



# PRIESTLEY SMITH SPECIALIST SCHOOL

(For Blind and Partially Sighted Students)

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Headteacher: Mrs J. L. Garvey



27<sup>th</sup> February 2022

Dear Parents / carers,

We hope you have had a well-rested half term. School returns on Monday 28<sup>th</sup> February.

We have, this half term, published our newsletter on “Sway” online so hope it is more accessible to everyone. I will be sharing the link via text.

I am very pleased to inform you that before half term we interviewed for the Assistant Headteacher post and we have appointed Louise Herbert, who has accepted the offer of the post and will start with us on the 25<sup>th</sup> April. Louise is a QTVI (Qualified Teacher of the Vision Impaired) with a wealth of experience, she is currently working in Solihull Sensory Support having previously worked in primary schools as well as a placement at Priestley Smith during her QTVI course, so she knows and understands our school well.

Louise will be leading on the Quality of Education across primary and secondary as well as being the Head of the Primary Department. She has some very exciting and innovative ideas and I know she will be a huge asset to the school.

I am very concerned at the number of parents taking their children out of school during term time. I appreciate that during covid many people have missed seeing relatives abroad, however, absence from school should be avoided as it can have a serious effect on your child's educational progress and can create difficulties for them on their return to school. It is important to note that only the Headteacher can authorise absence from school. Parents/Guardians cannot authorise the absence themselves. Birmingham Local Authority have very strict protocols regarding unauthorised absences which could result in fines from the Local Authority. Please do get in touch if you would like further clarification.

As you are no doubt aware, the ways in which we manage Covid has changed following the government announcement on the 21<sup>st</sup> February, however, in special schools, some things remain as many of our children are vulnerable due to their health conditions, we still require secondary students and all staff to undertake twice weekly lateral flows. Masks are no longer mandatory, but it is advisable that they continue to wear them on transport.

If your child has symptoms of covid we would ask you to get them a PCR. If they test positive, they should stay at home and avoid contact with other people [COVID-19: people with COVID-19 and their contacts - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/covid-19/people-with-covid-19-and-their-contacts) ([www.gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk))

## Symptoms

We have all lived with and know well the symptoms of the original COVID variants:

- continuous cough
- fever/high temperature (37.8C or greater)
- loss of, or change in, sense of smell or taste (anosmia)

However, the issue now is that the newer Omicron variant has the following most common symptoms:

- Runny nose
- Headache
- Fatigue (either mild or severe) / Body Aches
- Sneezing
- Sore throat

The challenge in relation to these new symptoms is that you could have these symptoms at any time of year if you were struggling with a common cold, hayfever etc and didn't have COVID at all. Therefore we are using the term 'unwell' instead of symptoms.

If a pupil feels / appears unwell at **home**, pupils should do a Lateral Flow Test if at all possible. If you have positive COVID cases in your household, pupils should do a Lateral Flow Test daily. *If it is not possible to do a Lateral Flow Test and your child presents as unwell or there is COVID in your household, please keep your child at home to support us with keeping potential COVID cases outside of the School Community and to protect our highly vulnerable children.*

We are very much looking forward to trying to get back to some sort of normality, with residentials being planned for the summer term and the hope that we can increase our trips and visits.

School breaks up for Easter on Friday 8<sup>th</sup> April

With best wishes,

Joanna Garvey  
Headteacher  
Priestley Smith Specialist School