



## NEWSLETTER – 18<sup>th</sup> September 2020

Dear parent

I cannot quite believe we have made it to the end of week three already in this rather different term. I continue to be very impressed by the mature approach of all of the children to the more structured school environment. We hope that any initial teething problems are now resolved and we are now focusing on supporting the children's reintroduction to the curriculum and looking to identify those areas where we feel a further boost will be required.

Well done to our new Reception children, a slightly longer transition than normal has been very successful. They all look so settled in their classes and their teachers are really proud of them.

New Nursery pupils are now beginning their phased start to school life and we look forward to them settling in to their new surroundings and beginning their Holystone journey.

Movement around the school site at drop-off and pick up time seems to have settled down well although a couple of parents have asked that I remind parents not to congregate right by the gates as others are coming through. Some parents have also queried about the wearing of masks on the school site and whilst we have no guidance to say masks are mandatory you can certainly wear them if that is something you wish to do.

### **New North East of England local restrictions:**

I am sure you are aware that a range of new restrictions have been placed on North Tyneside and surrounding authorities. For full details of these, please visit:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/north-east-of-england-local-restrictions>

The guidance includes a section on childcare however it does not answer all of the queries that we have heard raised, either here or in other schools. Should we receive any further clarification then I will let you know.

**Covid Testing and Home Learning in event of a lockdown** – The issues with testing nationally are well documented and have certainly impacted Holystone. We hope the system will improve quickly so that tests can be turned-around to allow a rapid return to school for pupils who are negative. I believe new permanent walk in testing facilities will be brought on line next week in North Shields and Wallsend. Pupils can return to school if well enough as soon as a negative test result is confirmed.

I am sure you will be aware that some local schools have had incidences of pupils testing positive for Covid-19 although thankfully, numbers remain very small. Should we have a positive case, then we follow a risk assessment in conjunction with the local public health team (who have been a fantastic support throughout this pandemic). In these circumstances, it may be that they request that a class or a wider year group need to isolate for a period of time. We are currently working hard to ensure we have a robust response to this in terms of setting home learning. We have further invested in the SeeSaw app to make this more user friendly

for staff. Early Years teachers would continue to use their Tapestry app. We will soon send out guidance as to what you can expect if a whole class/year group shutdown situation arises.

We may get one or two pupils who are required to isolate for up to 14 days following a Track and Trace notification. Again, here we are working to provide a quick response for these children in terms of work set.

If pupils are away for the odd day awaiting a test then we are asking that they utilise the Apps – Times Tables Rockstars, Spelling Shed, My Maths or MyOn and we will ensure you are aware of your child's log-in to these resources.

**Books at home** – Thank you to all of you who have returned books that were sent out over the lockdown period. We are still missing quite a few (to a value of over £1000) so if you have any school reading books still at home, could you please return these to us. We may well set up a little sponsored challenge in the coming weeks to help fund some replacements and further extend the range of books available across all levels of our reading programme - Accelerated Reader

**Parents' Evening Week** – We would normally have a physical parents evening in school this half term. Clearly, given the current restrictions that cannot go ahead. We are looking into alternative means of communicating how your child has settled in and we will let you know when that is decided.

**NUFC Foundation** – We continue to work closely with the Newcastle United's Foundation to help us with our Physical Education lessons in school. We have worked closely with them around our Covid-19 risk assessments to ensure this can continue in these unusual times. We may be able to reintroduce a small number of extra-curricular activities in the coming weeks through the NUFC programme or with other providers who can demonstrate they can operate in a Covid-secure manner.

**OOSC** – I know users of the Out of School Club are delighted to see it back up and running, Joanne and her team have done an amazing job - if you do need before or after school care then please contact the club via the link on the school telephone switchboard.

**School meals and free school meals** – The new school meal choices are appearing to be more popular and the kitchen staff and lunchtime supervisors are working incredibly hard to ensure meals are delivered around school on time.

North Tyneside council support parents who qualify with a Free School Meal programme which in turn increases the funding that is available to school. This scheme is available even if your child receives a Universal Free School Meal (Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 pupil meals are currently free for all). Details of how to register for this scheme are available on the North Tyneside website or you can contact the school office.