



## **September Return to school**

Dear Parents / Carers

Following the release of the government's guidance on the reopening of schools, we will be welcoming all our children back to school in September. We are so looking forward to seeing them all again!

Returning to school is vital for children's education and for their wellbeing. The balance of risk is now overwhelmingly in favour of children returning to school. For the vast majority of children, the benefits of being back in school far outweigh the very low risk from COVID-19. We want everyone to feel as safe and secure as possible upon their return and the government have produced comprehensive guidance for proportionate protective measures for children and staff to manage risk effectively.

Over the last few weeks, many of the systems and procedures have already been successfully put in place. A more detailed risk assessment will be produced over the summer in line with national and Local Authority guidance as the finer details of the children's return is planned. However below is some key information about systems and procedures in school, which will hopefully provide you with reassurance for September.

### **Enhanced Cleaning**

- As currently, there will be more frequent cleaning throughout every day, including touch points around school, especially toilets, tables, taps, door pushes/handles and toys/equipment after use.

### **Handwashing / Toilet areas**

- Handwashing will happen at regular intervals including when arriving at school, returning from breaks, if changing rooms and before and after eating.
- Hand sanitiser will be used regularly in addition to hand washing. This will be administered & supervised by an adult.
- Paper towels are used to dry hands.
- Different groups do not need to be allocated different toilet blocks and taps/touchpoints are cleaned during the day.

### **Good respiratory hygiene**

- The 'catch it, kill it, bin it' will be taught and stressed in all classrooms.
- Tissues will be readily available in classrooms (on tables) and around school.
- Lidded bins are located in classrooms and central areas.
- Used tissues will be immediately disposed of in tied bags.

### **PPE**

- Public Health England does not recommend the use of face coverings in school. They state that these are not required in school as pupils and staff are mixing in consistent groups.
- The school has a supply of emergency PPE. This may be used in the event that a child becomes

unwell and a designated member of staff will care for that child in an isolation area until an appropriate adult can collect them from school. Whilst the guidance states that PPE is generally not required, staff will have access to face masks, gloves and face visors should they wish to use them.

- Children should not wear facemasks because they are less likely to be able to manage these safely and this could cause greater risk.

### **Child / adult becomes unwell**

- Only staff and pupils who are not exhibiting any symptoms, and who do not need to self-isolate, may attend school. **Pupils and staff must not attend school if they are unwell.**
- School may close at short notice if staffing levels fall to levels where safety cannot be assured.
- If a child presents with symptoms of COVID-19 the child will be sent home as soon as possible, or if this happens at home, the parent/carer must inform school as soon as possible. Under safeguarding guidelines, the child must access a test as soon as possible. The parent/carer must inform the school as soon as the results are returned. The child must not return to school until the results of the test indicate a negative result.
- If a member of the group, adult or child, tests positive from COVID19, then the whole group will need to remain at home for 14 days. Parents will be asked for proof of test results.
- School will consult the local health protection team, who may also contact school directly if they become aware that an attendee has tested positive – as identified by NHS Test and Trace.

### **Groupings of children**

- We will establish consistent groups of children to reduce the risk of transmission and limit the number of children and staff in contact with one another. Briefly passing in the corridor or playground is considered low risk. Distinct groups make it easier in the event of a positive case to identify those who may need to self-isolate.
- Mrs Suluga's class and Mr Soppitt's class will operate as a single bubble. All other classes will operate as either independent bubbles or be grouped into slightly larger bubbles. Teachers and other staff can operate across different bubbles but this will be minimised as much as possible and social distancing will be prevalent.
- Groups will be kept apart from other groups throughout the school day. This includes playtimes and lunchtimes.
- Each group will have their own supply of playtime equipment. The children will not be able to use the large outdoor play equipment at the moment.
- Children will be supported to maintain distance and not touch staff and their peers where possible.
- There will be no assemblies or large gatherings. This may affect our Christmas performances next term but we will see how the safety guidance develops.
- Movement around the school site will be kept to a minimum.
- We will be operating staggered starts, break times, lunchtimes and end of day arrangements. (information to follow)

### **Staffing:**

- Each bubble will have a teacher and where possible, a teaching assistant assigned to them.
- All teachers and staff can operate across different classes and year groups in order to facilitate the delivery of the curriculum.
- External sports coaches, peripatetic teachers, supply teachers are allowed to move between schools.

