



Explore, Learn and Grow Together

Brewery Road
Wooler
Northumberland
NE71 6QF

Thursday 4th March 2021

Dear Parents/Carers

I am writing to share with you some final bits of information ready for welcoming all children back into our schools on Monday next week. The information contained in this letter complements the details that I shared with you all in my letters last week. Preparations here in school continue at a pace and we are all looking forward to welcoming all of the children back into school and into lessons next week. Over these last few days before wider school reopening it is important that you share information with your child/children as their understanding and cooperation are essential to making these systems work effectively. Apologies in advance for another long read – I had hoped that this letter would be shorter than my last one but it has grown again to 4 pages!

As with our preparations for opening at the start of the academic year in September 2020 there are some key actions for families and children to be ready for Monday.

1. Ensure that parents/carers and children know and understand the systems of control that we will all be using here in school (detail in my letters dated 26th February 2021 – copies on the school websites).
2. Follow the rules and systems for dropping off and collecting children (detail and images in my letters dated 26.2.2021). It is vital that everyone is in the right place at the right time to enable us to get children in and out of school safely each day. Everyone who needs to come onto the school site will be expected to follow the rules and directions from staff – remember there will be no vehicular access to the school grounds apart from school transport providers and only one parent/carer will be permitted on site when dropping off/collecting younger children. **Please note that we have swapped over entrances for Yr7 & Yr8 to improve movement flow in school – Yr7 entrance now next to Year 1 classroom & Yr8 via the school hall.**
3. Ensure that children are well prepared for coming back to school with good home routines in place.
4. Do not send children into school if they are ill or displaying symptoms of coronavirus.

School Transport

School transport at Northumberland County Council has been notified that we are fully open again on Monday and we have also communicated this information directly to our local providers from the office here in school. COVID safety procedures that were in place in the autumn will continue and the County Council have also asked that we share wider information regarding travel which I have copied onto the back of this letter. **The key message is to consider carefully how and when you need to travel, and importantly for, us to reduce unnecessary congestion around Brewery Road to increase safety for children and families.** Parents/Carers are able to confirm individual collection/drop-off arrangements with their transport providers in the usual way ready for Monday.

Face Coverings

There are no wider changes to the expectations regarding face coverings for children, parents and staff at school that I shared with you all in my last letter and have noted again below:

- Children in Year 3 and Year 4 will be expected to wear a face covering as they arrive and depart from school.
- All Glendale pupils will be expected to wear a face covering as they arrive and depart from school and also when in communal areas of the school as we did last term (see further details below regarding Yr7 & Yr8).
- All staff across our settings will use a face covering when on the school site except when they are teaching in classrooms (see further details below regarding Yr7 & Yr8).
- Parents and carers must wear a face covering at all times when on the school site (medical exceptions are permitted).
- All children using school transport to wear a face covering as we did last term.

I have uploaded to our school websites the new guidance issued to schools by the Department for Education this week for face coverings in education. We are following this guidance here in school and there is one specific change from how we were operating in the autumn that parents and carers of children in Yr7 & Yr8 need to be aware of.

- **The use of face coverings in classrooms for children and their teachers in Year 7 & Year 8.**

Staff teaching Yr7 & Yr8 and the Yr7 & Yr8 pupils themselves will be expected to wear masks at all times when inside the building except when eating dinner. Staff and pupils will be expected to provide their own masks, however we do have a good supply in school for those that do not have one or need to replace their disposable mask during the day. Staff and pupils will not need to wear a facemask when they are able to adhere to social distancing guidelines. We have some reservations about this guidance as face coverings are unpleasant to wear for long periods of time and can be a barrier to effective communication in the classroom. The guidance states that this advice is initially for the three weeks from 8th March to Easter and we will continue to review and evaluate this along with our wider COVID secure procedures in the coming days and weeks. It is reasonable to expect that at some times during the day and during lessons, staff and pupils may need to lower their mask for comfort.

Please prepare for next week by talking with your child/children about face masks, how to wear them correctly and ensure that they have a suitable one ready for Monday morning. Below I have added some images of the most common face masks which most people will already have at home for use when out shopping. Children will need to have their reusable masks named and also have a small bag (a sandwich type bag will be ideal) for them to store their mask when not in use – this also needs to be named. Face masks must be plain or with simple patterns and not have words or inappropriate images on them as these could scare our younger children.

1) Surgical type mask



2) Reusable type mask



3) cotton pleated type mask



Below is an example of an illustrated mask that will not be allowed in school:



MASKS LIKE THIS WILL NOT BE ALLOWED IN SCHOOL

Rapid lateral flow testing for households and bubbles of school pupils and staff

Below is information from the Department for Education regarding the new rapid lateral flow device (LFD) home testing for households (**this home testing is for adults only - not for children**).

