



South Gosforth First School

'Roots to grow and wings to fly'

Dear Parents & Carers

Well, what a great start to the new term the children have made! All of the staff are so very proud of each and every one of our pupils who have demonstrated such a positive and excellent attitude to school life over the last couple of days. We had a small few children who were a little bit anxious at first about coming back for understandable reasons after being away from school for so long, but after an hour or so everyone had a big smile on their face! It really is clear that the children were ready to be back in school with their peers and ready to start learning again. It has been wonderful to see and really is testament to what wonderful, conscientious little people we have in school.

There were just a few things that I wanted to mention linked to protocols and procedures which have come to light over the last couple of days after having discussions with staff and monitoring provision in school:

1. Packed Lunches

It would be extremely helpful for pupils who are bringing in a packed lunch from home if these could be brought in a disposable bag (eg a paper bag) complete with disposable items inside that can be thrown away at the end of the lunch break and don't have to travel to and from school every day. Whilst I am fully aware that this may not be possible for all of our families to facilitate, it would make our lives at lunch time considerably easier, as well as reducing the level of risk from pupils transporting items between home and school – support from our families with this would be much appreciated. However, if this really isn't possible for your child(ren), we will continue to sanitise plastic packed lunch boxes from home each morning when children come in to school with antibacterial spray.

2. Ventilation

Public Health England and DfE strongly recommend that all classrooms are well ventilated, as this significantly reduces the risk of transmission of COVID-19. This is factored in to our risk assessment and staff have been leaving their internal classroom doors open, as well as opening most of their external windows so that fresh air can circulate. We plan to continue to do this for the foreseeable future, regardless of the weather outside. In light of this, it would be advisable if all children could come to school wearing a school jumper in case it is a bit of a fresher day outside and the classroom gets a bit cooler.

3. Water Bottles

After doing some research around this, as well as being mindful of some queries from parents, I have made the decision to have the children take their water bottles home at the end of each school day. Whilst I am aware that this isn't ideal in terms of the children transporting objects between home and school, there is an additional risk if the children are drinking water from bottles which aren't adequately cleaned as bacteria will obviously build up unless they are thoroughly washed each day. We simply do not have the capacity in school to thoroughly wash 30 bottles in each class every day, therefore I would request that this is done at home and the children can bring in their clean, filled bottle each morning.

This correspondence is available in audio, Braille or large print if required. Please contact us to arrange this.

4. Parent & Pupil Protocols

I have attached to this email a 'Parent Protocol' and 'Rules for Pupils' document, which clearly set out some of the expectations which we will require from our children and our families in order for us to keep things as safe as possible. These documents should act as a useful reference point and summary of guidance for everyone in our community. Please do get in touch if you have any questions or queries.

5. Parents & Carers in School

We have had a few of our parents and carers trying to come in school for various reasons (to use the toilets in the entrance lobby or to speak to members of staff etc.) I would like to stress that we really are unable to have our parents come in to the school building at the moment unless this is for an absolutely essential reason which has been sanctioned by myself. I really can assure everyone that this is genuinely not because we are being overly pedantic in some way or because we don't want to see our families face to face. This is based upon advice from Public Health England to actively limit the amount of additional adults who are coming in to school as much as we possibly can in order to minimise the risk of potential transmission. We sincerely hope that this arrangement won't be for too long and that we can go back to having school as the bustling centre of the community that it was before lockdown, but for now we really must enforce these rules strictly. If any parents need to contact school for any reason that goes beyond a very brief socially distanced chat with the teacher as the children enter the classroom, please do this via email or telephone, or speak to Mr Adams or Mrs Whitehouse who will be outside at the beginning / end of the school day.

6. Nut Free School

I just wanted to remind some of our newer parents that we are a 'Nut Free School'. We do have a small number of pupils who have severe, life threatening allergies to nuts, so for any parents / carers sending in food with their children's packed lunches, nuts are strictly forbidden please. Even pupils eating nuts or food products with nuts in them in the same vicinity as a child with an allergy can result in an anaphylactic shock, so we really must avoid any foods containing nuts at all in school. This does not include foods which 'may contain nut traces'.

7. Parental Concern Forms

Many thanks to the parents and carers who sent in parental concern forms about their children. This has given us some very useful feedback around some of the issues which your children have been facing over the lockdown period. These were shared with staff during a training session this evening and teachers have already begun thinking about specific support which they will put in place for these children.

8. Updated Risk Assessment

Please note that the most updated version (with most recent amendments) of our risk assessment and associated documents are available for all parents and carers to view on our new school website under the 'COVID-19' tab.

Once again, a big thank you to all of our families for your continued support over the last few days. It is wonderful to have our school family back together.

Warmest wishes

Mr Adams