



24<sup>th</sup> February 2021

## Newsletter No. 22 2020~2021

Dear Parents/Carers,

I hope you are all well and enjoying the current upturn in the weather. It has been an interesting start to the half term and so I would like to update you about a few matters.

### School Opening on 8<sup>th</sup> March

As you will be aware, the Prime Minister has announced that schools will be opening to all pupils from Monday 8<sup>th</sup> March. We will therefore be welcoming all pupils from years 1 to 6 back to school with non-touching, socially distanced open arms on that day. We know how difficult the most recent lockdown has been for all of us; we look forward to greeting the children and seeing them all face to face. My personal opinion is that I am pleased all children are returning at the same time and certain year groups have not been prioritised above others. Whether this is the right time to do this is not something I am qualified to comment on. That said, we are concerned about the children in Foundation all starting on the morning of Monday 8<sup>th</sup> March after such a long time away from school. When working with 60 four and five year olds, it is essential to have good routines and a full day can be a lot for some children all at once. We will therefore be sending out a brief survey for Foundation parents to give an option of your children attending for half a day for the 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> March before staying for full days from 11<sup>th</sup>. This will be optional and we will not be insisting that any children have to do this. This is just a transitional measure for children in Foundation and it should be noted that once all the children are back in school, attendance is compulsory and not optional.

### Control Measures

In our excitement about having all the children back, we must remember that we will still be implementing a full set of control measures to make the school as secure as possible. All the systems that were in place in the Autumn term will still be applied and this will apply to staff, pupils and parents. We will still be operating with year-group bubbles and children in most year groups will be seated in rows facing the front of the class, with full ventilation and regular washing of hands. Access and egress will still be conducted according to a one-way system. All school staff will now be required to wear face coverings in communal areas but children do not have to do so. Staff will continue to take part in twice weekly lateral flow testing but there is no testing for primary aged children.

#### **If any member of a household has:**

- **A new persistent cough**
- **A high temperature**
- **A change in sense of taste or smell**

**then children should not be sent to school, the entire household should isolate and a test for the symptomatic person should be obtained. Do not wait for a positive test result before keeping your child off school.**

**If a child or member of staff tests positive for Covid-19, then it is possible that the whole year group bubble might need to isolate and learning will be managed remotely again for that bubble.**

### Catch Up Programmes

The school has plans for using the catch-up premium to help children address aspects of learning that may have been lost from their normal education in school. These plans will be implemented straight away and we welcome the news in the media that more funding is being made available. The actual amounts of money per school are relatively small but we will be using them as effectively as possible. I have a concern as to how the notion of 'catching up' is presented in the media and parents should be aware that it might not be that straightforward. Imagine you booked a holiday for £2000. The holiday was cancelled because of Covid-19. You are then sent £200 by means of a holiday catch up and go on a day out. Would this replace the

benefits of the first holiday? I suspect not and my point is that it is hard to suggest that some extra teaching sessions (even those that last for a few weeks) will ensure children 'catch up' that easily. Please do not misunderstand me, I am extremely positive that, in the long-term, children's life chances will not be affected by the pandemic and we will be working as hard as possible straight away to ensure that the children begin to fill the gaps that might have developed but, naturally, for some children this might take time. I think it has become obvious that children benefit in so many ways (in addition to the academic) from their time in school and these are areas that will need to be concentrated on too. We must avoid the temptation to think in the short term and that 'catching up' is simple.

### **Parents Evening**

You may recall that before half term we tentatively set dates for parents' evenings in the weeks beginning 1<sup>st</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> March. Given that the children will be returning to school on the 8<sup>th</sup>, it seems to make much more sense to reschedule these meetings for week beginning 29<sup>th</sup> March after we have had a time to settle the children back into school. Information regarding appointment times will therefore be sent out in a few weeks.

### **Uniform**

We are aware that it is hard for parents to purchase some school uniform and find shoes that fit children properly at the moment whilst non-essential retail outlets remain closed. In light of this, we would like to state that children should wear the correct uniform and footwear when they can but we also understand that this might not be possible in every situation.

### **Early Birds Breakfast Club**

Following communication with Mr Mabbutt, we can confirm that the Early Birds Breakfast Club will be operating again from 8<sup>th</sup> March.

### **Assemblies**

I was able to hold some assemblies before half term and would like to plan a [Key Stage 1](#) (2.00pm) assembly and a [Key Stage 2](#) (2.30pm) assembly on Monday 1<sup>st</sup> March. These can be reached by following the links above.

### **Swimming**

Fully risk assessed school swimming is due to begin again when schools fully open and so year 4 will be swimming from Weds 10<sup>th</sup> March to Weds 12<sup>th</sup> May and then year 3 will swim from Weds 19<sup>th</sup> May to Weds 14<sup>th</sup> July.

There is still so much information that I intend to share with you all but that is probably enough at the moment. I look forward to seeing you all soon.

Yours faithfully,



Pete Taylor  
Head Teacher