Dear Parents,

I wish you all a very warm hello and welcome back! These last few months have been the strangest in our professional and personal lives, and as I sit in my office and type this, the sound of the children playing outside my window is truly an uplifting and lovely sound! I hope all went well for you this morning with reestablishing the morning routines and dropping off.

I just wanted to write briefly to provide some reassurance and guidance for you. The first thing is that the children are fine – having seen them on the playground, in classes and around the building, they look happy to be back with friends, seeing their teachers and are certainly back in the swing of school life. So from that end, it is fabulous to see. The staff will spend time settling the children in, ensuring their mental health and well being is given top priority. From there they will start to establish baselines of learning and plan whatever is needed to ensure continued progress.

The coming days, weeks, months and year will undoubtably continue to be tough. This virus has not gone away and it is important we all continue to do everything we can to keep each other safe. We have put systems in place, following the Government issued control measures, including monitoring for Covid symptoms, more regular handwashing, keeping separate as much as possible, and more regular wiping of items and surfaces.

As any staff member will tell you, I like things to be well planned, organised and structured and I don’t like deviation! However, the next period will most probably include several different versions of plans as the Government continue to advise and update based on science and local situations. As you will probably be aware, sometimes these changes are announced and come into effect 24 hours later. Therefore, my preferred way of working – to have a very clear and set plan will have to adapt as the needs arise. I ask you therefore to work with us as whatever the plans are at the moment they may well have to adapt and change as time goes on.

What I will say though is please do not become overly stressed yourselves! The guidance documents we receive from the Government are lengthy and change often! There is a danger that with so many rules and regulations we lose sight of the overall purpose – to follow sensible advice to keep everyone safe. So please do not worry if you forget which door to drop off, or what time, or if these change, or if you are unsure about anything. Please just ask us. We will publish all the latest arrangements on the Coronavirus page of our website, including timings, but if there is anything else you need to know, please just contact us. We will begin to work through the usual start of year tasks such as updating contact forms, medical information etc, as well as plotting out some key dates for the year.

By all working together we can ensure a good year ahead for the children and all of us. On the reverse of this letter are some brief reminders of the current systems. Please do read through and if you have any specific questions, contact schooloffice@stjosephs-birkenhead.wirral.sch.uk

Best wishes

* A thorough Risk Assessment is in place and is constantly reviewed in relation to guidance and updates
* If your child or anyone in the household is displaying symptoms of Covid-19 (High temperature, new and persistent cough, loss of or change of taste or smell) they must not come into school and must isolate for 10 days. We ask that you make arrangements to have your child tested before returning (if negative).
* For drop off and collection, we have staggered the times so that we can all maintain distance. Please refer to the following

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Year** | **Drop off time** | **Pick up time** | **Entry/Exit point** |
| EYFS | 8.50 - 9.00am | 3.00pm | EYFS entrance |
| Year 1 | 8.50 - 9.00am | 3.15pm | Year 1 Door |
| Year 2 | 8.50 - 9.00am | 3.15pm | KS2 Playground |
| Year 3 | 8.55 – 9.05am | 3.20pm | KS2 Playground |
| Year 4 | 9.00 – 9.10am | 3.25pm | KS2 Playground |
| Year 5 | 9.00 – 9.10am | 3.25pm | Via Main Office |
| Year 6 | 9.00 – 9.10am | 3.30pm | Stair case outside main office |

\*EYFS have separate arrangements for the first two days

* Please just one adult to come to the playground.
* If you are waiting, please maintain distance from one another.
* Adults are not permitted into the school building. If you need to relay a message, please phone 0151 652 6781 or email schooloffice@stjosephs-birkenhead.wirral.sch.uk

Entry to the office will only be in the case of urgent business, or for example to hand over medication. If you do need to enter, this will be limited to one at a time, so please wait at the office door to be let in. On entry you will be asked to sanitise hands and we ask you to wear a mask or face covering.

* We have introduced regular handwashing and cleaning throughout the day and will be asking the children to ensure they clean their hands more often than usual. We have installed additional sanitising stations around the school.
* Children will be kept within their year group bubbles and will have staggered lunch and break times.
* Children are to use and keep their own equipment (such as pencil case, water bottle etc.) and avoid sharing.
* We will write to you again in the next few weeks with any further updates.