



PRIMARY SCHOOL

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Durham Gilesgate Primary School Reopening of School 8th March 2021

2nd March 2021

Dear Parent / Carer,

Thank you for all the hard work that that you have put into home educating your child/children in the past two months; we know how hard this has been for everyone, parents and teachers alike, and we are looking forward to welcoming **all** our children back to school on **Monday 8th March**.

There will be no major changes to the systems that we had in place in the autumn term but because we have been out of school for two months I would like to remind you of these systems. I apologize for the length of this letter but it is important that we are all reminded about our risk control measures so that we can keep the school COVID safe and open. I am sure that no one in our school community would relish a further increase in cases that leads to yet another lockdown.

Entry to School

In order to eliminate congestion at 'pinch points' such as the gates into the Early Years garden, please leave your child at the pedestrian gate and let them walk in without you. If you do need to accompany your child we ask that, where possible, only one parent/carer per family brings children in, to help enable social distancing and that you follow the one-way system which will help reduce congestion and contact.

Two Year Olds, Nursery and Reception

If you have a child in our 2 year old provision, nursery or Mrs Bancroft's class, please arrive at the following times:

- If your surname starts A to D, arrive at 8:45
- If your surname starts E to N, arrive at 8:50
- If your surname starts O to Z, arrive at 8:55

Wait with your child on the social distance lines leading to EYFS. Staff will let the children (or, if necessary, child and parent) enter. Children will then take their coats off. To reduce the number of adults in the building and in areas where they may be in close contact, it will be great if your child can take off and put on their coat without parental help. However, we do know that some very young children might need a bit of parental help or reassurance when they enter. There will be a one-way system in EYFS for parents to leave without congestion.

Years 1 to 6

The school gates onto the yard will be open from 8:45 and we will be operating a one-way system through the yard and around the rear of the school, to exit across the carpark. To this effect, the gates to the drive will be closed to traffic.

We are asking that pupils come to school at the following times:

- If your surname starts A to D, arrive at 8:45
- If your surname starts E to N, arrive at 8:50
- If your surname starts O to Z, arrive at 8:55



Your child should walk onto the yard where staff will direct them into school via a designated entrance. If you have accompanied them you will then follow the one-way system around the rear of the school to exit via the pedestrian gate.

Lunch Break

Mrs Bancroft's, Mrs Stringer's and Miss Smithson's classes will eat their lunch in the school hall. All other classes will eat in their classrooms. We are moving away from using take away containers and dinners will be served as normal with children taking them to their rooms to eat. We hope to move to all children eating in the hall by Easter.

If your child brings a packed lunch please make sure it is contained in an easily wiped container, such as a plastic Tupperware box or vinyl lunch bag, and that it contains food that children can open independently.

All children will have time to play outside during breaks.

End of the School Day

Two Year Olds, Nursery and Reception

Children in 2's provision and nursery will leave at 11:50.

Parents of children in our two year old provision should wait outside the blue EYFS doors; collection will be as normal.

For parents of nursery children, we will open the gate onto the EYFS garden and parents can wait there, where there is more space to socially distance. Staff will hand children over via the covered area, and you will be able to leave via the gate.

Reception-aged children can be collected from the blue (EYFS) doors at 3:20.

Years 1 to Six

Children in Years 1 to 6 will line up on the yard. Children who walk home alone will do so immediately via the one-way system, and then we will let family groups leave.

For the end of the school day to work without congestion or the risk of increased contact, we are respectfully asking that parents do the following:

- Only come onto the yard if you have to do so
- If on the yard, maintain social distancing and wait beyond the zoned area
- If on the yard, please be patient while you wait and then leave immediately via the one-way system, whilst maintaining social distancing.

Please walk with your child when leaving school and do not let them run ahead or across the car park. I know that many of you will want to chat to friends that you will not have seen in person in the last two months but please remember social distancing when on the yard and walking out of school.

The Measures We Have Taken and Our Expectations for School Staff and Parents to Prevent Transmission of COVID-19

To Keep Everyone in School Safe we will:-

- Use class bubbles so that we can reduce the number of contacts between children and staff across the school day and so that we can endeavour to maintain social distancing. (Although I am sure you will acknowledge that younger children will find this harder to maintain)



