



Dear parents,

I hope you are all well. The last few weeks seem to have accelerated at pace, and it seems so odd to be writing this in what is the penultimate week of the year!

Last week, the Government published guidance regarding schools opening in September –

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools>

and this has enabled us to now start firming up some of the arrangements for next year. However, there are often updates and revisions to Government documents, so we will need to continue to be flexible and respond to any updates as and when they come. But as it stands, in this letter I will be able to start confirming a few of the details for next year.

Opening and Dates

The document states that *“all pupils, in all year groups, will return to school full-time from the beginning of the autumn term.”* We recently published our dates for the academic year 2020-21, so as it stands, these can be followed. The dates for the year are on our website and on the Parent App.

- The children in Year 1-6 will return on **Wednesday 2nd September**
- The children starting in F2 will return on a phased basis from **Wednesday 2nd September** (surname A-G morning, surname H-Z afternoon), same for **Thursday 3rd September**, and all in **Friday 4th September**
- The children starting in F1 will have a welcome morning on **Monday 7th September** and start school on **Tuesday 8th September**

Timings and arrangements

The document states *“schools will be asked to minimise the number of contacts that a pupil has during the school day as part of implementing the system of controls to reduce the risk of transmission.”*

Therefore, we will be making some adjustments to the timing of the school day, including drop off and collection times. These will only differ slightly from usual arrangements. When the timings are available, we will share these with you. These alterations are to reduce the amount of people on the playground at one time. Therefore, we must continue to ask you to support us with this, and keep to the correct timings and not gather in groups as adults.

Attendance

“Schools should be clear with parents that pupils of compulsory school age must be in school unless a statutory reason applies.” While we understand that many parents may be apprehensive



about their children returning, this message is from the Government – that all children are expected back in. The Government have reintroduced our statutory responsibility as schools to ensure good attendance and to take action where needed. If your child is absent, we will have to follow our usual attendance policy as directed by the Government.

Uniform

“Some schools may have relaxed their uniform policy while only certain categories of pupils were attending. We would, however, encourage all schools to return to their usual uniform policies in the autumn term. Uniforms do not need to be cleaned any more often than usual, nor do they need to be cleaned using methods which are different from normal.”

Therefore, we ask that full uniform is worn in September. Our uniform policy can be viewed on our website <http://www.stjosephscatholicprimarybirkenhead.co.uk/uniform> and purchased from the Wirral Uniform Shop <https://www.wirraluniforms.com/> (for parents of children moving to Y3 please note our KS2 uniform).

If you are unable to have school uniform in place for September, it would be acceptable for children to wear suitable smart alternative clothing until you are able to arrange for school uniform. We do run a donation and exchange programme so please contact the school office if you would like to add your requirements or to make a donation.

Curriculum

“Schools will teach an ambitious and broad and balanced curriculum in all subjects from the start of the autumn term, but make use of existing flexibilities to create time to cover the most important missed content.”

As mentioned in previous letters, please do not worry about any ‘gaps’ in your child’s learning. Come September, staff will work with children, establish baselines and then plan appropriate teaching to meet their needs. In the first weeks back, we will use parts of our existing curriculum to then establish what future support will be needed. One area we are very mindful of is the need to support the children with their mental health and well-being. We have all lived through history, and this pandemic will have affected us all in some way. It may be that the effects are not fully felt for months or even years to come. Therefore, it will be really important to help the children reflect on this time and come to terms with what they have lived through. In some cases, we are aware that this very sadly has included bereavement. We are planning a ‘Recovery Curriculum’ to work alongside our normal curriculum, with a resource called ‘Agents of Hope’ as a driver to deliver sessions.

Google Classroom

You will have received details via text of how to access Google Classrooms. The Government have stated in their guidance that schools should have an online curriculum ready to go, which is just as broad and ambitious as school based, in the event of any future lockdowns. Throughout



this pandemic, we have all been working in new and innovative ways and making use of technology for a variety of reasons. This new way of working has many benefits, and we hope to continue with many of them. Google classroom will be a particularly useful tool, and allow us to set work via the site, such as weekly spellings, homework or other activities. Therefore, please can you ensure that you have accessed Google Classroom as we will be using it while school is open, as well as if needed during a future lockdown. If you need any support with this, please contact Mrs LeFeuvre via the school office email or by phoning.

Firbobs

There is additional guidance directly relating to wrap around care providers. Our providers, Firbobs, have been in constant communication with us, and our respective Risk Assessments have complemented each other. The Government document states that before and after school provision should be running where possible. As it stands, Firbobs hope to be operational as usual from September.

Lunch

We are in talks with our caterers, Edsential, to ensure lunch logistics are planned for. We therefore hope to be able to resume providing lunch as normal. The kitchen staff have additional Risk Assessments to ensure the preparation and delivery of food have extra control measures to reduce the risk of transmission.

Other changes

We truly are looking forward to September and having our school fully open and seeing all of the children. However, in order to do this, there are some additional compromises we will have to make. This includes keeping bubbles separate, not having whole school assemblies, not singing, staggering parts of the day, building in additional time for handwashing and extra cleaning and some changes to the resources used. All of our plans and Risk Assessments have been created to ensure that the risk to children, their families and staff is as minimal as possible.

It will be vital that we all continue to follow all guidelines, including regular handwashing, minimising contact and isolating where Covid symptoms develop. In addition, in September will be full cooperation with the NHS Test and Trace process.

2020 End of year reports

Your child's end of year report is ready for collection. Year 6 reports will be handed out to the children on Tuesday 14th July. All other reports will be available for collection from 11.30am on Tuesday 14th July from outside the main office.

I will write again next week to close the year and will include any other updates that may have

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come through.

Hope you are all well and many thanks for your continued support.

Mr Turner