

# RETURNING TO SCHOOL – IMPORTANT INFORMATION

## FOR ALL PARENTS AND CARERS

When we return to school almost all of our normal routines and procedures will change. Please read this information carefully and treat your child's return to school as if they are starting in a brand new school – **almost everything is different.** (Please read this advice, even if your child has been accessing school over the last few weeks.)

### Preparing to start:

- **If possible**, talk to your child about social distancing. Please try to remind them that they should avoid physical contact with friends and school staff. Please show them how far apart 2m is and practice maintaining this distance. You could play a game where you try to get within 2m of them and they have to move away.
- We have limited the numbers of children in school and planned the classrooms to help children to stay 2m from each other whenever possible and to minimise the sharing of equipment. However, we cannot guarantee that the children will actually be able to adhere to this. When children return more widely to school, they will come into contact with other children and adults. Although we have done what we can do to reduce the numbers of contacts and the risks involved, school is certainly not a risk-free environment and we cannot guarantee stringent social distancing. **This is worth bearing in mind if your child has to interact with a family member who is clinically vulnerable.**
- Tell your child that they will be now in a smaller group. They are likely to be with some of their friends, but they will not be with all of them. Their other friends may well also be in school, but they will not be able to play with them. Although they may find this upsetting, this should only be for a few weeks. Hopefully, we will be back to normal soon. For those students accessing School Transport, **when they arrive in school** they will be grouped with the student(s) they have travelled with.
- If you bring your child to school, please make sure you and your children stay 2m away from staff and other family groups. We will be staggering start times to make this easier, but you have to help us with this by following the advice. Please do not come early and wait outside reception. Please do not stay and chat after dropping your children off. Please arrive quickly and leave quickly.
- Parents and carers will not be allowed into the school building unless it is absolutely essential. School staff will decide whether a situation is essential.
- The School kitchen continues to prepare hot meals, but you might wish to send your child in with a packed lunch. All lunches will be eaten in the classroom. If your child brings a packed lunch to school, we will wipe down and clean the outside of the packed lunch bag/box when they arrive in school. We will do the same for water bottles. We would like you to do the same when they arrive home.

- Please only send your child into school with the minimum of equipment. All they will need is: a packed lunch, a water bottle, a waterproof coat, a hat if needed, and possibly sun-cream (please apply this in advance if your child is unable to do this for themselves)– Sun cream is not to be shared between students *and staff will not be applying it for the children.*  
*As we are aware that not all children can apply their own it is worth applying sun cream before they leave the house just in case.*
- Please ensure that any medication that requires administration in school, including emergency medication is in date and available for staff. **Please check this with your child’s tutor before your child’s start date.** We cannot admit a child back into school without emergency medication if this is required.
- Children **must** wear sensible shoes that are suitable for running around in as they will be outside a lot of the time. No flimsy sandals or flip-flops please.
- The doors and windows of classrooms will be open for ventilation – whatever the weather. Sometimes the classrooms may be cold so please provide sensible layers to wear in case they need to wrap up.
- Unless it is absolutely pouring down, the children will still go out to play if it rains. This is why they need a waterproof coat (everyday please as the weather may change during the day even if the forecast is good).
- Please send your child to school in clean clothes every day. They do not need to wear uniform, but feel free to use it or mix and match – whatever is easiest for you. Please make sure that any clothing the children wear is suitable for school and is comfortable and practical. We recommend that you wash the children’s clothes when they return home from school (or store them separately in a plastic bag to wash later). This helps to reduce any possible contamination between school and home. They will be outdoors as much as possible – please make sure they have a waterproof coat and sensible shoes. They will **not** need a PE kit.
- The most important advice in terms of preparing for school is that **NO-ONE IS ALLOWED ONTO THE SCHOOL SITE IF THEY, OR ANYONE ELSE IN THE HOUSEHOLD, HAVE ANY COVID-19 SYMPTOMS**, however mild. If your child has to miss school because they are ill, please let us know and, in the message, **tell us exactly what is wrong with them.** If your child (or anyone else at home) has any symptoms of Covid-19 they must be isolated (with household members) in line with government guidance and they cannot return to school straight away, even if they feel fine.
- Please continue to follow Government advice and do not participate in any large gatherings. If you do, we will have to advise that your child remains at home.

