



## Weekly Newsletter: Friday 11<sup>th</sup> September



Dear Parents and Carers,

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you!

The start to this academic year has been like no other in my entire career and it was a huge pleasure to welcome everyone back to school on Tuesday. I want to say how grateful we are for your patience and also for reading our plan regarding our staggered drop off and pick up times. The aim of our plan is to keep you and your children as safe as possible and given the physical limitations of our school site this is not an easy thing to achieve. We will continue to tweak our plans to improve efficiency and safety as we go through this academic year, but we have seen how this has

improved over this week already.

I also want to commend all the children on their resilience, determination and enthusiasm for coming back into school after such a long break for many of the children. The teachers have been delighted with their knowledge and adaptability to a new school day.

It has been lovely to catch up with so many parents on the yard this week following a lovely summer holiday where I was very fortunate to spend time in Mevagissey in Cornwall. A special welcome too, to all of our new parents of Reception children as part of the West Jesmond family.

This will be my final term as Head Teacher of West Jesmond after 10 very successful years and I am delighted to be supported this term by Mr Jones as my Deputy and Mrs Matthews and Miss Sykes as my Assistant Heads. My absolute aim is that when I hand the school over to Mr Ward at midnight on December 31<sup>st</sup> it is in the very best possible shape that it can be.



Please do make sure you read the newsletter and the week ahead each week, published on a Friday to keep up to date with school events and dates which we will try and get out to you as soon as possible. Also our Facebook Page has some lovely records of the vast range of things we do in school so do sign up to our secure page.

**Executive Head Teacher: Gary Wallis-Clarke MA in Education BA (Hons) NPQH**

**Deputy Head Teacher: Tom Jones BSc (Hons) PGCE NPQSL**

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I hope we have another brilliant term at West Jesmond and we will continue to lead and drive our own path forward in these unsettling, unprecedented and changing times, where your children and their education and safety are our main and only concern.

The guidance and legal issues around quarantine, self-isolation and testing are constantly in the news and we will do our best to support parents with this, if your child does become ill at school.

The Autumn term is notorious for coughs, colds, runny noses, sore throats, tummy bugs, noro virus and flu. To protect your own child and other children, if your child is unwell or displaying any of the COVID symptoms please do keep them at home and if symptoms persist arrange a test. We are constantly in contact with Public Health England and should there be a confirmed case within our school we will act according to their direction.

With my very best wishes for the year ahead.

*Gary Wallis-Clarke*

## **IMPORTANT COVID INFORMATION**

### **Pick Up Reminders**

Please could you complete the section at the back of the reading diary regarding 'who is picking me up'. It would be very helpful for class teachers to have a reference.

### **Drop off and Pick up Staggered timings**

Breakfast Club 8.00 am	
Year 2, 4 and 6 8.30 – 8.45 am	3.05 – 3.20 pm
Year 1, 3 and 5 8.45 – 9.00 am	3.20 – 3.35 pm
Reception 8.45 – 9.00 am	3.20 – 3.35 pm
After School Club	3.30 – 5.55 pm

If possible do drop your child off at the gate and let them come into school on their own under our staff supervision.

### **Year 1 and Year 4 Gate**

Thank you to the parents for your patience as we know this area has been tricky to navigate. There will be a new system from Monday.

### **Drop Off**

Y4 - please can all children be dropped at the gate and make their own way across the yard to the staff at the door. Any bikes or scooters can be left in the Disabled Bay and staff will move these to outside the Y2 classrooms. If you have a buggy please enter and leave via the Y2/3 Gate.

Y1 - If any children are confident enough to be dropped at the gate, please do so. Staff will be on hand to guide them to the classroom. Any bikes or scooters can be left in the Disabled Bay and staff will move these to outside the Y1 classrooms. For any parents dropping at the door, please then leave via the same gate. If you have a buggy, please enter and leave via the Y2 and Y3 gate and walk around the back of the Y2 classrooms.

### **Pick Up**

Y4 - please could parents enter the yard via the Y1/4 Gate and collect any bikes or scooters from outside the Y2 classrooms, collect your child and then leave via the Reception gate. Please can you walk round the back of the Reception parents and not along the Reception classroom fence

as this is a one way system in the other direction. If you have a buggy please enter via the Y2/3 Gate and leave via the Reception Gate.

Y1 - Please enter and leave via the Y1/4 gate. If you have a buggy, please enter and leave via the Y2 and Y3 gate and walk around the back of the Y2 classrooms.

### **General**

- Please do pick up your child or children and leave the site as quickly as possible
- For the time being, please could you not bring in any uniform donations to the school as we do not have space to quarantine large amounts of old school uniform.

### **Parent and Pupil Safety**

As you will be aware we are a large school on a very small Victorian site. Originally, this was an infant school designed for just four classes of 60 pupils (240 rather than 630 pupils).

We have very small pavements and Tankerville Terrace with the difficult junction has to cope with all the traffic from the Royal grammar School, Newcastle High School for Girls, Percy Hedley special school and of course ourselves. Congestion has eased throughout the week and thank you to parents that have now reconsidered their parking arrangements. We are continuing to try and work with the council to see what we can do to further improve road safety.

**Please remember that I or any other members of staff or governors have absolutely no jurisdiction or legal enforcement powers over the pavements or road system in Jesmond.**

Whilst we have done our best to stagger entry and dismissal we are aware of problems the geography of our site causes. We have allowed parents onto the school site to ease this congestion (many schools have not allowed this) and have organised our pick up and entry gate systems to distribute pupils and parents as best we can.

**A number of parents have been very concerned at the proximity of other parents at the start and end of the day so please do your very best to social distance and if possible wear a mask to protect yourself and other parents.**

By working together we can make our site as safe as possible for us all.

### **MUSIC LESSONS**

Our peripatetic music teachers have been invited back into school to resume teaching.

Instrumental lessons will take place in the school hall, so that social distancing advice can be followed, and children will only be taught within their year group 'bubbles'. It is not possible for children to share instruments at this time, so it is really important that pupils remember to bring their own or their allocated hire instrument, on the right day.

We will keep you informed, via this newsletter, of days when instrumental teachers will be in school.

This week, we are happy to announce that Ms. Montgomery will be in school next MONDAY morning 14th September and Ms. Harrison will be in school next TUESDAY afternoon 15th September.

Please can all string pupils bring their instruments into school on the day of their lesson, taking them to their classrooms, where they can be stored safely until needed. Ms. Montgomery and Ms.

Harrison will let class teachers know when it is time for children to come to the hall for their lessons.

Thank you,

Mrs. Hague.

**LEXIA**

For the time being unfortunately we cannot run our Lexia Early Bird sessions whilst children need to remain in their year group bubbles. We will be integrating this important support package into the school day and will be sending more information regarding this to parents shortly.