the whole school site for the different scenes.

Finally, I should like to extend our thanks to all of you who are helping to put out the cones at the start and/or end of the school day. It is such a help and is definitely helping to keep your children (and you!) safer as you walk along Grange Lane at that busy time.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs D. M. Hannaford
Principal