### **Start and End of the School Day:**

- To stagger the arrival of families to school and transport our doors will be open for children to arrive between 9:15 and 9:45.
- Whilst waiting for your child, please stand 2m away from people in other households.

- Whenever waiting and queuing to drop off or pick up children, please make sure you (and any children you have with you) stay 2m away from other adults and children.
- **Ideally, only send one adult to collect your child.** The fewer the adults we have on site, the quicker we can hand over the children and less chance for contact between different families there is.
- If you have already notified school in writing that your child can walk home alone, they will be allowed to do so, **but you must ensure they know that they must remain 2m away from other children and families.**

### **Attendance:**

- If a parent chooses not to send their child to school at all, we will not penalise you for non-attendance.
- If you have kept your child at home but change your mind at a later date, please do not just send them in. We have done a lot of planning to make the school as safe as possible and we cannot just accept new children without warning. If you change your mind and want your child to come to school, please let us know but be prepared to have to wait at least a week before we can accept them. The government wants us to prioritise vulnerable children, and the children of key workers.
- All children attending school who develop symptoms of Covid-19 can be tested. **If your child receives a positive test result (i.e. it confirms they have Covid-19) then you must tell school as the rest of their class will also have to go home and isolate themselves.**
- Please report all absence to the school office as soon as you can. Checking the registers in the mornings and chasing up parents who have not let us know why their child is off takes a huge amount of time during a normal school day. In the current conditions with reduced staff in school, it will be even more difficult.
- If your child does not attend school for whatever reason, please ensure you inform School Transport as soon as possible to avoid them having to make unnecessary journeys.

### **Handwashing, hygiene and personal care:**

- Your child will be expected to wash their hands frequently throughout the school day. They must understand that they have to wash their hands as soon as they come into school, after they have coughed or sneezed and used a tissue, after they have visited the toilet, and before and after eating. Their teachers will also be ensuring they wash their hands periodically throughout the day. We will support all children who need help with this but if possible talk to this with your child often and promote handwashing at home.
- Should a child require personal or intimate care throughout the day we will continue to provide this in a safe and professional manner. We will follow our usual hygiene procedures and protocols ensuring consistency for the children in our care. Children

who need high levels of specialist adult care and close contact will continue to receive this support.

- When children return home, they should wash their hands again, as soon as they get back.
- Please (where possible) show your child how to cough or sneeze into a tissue and 'catch it, kill it, bin it'. In case they don't have a tissue handy, show them how to cough into their elbow.

### **The Curriculum:**

- The children, although at school, will not be learning in the same way as normal.
- Our main priority is keeping the children happy and safe and providing additional childcare to help some people get back to work.
- Home learning activities will continue to be planned for the children who remain at home. The children attending school will complete the same work that is being provided for home learning.

### **Behaviour:**

- Clearly, this reopening of school is a very challenging undertaking for staff. It will also be very strange for your children. On the plus side, they will be working in very small groups. On the down side, they may find it difficult to remember the new rules on social distancing and struggle when they are not allowed to see their friends or particular staff.
- We will always try to deal with these issues sensitively, but I would like all families to talk to their children about an increased expectation for good behaviour once they return to school. Our staff will be stretched very thinly across school

With your help, we will be able to navigate our way through a successful recovery period for more of our children. If that goes well, we may be in a position to gradually open up to all of the children in school before the end of the summer term. Whilst I believe that this is extremely optimistic, it is reassuring to think that there is now a light at the end of the tunnel.

Many thanks for all of your kind words and support for our staff that many of you have shared over the last couple of months.

Best wishes to you and your family.

*R. Whelan*

Rebecca Whelan  
Principal