

Knutton St Mary's C of E Academy

Together we succeed and shine ...

'We shine like bright stars in the sky' Philippians 2:15



Wednesday 15th July 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

This is a lengthy letter but I urge you to read it all as it contains important information for September.

We are really pleased that the government have announced that *'all pupils, in all year groups, will return to school full time from the beginning of the Autumn term.'* This means that, from September, it is once again compulsory for all children to attend school. We are thoroughly looking forward to seeing all the children in September.

Obviously this is a huge change from what has been happening in the Summer term, but we will be following the government's guidance to ensure that all of our children, staff and community will be kept as safe as possible. Part of the government's advice is that *'in welcoming all children back this autumn, schools will be asked to minimise the number of contacts that a pupil has during the school day.'* This means that, whilst we are trying to return to some level of normality, school will not be running in the same way that it was when we left in March. Some of the recommendations from the government are:

- *grouping children together (in Year group bubbles)*
- *avoiding contact between groups (no assemblies, staggered breaks/lunch, staggered start and end times, etc.)*
- *arranging classrooms with forward facing tables*
- *staff maintaining distance from pupils and other staff as much as possible.*

Attendance

During the Summer term, and the height of the pandemic, the government stated that *'no parent would be penalised or sanctioned for their children's non-attendance at school.'* However, now the circumstances have changed, and government guidance states that *'school attendance will therefore be mandatory again from the beginning of the autumn term. This means that from that point, the usual rules on school attendance will apply, including:*

- *parents' duty to ensure that their child attends regularly*
- *schools' responsibility to record attendance and follow up absence*
- *the availability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices.'*

We understand that there may be exceptional circumstances which affect your child's attendance and, as always, we would work together with individual families to support you as best we can.

Bubbles/classes

As we are now allowed to group children in full class sizes, we will be returning to our normal class structures. This will mean all children from a year group will be grouped together with a class teacher and at least one member of support staff, for at least part of each day. However, as the guidance states that we should avoid contact between groups, these classes will not interact with any others during the school day. Timetables have been carefully put in place to ensure the minimum movement around the school at any one time.

Each class will have their own classroom, toilet and a clearly marked area of the playground. The toilets will effectively become unisex and will be used on a one-in one-out basis. Children and adults in one class will rarely cross paths with another, even when we are outside. The research suggests that children are able to interact without social distancing, within their group, although they will be expected to socially distance themselves from members of staff. Although children are able to be in closer proximity of each other we will be ensuring that they are sat side by side rather than facing other, all facing the front of the class.

Whilst the advice is that *'staff should remain a 2m distance from each other and children'* and *'in particular should avoid close face-to-face contact and minimise time spent within 1m of anyone'*, we are fully aware that this is not always possible and all of our staff will be doing everything in their power to make children feel at ease. This means that we will not be telling children off if they forget about distancing rules, they will just be given gentle reminders. Similarly, if a child is in distress, upset or struggling with something, they will not be ignored or left that way. As always, our first priority is the well-being of your children.

Hygiene and Prevention

Schools have been given strict government guidance in order to reduce risk and ensure a safe environment for both staff and children. This includes:

- ensuring anyone who shows symptoms of coronavirus, or lives with someone who does, does not attend school
- daily temperature check for all children and staff
- cleaning hands thoroughly at regular intervals through the day
- using 'catch it, bin it, kill it, when coughing and sneezing
- regular high level of cleaning surfaces and toilets through the day
- minimising contact between groups and social distance wherever possible
- where necessary, wear appropriate Personal Protection Equipment (PPE)

What happens if someone shows signs of infection?

Whilst every measure has been put in place to protect our school community, there is clear advice from the government for schools to follow should there be a suspected, or confirmed, case of coronavirus in the school. These include:

- isolating the individual from their class group
- advising the child's parents for immediate collection
- supporting parents in getting tested and engaging with 'Track and Trace'

If a case is confirmed, we contact the local Health Protection Team who will carry out a risk assessment and advise us of any next steps.

Curriculum

We will return to teaching a full curriculum from September, which will take into account learning that has been missed since lockdown and gaps that children may have developed.

The school day

Prior to this letter, you will have received instructions specific to your child's class.

