

Otterham C P School

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Dear Parents

It is with great delight that I am writing to welcome the whole school community to the start of the academic term, Autumn 2020. We are excited to see all pupils returning to school on a full time basis on Monday 7th September (with the exception of our new Reception intake who have a phased introduction to school) and have been busy ensuring a safe learning environment for all. After a thorough review of the government guidance on reopening schools fully, our risk assessment is comprehensive, meeting all the relevant guidelines. Please find the latest version on the school website and be aware that it will be reviewed and updated as and when new guidance is released.

Although it has been pleasing (if not somewhat surprising) to see the coronavirus statistics head in the right direction throughout the summer, the virus is still in circulation and as per the government guidance and our own risk assessment, adaptations to the school day and environment have had to be made to keep everyone safe. For those of you whose children returned in some way shape or form during the summer term, many alterations will be familiar to you but please read the following carefully as some timings are likely to have changed.

- The main theme and thrust behind many operational procedures is the 'bubble' system we must adhere to in order to limit potential transmission of the virus and to aid track and trace systems. The children from each class will be operating as a bubble, not mixing with children in other bubbles (classes) at any point during the school day. A change from the summer term is that staff can now work across all bubbles within a school and specialist/supply teachers are able to assist in the delivery of the curriculum.
- A breakfast club will be operating daily with cereals, toast and fruit available. It will run from 08:00 to 08:45 within the school hall which will be zoned for each class so that a distance can be maintained between each bubble. **Breakfast club is £2.50 per child per day and is payable on the School Money site.** There is no need to book in advance.
- There will be a staggered start and end to the school day to reduce congestion during these times and to allow for social distancing. **Children with a surname beginning with letters A-H please arrive between 08:50 – 09:00. Children with a surname beginning with I-Z please arrive between 09:00 – 9:10.**
- **Reception children are to arrive at 08:45 to allow for a 5 min settling in with parents within the classroom.** All parents of **Reception children** are to use hand sanitiser and wear a face mask within the classroom and exit through the decked area to the rear of the classroom.
- Class 1 children to use main entrance of the school.
- Class 2 children to enter their classroom via the playground, using their library door.
- Class 3 children to enter classroom using main entrance to the Eliot Building.
- Punctuality is vital so that learning can start punctual at 9.10 am.
- Could we please ask that all adults vacate the school premises as quickly as possible to aid social distancing and help the car parking situation on the roadside.
- The enhanced hygiene regime means that at the beginning and end of the school day hand sanitiser will be given to your child and hand washing / sanitising will take place before and after lunch and whenever children come in from play. If your child has any adverse reactions to hand sanitiser, please let us know.
- Every classroom or frequently used space within the school building has a cleaning and PPE station. There will be more frequent cleaning of tables, chairs, large equipment and of high use touch

points such as door handles. Visors, masks, gloves and aprons are available for any staff to use but it is not mandatory to do so. Some staff may choose to use PPE depending on their own personal circumstances.

