

March Return to School

Dear Parents and Carers,

Following the announcement by the government regarding the full opening of school on **Monday 8th March 2021**, I am now outlining a little more detail for your child's compulsory return to school. We are aware that parents will understandably have concerns about sending their children back to school and I want to outline the measures we will be taking in school to reduce the risk from COVID-19.

So how can school minimise the risk of infection?

The government set some principles for wider opening of schools and provided a hierarchy of measures to follow. These were:

- Avoiding contact with anyone with symptoms
- Ensure face coverings are used
- Frequent hand cleaning and good hygiene practices
- Regular cleaning of settings
- Minimising contact and mixing
- Keep occupied spaces well ventilated
- Promote and engage in asymptomatic testing, where available.

We can make things safer and reduce the risk by following these measures. Our plan addresses these in the following ways:

Measures to follow	School's measures
Avoiding contact with anyone with symptoms	If anyone is displaying symptoms (see more detail below) in your household, your child must not be sent to school. If at any point any child displays any symptoms of the infection, we will contact a parent or carer who must come and collect the child immediately. This will be a school decision and we will follow the government guidance for schools on what to do if this occurs. This process will involve a member of staff having to use PPE when waiting with the child before collection, in a room separate to anyone else.
Ensure face covering are used	Face coverings will be worn by staff and adult visitors in situations where social distancing between adults is not possible (for example, when moving around in corridors and communal areas). The children do not need to wear a face covering. Further to this we will continue to ask parents to wear a face covering, on the school site, when dropping off or collecting their child/ren at school, unless you have an exemption.
Frequent hand cleaning	We will be following the NHS guidance (see below) and teaching children how to wash/disinfect their hands. The children will be washing their hands more frequently and where they aren't able to wash with soap and water disinfectant gel will be used. Each space we are using, initially, will have a sink and running water. We will be expecting children to wash/disinfect their hands every time enter/re-enter the building from outside: start of the day, break times, before & after lunch, after toilet visit, after outdoor learning (bikes, forest school etc.)
Good hygiene practices	We will continue to promote good respiratory hygiene for everyone by promoting the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach. To help us do this every classroom will be stocked with tissues.
Regular cleaning of settings	There will be enhanced cleaning practices in place where we will be cleaning surfaces, areas and emptying bins more frequently during the day. This will happen before the children enter school, at break time and at lunchtime. After school, our cleaning team will further clean classrooms – using a new cleaning schedule.

Minimising contact and mixing (this includes social distancing measures)	Classes will be kept in year group 'bubbles' and will be staying in these throughout the school days. Within the bubbles they will have their own pencils, rulers, iPads etc. Break times and play areas will be separated too, to ensure no mixing of children within bubbles. (see more detail below) Further to this we are staggering start and finish times for all year group 'bubbles' to prevent congregation and congestion. (see more details below)
Keep occupied spaces well ventilated	In all occupied rooms in school the windows and doors will be open at all times. With wider opening during break times to fully aerate the rooms to replenish with fresh air.
Promote and engage in asymptomatic testing, where available.	The children in school will not be being tested in school. However, the staff are being tested, currently and this will continue. Staff are being tested twice a week, as part of the asymptomatic testing regime.

Avoiding contact with anyone with symptoms

Symptoms include:

- a high temperature – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature)
- a new, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual)
- a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste – this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal

Minimising contact and mixing (this includes social distancing measures)

Within classrooms we will use the following measures:

Separate Class Groups

- Staying in class group – each year group will be in their own year group with their own class-based staff.
- Tables in classrooms facing forwards – children will have their own equipment e.g. pencils, pens, iPad etc.
- Children will work at a desk with their partner throughout, whilst in the classroom.
- Play time – children will remain in their class groups. Each class will have their own play area and timetabled playtimes.
- Lunch - EYs & KS1 in hall; KS2 in their classrooms.
- Staggered start/end of the day routine – each year group will have their own start/finish times.
- One-way system of movement in school – splitting up the hall into lanes and arrows on the floor to indicate direction of movement.
- Controlled use of toilets – careful not to have a congregation of children in toilets. Staff monitoring the children's use of toilets.
- Parents will not be allowed to enter the school building. Any queries, or requests to speak to the class teacher, will need to be made by phone or email.
- Windows will need to be open to ensure the room is well ventilated and internal classroom doors will need to be wedged open to prevent touching of door handles.
- Breakfast Club will resume – starting at 8.15am. Children will receive their breakfast and take to their classroom to eat and have activities available there.
- Children will need to wear their uniform – it would be ideal if the children wore trainers to aid them with the outdoor activities that will be planned.

These measures are what will be needed to keep everyone as safe as possible and to prevent, as much as possible, the risk of illness to all. Following government guidance, these measures are very similar to what other primary schools are also implementing, whilst acknowledging each school is very different. We all have very different sites, buildings, number of classrooms, numbers of pupils and numbers of staff.

Drop off/Pick up details

There can **only be one adult dropping off and collecting**, per child/family. Drop off and pick up times **must** be strictly adhered to by parents and carers. I would like to remind you to:

- Remember your face covering.
- Stay behind the cones (buffer zone) – if you need to communicate with staff ensure you keep a 2m distance.
- Arrive on time – not early, we are trying to prevent congregation and large crowds.
- Wait on the yard space – ensure you are socially distanced. Do not gather at the gates.
- Let us know of appointments – ring to inform us. Do not come onto the site without an appointment.

Class Group	Drop off/Pick up	Entrance	Start time	Finish time
Little Learners	Staff Car Park	Little Learners door	9.00am	11.55am
Nursery	Main Entrance	Early Years door	Morning 8.45am Afternoon 12.30pm	11.45pm 3.15pm
Reception	Main Entrance	Early Years door	8.45am	3.15pm
Year 1/2	KS2 Yard	Y1/2 gate	8.45am	3.15pm
Year 3/4	KS2 Yard	KS2 Yard door	9.00am	3.30pm
Year 5/6	Main Entrance	Main Entrance	9.00am	3.30pm

These plans have been formulated following the advice and guidance provided by the government taking into consideration our individual school layout, pupil numbers and staffing numbers as well as a full and detailed risk assessment supported by Northumberland County Council's Health and Safety Team.

Finally, I realise that the measures we've put in place may look complex and potentially intimidating for the children. However, the first couple of weeks back at school will be focussed on supporting the children's well-being and adjusting back to school life after a long period of absence while also trying to balance and assess where the children are with their learning to help them move forward academically.

We are very much looking forward to welcoming the children back and staff are working hard to ensure that they all have a range of exciting learning activities upon their return. We look forward to welcoming you back on Monday 8th March.

If you have any questions or queries related to this letter then please contact us via phone, email or Class Dojo.

Please continue to take care and stay safe.

Yours sincerely



Mr D. Nelson

Headteacher