Around 1 in 3 people with coronavirus (COVID-19) do not have symptoms but can still pass it on to others. Regular testing of people without symptoms (asymptomatic testing) is important to help stop the virus spreading. As lockdown restrictions gradually ease, we all need to play our part to help protect each other.

On Sunday 28 February, the [Department of Health and Social Care announced](#) that from Monday 1 March, households with primary school, secondary school and college age children, including childcare and support bubbles, can test themselves twice every week at home as schools return from Monday 8 March. Households, childcare and support bubbles of primary, secondary and college staff can also be tested. Twice-weekly testing will also be offered to adults working in the wider school community, including bus drivers and after school club leaders. The twice-weekly test kits can be accessed:

- *via employers if they offer testing to employees*
- *at a local test site*
- *by collecting a home test kit from a test site*
- *by ordering a home test kit online*

The preferred option is for families to collect home test kits from a test site – our closest test site is in Berwick, you do not need an appointment - just arrive, follow procedures and ask for household home LFD test kits. The test site is in the Sandstell Road Car Park, Spittal (right down by the beach next to the sailing club – further info and directions can be found via the guidance link below).

Schools should not give test kits to parents, carers or household members and should not order more test kits for this purpose. This [guidance](#) provides information on who can be tested and how you can get a test. I have also uploaded this guidance to our websites and included a copy with this letter – it is quite long but does give more detailed information about the system.

Information from Class Teachers & Form Tutors

Class teachers and Form tutors will be sharing class/form specific information (timetables etc.) with parents and carers over the next couple of days. The full government guidance issued to schools which contains the details of how school should be working as they reopen fully again next week is on our school websites – it is quite lengthy but does give lots of information on how we will be operating in the coming weeks. I will also be uploading our revised risk assessment documents onto the school websites over the next 24 hours so that parents and carers can also access this information easily (it will be in the COVID-19 section).

As we did across the autumn term we will be reviewing our systems each day to ensure that everyone is feeling safe, happy and ready to learn. Mr Tong and I are looking forward to seeing our Yr7 & Yr8 pupils and parents tomorrow as we undertake the first of the 3 pupil lateral flow device return to school tests for our older children – we will be distributing pupil home test kits and will be available for questions as these appointments take place across the morning.

Keep safe and thank you all in advance for your support and cooperation as we get our fully schools open and operating again.

M.Deane-Hall
Executive Headteacher

Message to all families from Northumberland County Council regarding travel as schools reopen more widely on Monday 8th March 2021

When schools return next week there are concerns that the extra demands on both the highway network and public transport across the country could cause significant issues, in terms of congestion and lack of capacity.

To mitigate this the DfT are encouraging parents and pupils to walk, cycle or scoot to school where possible or to park and stride.

They are also encouraging the public to think about how they can reduce their need to travel at these times; avoiding travelling at peak times, making journeys on foot or to cycle, or continuing to work from home where possible. This will hopefully reduce the demand on the network and free up space for the return to school.

To support this the DfT with the Department for Education have developed messaging for schools and local authorities to use. The messages set out how pupils should travel to school and how to travel safely on public transport and can be accessed here; <https://extranet.dft.gov.uk/safer-transport-campaign/schools/>

In Northumberland we are working with our public transport providers to identify those bus services that may struggle to accommodate scholars due to social distancing restrictions, and where possible we will be providing larger or additional vehicles to ensure that scholars and passengers can undertake their journeys to and from educational establishments in a safe and legally compliant manner.

We are also working to encourage more walking and cycling through behaviour change programmes across the county and to support this work we would like schools to share these messages on their social media and parent mail platforms, where appropriate to encourage safe travel next week, encouraging walking, cycling and scooting where possible, which will hopefully reduce the number of cars and help with social distancing at your schools.

Department for Transport message

Since the lockdown began, students across the country have been prevented from going to school to help control the virus and save lives. The Government is committed to ensuring that all students can safely return to school and we are working to make sure transport is not a barrier to people accessing the education they deserve.

There are many ways students can travel to school. In the first instance, we encourage all students to walk, cycle or scoot to school if they can and if they live a short distance (2 miles or less) from their school or further education college. This will help to reduce pressure on the public transport network for those who need it most.

If students aren't able to walk, cycle or scoot, they can use public transport or drive to get to their school or college. If parents or students are car-sharing with someone outside of their support bubble or family, they should share with the same people each time, open the windows for ventilation and wear a face covering if they are over 11 years old and are not exempt.

If students are using public transport, they should continue to follow government guidelines to ensure they can travel safely on the network. They should plan their journey in advance and allow more time to get to their school or college. They should wear a face covering for the entirety of their journey if they are over 11 years old and are not exempt, wash or sanitise their hands regularly and social distance where possible.