

17 August 2020

Dear Parent / Guardian,

It seems like we have been travelling on a very long road. However, we now find ourselves on the threshold of a new school year. I hope that you have been able to have a restful summer and managed to grab some time together as a family that resembled the 'norm'.

It is now time, however, to make preparations for the return to school. I hope that the following information will clarify any questions that you have in mind.

PLEASE CONTINUE TO BE AWARE THAT THE PLANS THAT WE HAVE PUT INTO PLACE ARE OPEN TO CHANGE DUE TO GOVERNMENT DIRECTION.

Primary 7 children will return to school on Monday the 24th August.

It is intended that this return will be on a full-time basis, with **school ending at 3pm.**

Children who were previously assigned to the **BURGUNDY** group should arrive on the school premises between **8.30am and 8.45am**. They should proceed immediately to their classrooms in the usual P7 area. **They should not stay in the playground.**

Children who were previously assigned to the **BLUE** group should arrive on the school premises between **8.50am and 9.05am**. They should proceed immediately to their classrooms in the usual P7 area. **They should not stay in the playground.**

No school lunches will be available this week. Children need to bring their own packed lunch. Please send lunches in disposable bags rather than lunchboxes. Likewise, please send water in disposable bottles.

School is closed as planned on Bank Holiday, Monday 31st August.

Children in P1-6 will return to school on Tuesday 1st September. School will start according to the times listed below. Please read to the end of this letter to find finishing times for each year group.

School starting times for Primary 1 may differ to that of the rest of the school. Separate information will follow on this matter.

Children who were previously assigned to the **BURGUNDY** group should arrive on the school premises between **8.30am and 8.45am**. They should proceed immediately to their classrooms. **They should not stay in the playground.**

Children who were previously assigned to the **BLUE** group should arrive on the school premises between **8.50am and 9.05am**. They should proceed immediately to their classrooms. **They should not stay in the playground.**

Staff will be on hand to direct children to their classrooms. However, a map of the school has been attached to clarify the location of each class and the entrances to be used. **Please note that P5B will also enter and exit via the P7 activity area door.**

The wearing of school uniform will be optional until half-term, when this policy will be reviewed.

In order to keep everyone safe and to ensure that we can stay open and operate as near to normal as possible, the following points should be noted:

START OF DAY

- Children using the crossing patrol should remain outside of the yellow box until they are called forward to cross the road.
- With the exception of P1 children (and, initially, P2), pupils should make their own way into school once entering *via* the front or rear gates. They should not be accompanied by parents and they should go directly to their classrooms.
- With the exception of P1 parents and, initially, P2 parents, no adults, other than staff, should be on the premises without prior arrangement. P1 and 2 parents leaving children off **MUST** observe social distancing guidelines and follow directions as laid down by the school. This is seen as essential if we are to keep the school fully operational. Parents of P1 and P2 children entering the activity area in the mornings should wear face coverings as they would entering any indoor area used by the public.
- Children should cleanse hands as they enter the building. Ideally, **children should bring their own small bottle of sanitiser** to use as required during the day and to reduce queues for communal bottles. They can also wash their hands with soap and water using the facilities in the activity areas / classrooms.

DURING THE DAY

- Items brought to and from home should be kept to a minimum. Stationery items should be kept in a bag or container which can be easily wiped clean. The materials should be clearly labelled so that they can be safely left in school at the end of the day. Books / paperwork for home will be kept to a minimum. With this in mind, school bags are unlikely to be needed, a simple disposable or washable shopping bag which can be changed each day will suffice.
- Children should follow the one-way system that has been set up around the school. This should only be needed upon entering and leaving the building. However, as the school dining hall comes into full use, the one-way system will also be observed.
- Pupils will not go to the classrooms of other teachers for any afternoon lessons. They will remain in their own room and be taught by a visiting teacher.
- Classes will remain together as a single group throughout the day. Opportunities for outdoor learning will be taken whenever possible, so **please send your child in clothing appropriate for the weather.**
- The toilets in each area will be designated for the use of children in that area only. Pupils will be allowed to go the toilet one at a time.

BREAK AND LUNCH

- Break will be consumed in the child's own classroom. Mixing of classes in the activity areas will not be permitted.

- Break times will be staggered so that outside play will only be for the classes from one activity area at a time. In addition, pupils will be encouraged to engage with only the children from their own class in designated areas.
- Packed lunches will be the preferred option in the first week. Packed lunches should be brought in disposable bags which do not need to be brought home. Similarly, water bottles should be disposable. Children cannot leave the rooms to refill water bottles, so send a second bottle if you think that is necessary.
- As school dinners become available these may, in the first instance, be of a packed-lunch variety and delivered to classrooms.

END OF DAY

To help facilitate cleaning and preparation for the next day, school for P4-7 will now end earlier for all P4-7 children.

- At the end of the day, children in P1 and 2 can be collected from their usual exit point. However, this can only be acceptable if those collecting the children are seen to be maintaining responsible social distancing from each other. P3 children will be brought to the front gate by their class teacher for collection at 1.55pm.
- Please stay beyond the yellow lines on the footpath and wait for your children to come to you. This will avoid unnecessary congestion around the crossing patrol.
- Please move away from the school as quickly as possible to avoid crowding on the footpath.
- P4 - 7 children will be dismissed from the gates by their teachers at the end of the day. Again, to avoid congestion around the crossing patrol, the children will be released at different times as outlined below. Parents are requested to wait beyond the yellow lines on the footpath for their children to come to them and to disperse from the area of the school as soon as possible.

Dismissal times P4-7

P4 2.30pm

P5 2.35pm

P6 2.40pm

P7 2.45pm

Children may still enter and leave *via* the rear gate as footfall here is naturally much lower. However, it is incumbent upon parents to emphasise to the children the importance of not crowding this exit as its design only allows for one person to pass through at a time.

It should be noted that, **although social distancing for children has been reduced, this is not the case for adults and that includes school staff!** Children carry the least risk of contracting COVID19,

but infection amongst staff could have serious consequences for the provision of education at school in particular and for the wider community in general. We will continue to do our utmost to support your child's emotional, physical and academic wellbeing, but we all need to maintain our guard to protect each other.

As I have often said, please constantly emphasize to your children the need to maintain excellent hand hygiene, appropriate respect for social distancing and the importance of following the mantra of 'catch it, kill it, bin it' with respect to coughs and sneezes. We – parents, staff and children – must all play our part in keeping our school open. To this end, please read the attached guide for parents for the return to school.

There has been consistent understanding and support from the parent body over these very difficult months and, for that, you have my heartfelt thanks. Let's keep working together and supporting each other in the months to come with the aim of giving all of our children what they deserve – an excellent education in a safe and secure environment.

Regards,

John Sandford
VP.