**WELCOME BACK TO 34 CASTLE STREET HEREFORD**

We are very thankful for your understanding during this time and thank you for your continued support and loyalty to the practice. These have been very difficult times for all of us and we understand that many of you have been unable to access the dental care you need.

After 3 months of lockdown we are moving to reopen the practice. Certainly most clinical procedures remain the same as pre-Covid but others have changed. This letter gives you information that explains what you, and your son or daughter will need to do to help us run an efficient service that is safe for all of us.

One of our team will be in contact with you over the coming weeks, to make an appointment and to reschedule any appointments we have had to postpone.

Our priority, as always, is your safety and your care, and we would like to offer you reassurance that we have re-examined all of our procedures and protocols to ensure they give the highest level possible of safety to you and our staff.

We have always had very high levels of infection control in the practice, but we have enhanced these measures even further to meet and go beyond new regulations and guidelines following the Covid pandemic.

You will, therefore, notice a number of changes before, during, and after your next appointment.

We are contacting people to arrange appointments via phone, e mail and text messages.

The reception team will aim to confirm a convenient time and date with you. If you receive a text or email asking you to contact us, please do so on 01432 273393, to agree the time and date to attend.

The new way of working reduces our surgery capacity to see people and there will be fewer appointments available per day. Appointments will be managed to allow us to maintain social distancing standards throughout the practice. This means that there may be fewer options when arranging your review appointment, but we will probably be changing our opening hours to be able to increase the number of appointments we can offer you.

Before your appointment you will need to complete a short questionnaire regarding your overall general health and fill in the extra Covid 19 questions for the person having treatment. This is to ensure that you don’t have symptoms of Covid-19 when you come to the practice.

We would like you to complete the section at the end of the medical forms and return it to us by e mail prior to the appointment. By updating this medical history form, and sending us confirmation of the information, even if all the answers are negative, we have another way of reducing the risk of virus transmission.

If you, or the patient, have had or still have any symptoms of active virus infection please do NOT come to the practice but telephone us to arrange an alternative appointment.

Only asymptomatic patients and carers should attend for their brace to be adjusted.

We may be taking and recording your temperature on arrival using a no-touch infrared thermometer.

There will be no capacity just to call in and have something done, so please phone us if there are particular issues with the braces.

Shielded groups need to decide whether they want to attend during their period of reduced contact or defer until this has ceased. This might mean having to ask another adult to accompany the person in treatment if parents fall into symptomatic or shielded categories.

Try to bring as little with you to the appointments ie leave handbags, school bags, sports kit etc in the car or at home.

The WC is not available in the practice so please ensure you make alternative arrangements before entering the practice. Access to brush your teeth is also temporarily suspended. You are asked to thoroughly brush your teeth before arrival to the practice.

Please attend punctually for your timed appointments entering the practice as close to the agreed appointment time as possible. Where possible, you may want to wait in your car until the scheduled appointment time, this is to limit the number of patients in our waiting areas. We will be keeping waiting times to a minimum. We will try to run on time to limit the time you need to wait for clinical treatment.

On entering please use elbows or back into the push entrance doors to limit hand contact. Inside the first door is a hand sanitising station. Please follow the hand cleaning instructions and after entering tell the receptionist that you have arrived. She will ask about the e mailed medical history and Covid 19 questions. Perspex shield have been installed in the reception area and the floor marked out.

The waiting area has been redesigned to accommodate social distancing. You may be asked to wear some personal protective items such as a face mask. We will supply and dispose of these items for you.

You may see that our waiting room will no longer offer magazines, children’s toys and so forth, since those items are difficult to clean and disinfect.

You are likely to see your orthodontist and nursing staff wearing additional Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).  We will also be using special equipment to decontaminate the surgery between patients to ensure a safe virus-free environment.  All communal areas of the practice will be decontaminated regularly during the day.

As much as possible we will make your journey as contactless as we can, therefore receipts and follow up appointments / treatment plan may be emailed to you after your appointment. We would also appreciate it if any payments are not made in cash.

Certain review appointments, some follow-ups and some initial consultations may be completely over the phone or by utilising video communications.

We ask that you always practice social distancing whilst in public areas and these areas will be marked-out accordingly.