## Classrooms

- Guidance says that seating all children side-by-side and facing forwards is advisable “**where possible**”. This is not an option for our classrooms as all but one from Year 1 upwards have round tables. We have taken advice from Health and safety on this issue who have suggested additional mitigating factors for our classrooms. These will include:
  - Tissues on all tables but bagging system
  - Prevalent handwashing and use of hand sanitiser
  - Children will sit in the same seat each day.
  - Classroom doors will be kept open.
  - Windows will be open for additional ventilation.
  - Hand sanitiser will be available in all classrooms.
  - Pupils will have their own individual stationery / equipment where possible, however classroom resources can be shared within the bubble.
- Reading books can go home.
- Clear signage will be visible around school indicating circulation / signage at entrances for visitors / general hygiene / how to deal with staff / children displaying symptoms.

## Uniform:

School uniform should be worn. If you require any new uniform this can be ordered from “**Cre8ive Graphics**” either via our school website ([school uniform ordering link](#)) or by visiting in person - 12 Peel St, Bishop Auckland DL14 7LF. Uniform orders can be collected from the shop during the school holidays or can be delivered to your home for a charge.

## PE

- The children will need a PE kit in school.
- Where possible PE will be outdoors.
- There will be no contact sport.
- Sports equipment will be cleaned between groups.

## Equipment

- Bags can be brought to school but should only contain essential items.
- Clothes no longer need to be washed daily.
- A water bottle is essential.

Please refer to the “Meet the Teacher” information you received in the report envelope for further information about what your child will need to bring on the first day.

## Arriving on Site

**Arrival and leaving times for every class will be sent to you before the start of term in September and will be posted on the website. Guidance suggests that staggered start and finish times are important to keep groups apart, while retaining the amount of overall teaching time.**

- Parents will be asked to enter the site at **their dedicated time only**, leaving promptly.
- Only one adult is allowed per child.
- Arrangements can be made for siblings to be collected together.

### **Arrival on site: staggered start**

- School has been successfully operating a one way system for the last 4 weeks and this is likely to continue, although there may be a few changes to entry and exit points to speed up the process.
- There will be a staggered start to the school day - between 8:45am and 9:05am. More detailed information about your child's group and your allocated time will follow.
- Your child's group will be designated a specific door to enter school.
- On arrival, children will go straight to their classroom.

### **End of the school day: 3:00pm - 3:20pm**

- Children will leave via the same door as entering the building.
- Parents will wait in the yard, observing social distancing guidelines at all times.
- Our older children can arrive and leave unaccompanied with your permission- as long as they adhere to all guidelines.

### **Attendance**

- The government says that it is vital for all children to return to school to minimise the long-term impact on their education, wellbeing and development, therefore all the usual attendance rules will apply and non-attendance at school will no longer have exemptions from sanctions.
- We must be informed of any children who need to shield / self-isolate and absence will not be penalised.
- Where a pupil is unable to attend school because they are complying with clinical and/or public health advice, they will be offered access to remote learning.

### **Meals**

- School meals will be available. We plan to offer hot options. We may ask the children to choose their options at the start of each week.
- Packed lunches need to be brought in a container that can be washed at home or preferably a disposable bag.
- Packed lunches will be stored in the child's classroom.
- Children need to bring their own drink for during the day and at lunch.
- Lunch will generally be eaten in the classroom, apart from the youngest children (EYFS) who will eat in the Hall.
- School dinners will be brought to the classroom door by kitchen staff / Teaching Assistants.

### **Curriculum**

- Priority will be wellbeing of pupils both mentally and with regard to health and hygiene.
- When the children first come to school, they will be taught about social distancing, good hand-hygiene, good respiratory-hygiene, in-school routines, expectations and rules associated with this period of return to school in a sensitive manner so as not to overly worry children.
- The curriculum will remain broad and ambitious but in the Autumn term staff will maximise time to cover the most important missed content. There will be an emphasis on Reading and staff will look at how all subjects can contribute to the filling of any gaps in core knowledge.
- Opportunities will be used throughout the day for outdoor learning, as outdoors is considered to be the safest environment.

**Parental communication with school**

- Parents will be asked not to come into school if communication can be made via email or telephone.
- If an appointment is needed this can be arranged through the school office.

I apologise that this is a lengthy document but the aim is to reassure parents of all the procedures that will be in place to make school as safe an environment as possible for the return in September. Throughout the summer we will be working further on all aspects of the school risk assessment and will send information to you to confirm drop/pick up times and routes around the school site before we start in September. Please do not hesitate to contact us should you require any additional information.

Take care,

Mrs H E Wilson

Head teacher