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2nd September 2020 – Autumn Newsletter #1 – Preparing for Returning to School

Dear Parents,

I hope you have had a lovely summer holiday with your children and you're all ready to send them back to full time in-school education in our new world. For a full understanding of our plans please read this letter in conjunction with my letter of 16th July titled *September 2020 Opening Arrangements* which you can find on the home page of the website.

I know you must have some worries about the return to school. As a parent myself I completely understand. Transition back to full-time school will be a challenge for many of us. For example, there are fears around catching the virus, rebuilding relationships, adapting to new ways of working and learning, adapting to new boundaries, being with a new teacher, using the school site in a different way. Your children might be excited to be coming back but also likely somewhat anxious along with mums and dads.

Supporting children's mental health and teaching them how to be safe will be major features of our early work in all classes from day 1 when the children return. Teachers and teaching assistants will be using the whole of the first week to focus on building their class team, focussing on forming strong relationships, establishing new routines and very thoroughly teaching children how to be safe.

Teachers will be making a significant investment into teaching wellbeing and mental health in the weeks ahead. Addressing anxieties early on will enable children to better engage with their learning. Early teaching across the school will focus on the skills for learning: engagement (playing and exploring), motivation (active learning) and thinking (creating and thinking critically). Teachers will gradually expand the wider curriculum offer as the autumn term develops. Full assessments of the children will be completed just before half term and you will receive this information at the first parents evening.

In line with government guidance, we will follow a hierarchical system of measures in relation to COVID-19 safety. Points 1-4 below will be in place at all times:

1. We will be minimising contact with anyone with symptoms. If a child or member of staff develops symptoms during the day they will be isolated from others until they can go home at the very earliest opportunity. **It is really important that you or your children do**

KINDNESS RESPECT RESPONSIBILITY ASPIRATION

not attend school if you have any symptoms. If your child has symptoms you must get a test as soon as possible and inform us of the result as soon as you know.

2. There will be a big focus on hand washing. This will be built into class routines.
3. Good respiratory hygiene. For example, using the *Catch it Bin it Kill it* approach. There are foot pedal covered bins in all classes to facilitate this.
4. Enhanced cleaning. We have increased the cleaning hours and changed the plan to meet our new way of working.

In addition to the above (and again, as directed by government guidance):

5. We will minimise contact wherever possible and social distance where possible. Hence why our bubbles are almost always class sized but not more than year group size. Where there is cross-over between bubbles, such as pastoral support, nurture and interventions, staff will have access to Perspex screens and visors.
6. We will wear PPE where necessary. Staff will be able to wear visors if they wish. It might be useful to prepare your child to see this. Staff will always wear full PPE (gloves, apron, mask and visor) if dealing with any child who shows symptoms so again you may want to prepare your child to see this.

If it becomes relevant to respond to any infection (and again, as directed by government guidance):

7. We will engage with the NHS Test and Trace process.
8. We will manage confirmed cases amongst the school community
9. We will contain any outbreak by following local health protection team advice. We have a clear checklist in place for what to do if we have a confirmed case. This might involve a local school lockdown. If it does, we have plans already in place to revert to home learning. We will always keep you up to date.

Since I last wrote to you on 17th July there has been a lot of work going on at school preparing for a safe return and planning for a new style of teaching and learning. We enjoyed two really useful curriculum training days back on 20th and 21st July. Since then teachers have spent some of their summer holiday preparing new-look classrooms that will help with our curriculum plans and help to keep your child and staff safe on return. On Thursday 3rd and Friday 4th September this week, staff are working on all the latest COVID-19 safe practice, safeguarding and various curriculum related training to ensure we're fully ready to welcome back your children on Monday 7th.

You'll notice some changes to the school site when you return. Outside Year 3 we now have a lovely brand new outdoor learning space thanks to the PTA and their fund-raising. This area will no longer be a playground. It will be part of the KS2 classroom which helps support our new ideas for the curriculum as well as providing a bigger and therefore safer space to teach and learn in.

Outside Year 1 a new outdoor learning space is still being built. Works here will be going on for the first 2 weeks of this term so please be careful around this area when on site. Year 1 staff are very excited about having their own outdoor area built in the same style as the Reception outdoor area. The children will love it when it's finished.

Inside the building we've had a good tidy / clear out, removed any unnecessary furniture, reorganised cloakrooms and installed more sinks.

We have lots more plans to further improve the school site. Unfortunately we can't do it all at once but there is more planned: some for this term and some for next summer. I'll keep you up to date as it happens. It's very exciting.

Below is a reminder of the times for the start and end of the school day. If your child is in Y6 Maple Class (Miss Wooldridge), please note a small change to where they should enter the building.