The school day will be staggered, with different drop-off and pick-up times and locations for different year groups. It is vital for the safety of everyone you are punctual and stick to these given timings and areas. **There will be allowances for parents with more than one child in different year groups.** The home time routine will also be staggered. We would encourage, where

possible, children in Years 5 & Y6 to walk to school by themselves, to reduce the amount of people at the gates. **Bikes and scooters will not be allowed on school premises.**

Only one parent should accompany younger children and, where possible, please do not bring siblings who do not attend our school. Families will be expected to line up on the pavement outside of school and no parent will be allowed onto the school premises. There will be no access to school through the main entrance. Should you need to speak to someone within school, please phone and arrangements can be made. We must stress the importance of social distancing outside of the school in order to ensure everyone's health and wellbeing. Please try not to arrive ahead of your drop off/collection times, or congregate in groups outside the school.

The library car park will also be out of use, as we are using this entrance for children to enter and exit the school. We are encouraging as many people as possible to walk to school. However, if this is not possible, please be considerate about where you park as there will be families lined up outside the school gates, by the main road.

There will be no breakfast club or after school clubs, for the first half-term, as we will be unable to stop classes mixing in these situations. This will be reviewed as the term progresses.

Uniform and items allowed in school.

Schools are being encouraged to return to their usual uniform. Therefore, we will be expecting all pupils to arrive in full school uniform. However, on the days where your child has PE, they will be required to arrive in PE kit as there will be no opportunity for them to change through the day. PE kit should consist of:

- a plain white T-shirt
- plain black shorts/tracksuit bottoms
- trainers
- a plain jumper or hoodie can also be worn.

Football tops, or those with large slogans/brands, are not allowed.

'Public health England does not recommend the use of face coverings in schools,' as 'misuse may inadvertently increase the risk of transmission. There may also be negative effects on communication and thus education.' Therefore, face masks are not to be worn in school. This applies to both staff and children.

Government guidance states that. *'frequently used equipment such as pencils and pens are not shared.'* Therefore, we will be providing all equipment that children will need and each pupil will receive a pack with everything that they require. They are not allowed to bring any stationery from home. *'Classroom based resources such as books and games can be used and shared within the bubbles and cleaned frequently'* so each class will be allocated a selection of books and resources that will only be for their use.

We will only expect children to bring to school 1 bag in which to carry:

- their lunch
- their reading book and diary
- water bottle
- snack

We understand that children in Y5 & 6, who are walking to and from school, may need to bring a mobile phone. These will need to be given to their class teacher at the start of the day and will be stored safely and individually until home time. No other year groups will be allowed to bring in mobile phones.

Rules and expectations

We have amended our behaviour policy to reflect the changes that need to take place at school. It is absolutely essential that all children follow these rules, which include expectations on movement around school, hygiene and hand washing, playtimes and use of equipment. Along with this letter, you will also receive a copy of the Home-school agreement. Whilst we will obviously talk to children regarding the new expectations on the first morning back, we would encourage you to share the agreement with your child.

If children willfully break the rules, this may impact on them being able to attend school.

Up to date contact details

It is clearly very important that we have up to date contact details should we need to contact you during the school day if, for example, your child starts to show symptoms. Please contact the office immediately if your contact details do change.

School Dinners and Tuck

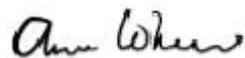
Due to the fact that we are unable to handle money, and we are unable to congregate in the hall for lunch, school meals will only be available for children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2, along with those children eligible for Free School Meals in Key Stage 2. Paid dinners will not be an option before half term. This will be reviewed and we will update you accordingly.

In the current circumstances, we are unable to offer the usual full range of hot dinner options and there will be a limited menu available, initially for the first half-term. This will regularly be reviewed and we will hope to return to normal as soon as we are able. A copy of the menu is available with this letter.

Children will also be unable to purchase Tuck at playtime, so they will be allowed to bring in a snack such as a piece of fruit or cereal bar; please do not send crisps or chocolate bars.

I hope that these arrangements provide you with the confidence to support your child in returning to school in September. I would like to thank you for supporting the school during the past few months and supporting your child with their home learning. I would also like to reassure you that everyone at Knutton St Mary's will be continuing to work their hardest to ensure that this is the safest possible place we can make it for all of our children and staff.

Take care and stay safe



Mrs Wheaver

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