- There is no need for children to wear masks and staff will wear masks as and when they feel it necessary. For example, when administering first aid, dealing with toileting situations or when having a cough that they know not to be COVID.
- **Children in Class 1 and Class 2 should have their own pencil case, large enough to fit a 30cm ruler.** All items needed to access the curriculum will be given to your child for their own personal use. The pencil case will stay in school. The youngest children will share the resources within their room, which will be cleaned regularly.
- The only items to come into school daily with your child should be - **coat, water bottle, book bag and lunchbox.** When the weather gets cooler, hats and gloves will also be permitted.
- **For the time being a PE kit is NOT needed. For children not wearing trainers as their school shoes, they will need to be provided and remain in school.** This will be reviewed at half term. PE will take place outside for both Class 1 and Class 2. Timetables will have a degree of flexibility to accommodate issues with the weather.
- Please note that all books returning from home will be left for 72 hours before going back into circulation.
- Aspens will be offering their full menu. Children in Class 1 will eat in their classroom and Class 2 and 3 will eat in the hall within their own zone.
- The outside area will be zoned on a weekly basis to allow classes access to various environments and equipment over time. This also means all children can be outside at the same time, assisting us with supervision levels.
- Although primary school children are no longer expected to socially distance themselves from each other (indeed, to get 28/30 children into a classroom, it would be impossible to do so), there is still the expectation that staff maintain a 2m distance from the children where possible. Clearly the older the child, the easier this is to achieve. Please rest assured that, particularly with the younger children, although a distance of some sort will try to be maintained, if your child is in need of nurture or reassurance through contact, it will be given. Common sense will prevail!
- In line with government guidance, any child in need of intimate care will receive it from a staff member wearing full PPE.
- The ending of the school day will be staggered in a similar way to the start. **Reception children and older siblings will be collected at 15:00. Children in Y1-6 with a surname starting with letters A-H are to be collected between 15:10 - 15:20. Children in Y1-6 with a surname starting with letters I-Z are to be collected between 15:20 – 15:30.**
- If you have children in Class 1 and another class, please wait near the main gates / shelter area to collect your children. If you have children in Class 2 only, please wait inside the side gate to the playground. If you have children in Class 2 and Class 3, please wait outside the main entrance to the Eliot building. At all times you need to be mindful of maintaining a social distance and the recommendation is that you wear a mask as there will be times that being near others is unavoidable.
- Whilst there is a need for us to maintain bubbles, after school provision proved to be too costly for the very small numbers involved when we surveyed the need back in July. This will be reviewed at half term.
- Teachers and Teaching Assistants will be endeavouring to be visible at the beginning and the end of the school day so that lines of communication can be maintained through chats outside. If a more formal conversation is required, please arrange an appointment via Kerry in the office.
- Please access the school office in the normal way but being mindful of the 2m distance between adults should there be a queue, and please, always wear a face mask when in the reception area.

I am aware that this is quite a long list of relatively new systems and procedures to remember. Paper copies of this letter will be given to your child so that it can be kept in a safe place at

home (fridge maybe 😊) as a reminder. It will also be on the school website. If, as the first week or so goes by, you notice something that we do that could be improved upon, please do let us know.

At the moment, the advice we need to follow should someone develop symptoms of coronavirus is as follows.

- 1) The adult or child leaves the school building as soon as possible and should go for a test. All children and school staff are eligible for a free test which can usually take place on the same day. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-getting-tested>
The school has 10 home kits to distribute to families who may struggle to reach a test centre. Going for a test cannot be enforced.
- 2) The rest of the bubble carries on as normal until the result comes back (usually within 24hrs). If the result comes back negative, the person with the symptoms remains at home until their illness has passed. If the result comes back positive the bubble/class is sent home to self-isolate for between 10-14 days. 10 days if a test has been taken on the 9th day and come back with a negative result. The Health Protection Team will be notified of a positive case. If any further positive cases are found within the school community there may be a call for the whole school to be tested.
- 3) If a parent refuses to get a child tested the child remains at home until well again and the bubble carries on as normal. If another person should develop symptoms, then the process starts back at step 1.
- 4) Teachers are receiving training in order to be able to provide online learning should classes be sent home to self-isolate.

Clearly, it is going to be vital that children are not sent to school if they have a temperature, cough or stating that they cannot taste or smell as well as usual. The first two symptoms of coronavirus are very common in a variety of childhood illnesses and whilst parents would not ordinarily send their child to school with a temperature, it is quite normal to do so with a cough. Unfortunately, without a negative test result, your child will need to remain home for the duration of the cough.

Teachers have been busy planning a literacy rich curriculum to kick start the Autumn Term and as mentioned before the end of the Summer Term, the first few weeks will be a chance for teachers to assess any gaps in learning that will need to be plugged as the year progresses. Having said this, we have been mindful to balance the curriculum with creativity and outdoor learning to aid emotional wellbeing. We will also be holding parental consultations earlier than usual to gain your insight into priorities for your child.

I think that is probably enough information for now! Teachers will be communicating their curriculum plans with you shortly but if there is anything else you need to know, please do not hesitate to make contact.

See you all on Monday.

Kind regards

Helen Ward