Year	Start of Day	End of Day
R	The pedestrian car park gate opens at 8.20am. Drop off outside the FS block. Lessons start promptly at 8.30am.	Collect from outside FS block at 2.40pm. The pedestrian car park gate will open at 2.35pm
1	The front slope gate opens at 8.10am. Drop off outside the KS1 block. Lessons start promptly at 8.20am.	Collect from outside the KS1 block at 2.30pm. The front slope gate will open at 2.25pm.
2	The front slope gate opens at 8.20am. Drop off outside the KS1 block. Lessons start promptly at 8.30am.	Collect from outside the KS1 block at 2.40pm. The front slope gate will open at 2.35pm.
3	The front slope gate opens at 8.35am. Drop off at the bottom of the slope or in the Arts Garden outside Y3 classrooms. Lessons start promptly at 8.45am.	Collect from the Arts Garden outside the Y3 classrooms at 2.55pm. The front slope gate will open at 2.50pm.
4	The front slope gate opens at 8.35am. Ideally, drop off at the bottom of the slope or you can drop outside Y5 classrooms. Lessons start promptly at 8.45am.	Collect from outside the Y5 classrooms at 2.55pm. The front slope gate will open at 2.50pm.
5	The front slope gate opens at 8.50am. Drop off at the bottom of the slope. Lessons start promptly at 9.00am.	Collect from outside the Y5 classrooms at 3.10pm. The front slope gate will open at 3.05pm.
6	The pedestrian car park gate opens at 8.50am. Drop off at this gate. All Y6 Hawthorn children will enter the Y6 classroom block via the Hawthorn Class	Collect from the pedestrian car park gate at 3.10pm. This gate will be open from 3.05pm.

	<p>outside steps. Y6 Maple children will enter via the fire exit at the bottom of the outside steps. Lessons start promptly at 9.00am.</p>	
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Below is a reminder and expansion of the key points to note about drop off and collection:

- **Please help us by timing your arrival and collection carefully and promptly to reduce congestion. Please do not gather with other parents and families at the school entrance and gate.**
- There will be a one-way system in place for entrance and exit to the school site during these times. **Entrance must always be via the front of the school (Barewell Road) and exit must always be via the back gate on to St Margaret's Close.** Outside these times however, you will still be able to come into school and leave by the pedestrian car park gate e.g. if you are collecting your child for an appointment during the day.
- Only one parent will be allowed on site with their child.
- For children in Y3, Y4, Y5 and Y6 it will help if you can drop your child at the gate entrance to school rather than come on the site. Obviously the younger your child is, we do understand that you will want to drop them outside the classroom; at least in the first part of the autumn term.
- If you are dropping your child at the gate and have a message for the class teacher, please either email the teacher using the class address (e.g. hollyclass@st-margarets.torbay.sch.uk), leave a message with the office or pass on a message to the member of staff who will be on the gate.
- Only children in Y5 and Y6 will be allowed to leave the site without a parent to collect them – and only if the teacher has an email from you to confirm this is allowed. Otherwise, they must be collected as per the above arrangements.
- Children will not be allowed on site wearing masks. These will have to be removed at the gate entrance. There will be a bin for disposable masks and any non-disposable ones like snoods will have to be placed in the child's bag or taken home by yourself.

Uniform

As you already know, we are asking children to return to school in full uniform to help them return to normality and get used to school mode again. Please help us by clearly labelling your child's uniform, including PE kit, so it is not shared with others. I politely suggest washing your child's uniform more regularly at home and keeping it separate to home clothes in the house.

Attendance

As the government has made it clear that attendance from 7th September is compulsory, we will have to work closely together to help make this happen. We now have a new school Attendance Officer, Sam Newman, who many of you already know from her big smile in the front office.

Over her summer holiday Sam completed 9 modules in attendance officer training so she's well equipped to help. She has already compiled a helpful [question and answer](#) document about attendance which you can find on the coronavirus section of our website under *A Range of Helpful Resources for Parents*. Sam will also be available in the office Monday to Friday to help you with any attendance queries and concerns.

Clubs

Full information about Breakfast and After School Club can be found in the 16th July letter, *September 2020 Opening Arrangements*. Information about sporting clubs available can be found on the school website.

Any Questions?

Mrs Pike and I will be on the school gate in the morning and after school to help with any questions. In the meantime, please email adminteam@st-margaret's.torbay.sch.uk.

Other Help

In late August the government released its 'Back to School Safely' campaign which can be found by following [this link](#). There is also a government [information page for parents](#) about returning to school

The full guidance for parents about schools during this pandemic can be found by following [this link](#).

Torbay Council has also produced a helpful returning to school page on their website which you can [find here](#).

You can also keep up to date with much useful information via *Parent Info* on the home page of our website which updates regularly.

For information on safe internet use for your children at home, the *Think You Know* website offers a simple 15 minute activity you can do as a family. You can [find it here](#).

I look forward to seeing you all soon, especially our new parents who will be bringing in their little ones for their first big school experience.

Very best wishes to you all,



Tim Hughes (Headteacher)