- Make sure that each bubble has their own space in school and that they will also have named adults who work with them and a timetable in school for breaks and lunch. This will reduce the number of contacts whilst in the building. When outside, where transmission rates are lower, two 'bubbles' will be able to have their break outside at the same time. Children will be able to play socially distanced games which we will teach. Playground resources will be regularly cleaned to prevent transmission.
- Make sure that children in Key Stages 1 and 2 (Years 1 to 6) will have their own seat and desk, and their own individual essential resources (pencils, rulers, etc.) that only they use. Desks are laid out in rows or horseshoe arrangements to limit 'face to face' between children.
- Treat children in EYFS as one 'bubble', and they will share resources, which will be cleaned regularly.
- Ensure that there is additional and regular hand hygiene, which will be a mixture of handwashing and hand sanitisers.
- Make tissues available to children and staff to 'Catch it, Bin It and Kill it', and separate lidded bins for tissue waste will be in each room.
- Have strict systems for use of the school toilets.
- Ensure additional cleaning during the day.
- Make sure that staff wear a clean change of clothes each day to reduce the risk of viral transmission.
- Have a designated room to segregate any child who is presenting with symptoms and some test kits have been made available to school so we can give these to parents to use if their child is symptomatic if parents are unable to arrange a local test. (For further information, please see the section, 'What will happen if there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 in school?')

To Keep Everyone in School Safe We Expect Parents to:-

- Return their child/ren at the start of term. The compulsory school age attendance laws apply once again from 8th March 2021.
- Abide by the social distancing measures that will be in place outside of school. Observe and use the 2m markings and adhere to the timings for entry and exit. Punctuality will be important to keep the risk of contacts to a minimum.
 - Ensure that their children and families do not mix socially outside of school. The government guidance states that parents should do everything they can to ensure that children are maintaining a social distance with people from other households, and observing the same social distancing principles as adults, as far as possible.
 - Accompany their child onto the yard only if necessary.
 - Provide a clean water bottle for their child, which must be taken home each day, cleaned and returned. Children should not take a backpack to school; those who are on packed lunch can bring their lunch in a plastic box or bag. Hats and gloves should be removed before entering the school building and placed in coat pockets.
 - Support the practice of regular handwashing with their children, to teach them to cough or sneeze into their elbow and follow the practice of 'catch it, bin it, it kill it'.
 - Ensure that we have an up to date mobile number and that parents are always contactable during the school day.
 - Report any symptoms of COVID-19 that their household may have to the school and follow isolation guidance if any member of the household has any symptoms or suspected symptoms; for other illnesses, follow the usual school procedures for sickness absence.

Do not send your child to their nursery, childminder, school or college if:



- they are showing symptoms of COVID-19
- someone in their household is showing symptoms

Arrange a test if you or your child develops symptoms. Inform your nursery, childminder, school or college of the results.

If the test is positive, self-isolate and engage with the NHS Test and Trace process.

What will happen if there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 in school?

If we have a confirmed case of COVID-19, either for a pupil or staff member, we will be in contact with the Local Health Protection Team. (This team will also contact us directly if they become aware that someone who has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) attended the school – as identified by NHS Test and Trace.)

The Health Protection Team will carry out a rapid risk assessment to confirm who has been in **close contact** with the person during the period that they were infectious. Based on the advice from the Health Protection Team, we must send home those people who have been in close contact with the person who has tested positive, advising them to self-isolate for 10 days since they were last in close contact with the infectious person. Close contact means:

- direct close contacts - face to face contact with an infected individual for any length of time, within 1 metre, including being coughed on, a face to face conversation, or unprotected physical contact (skin-to-skin)
- proximity contacts - extended close contact (within 1 to 2 metres for more than 15 minutes) with an infected individual
- travelling in a small vehicle, like a car, with an infected person

This means that if we have positive cases of COVID-19 in school, some class bubbles or staff may be asked to self-isolate at home if they have been in close contact with the infectious person. We would only envisage whole school closure in the case of multiple positive cases of COVID-19 in multiple bubbles or if there is a local lockdown following a local spike in COVID-19 cases.

During any partial or full school closure, we have developed our systems for home learning. We will continue to use paper based resources or Purple Mash and other online resources to ensure that children can access education in any future closure.

What about face masks?

The current government guidance is that there is no need for children in primary schools to wear a face mask in the school building. If your child wears a face mask to walk to school they will need to remove it as they enter school and keep it in a safe place such as a zip lock freezer bag.

Adult visitors must wear a face mask when entering school. Professionals working with children will follow their organization's risk assessment and ours. There is no requirement for adults to wear face masks when teaching or working with children, however if adults are in close contact with a child e.g. administering first aid, they may wear a mask or face shield as a precaution. In addition, adults should wear a face covering in communal areas where there is an increased risk of transmission via airborne particles.

What about uniform and what will happen on PE days?

There is not a requirement for children to wear a clean change of clothes each day. This means that our uniform policy is back in place and your child can wear their school uniform as normal, to fit in with your routine cycle of clothes washing.



We are aware that children will have grown and that it was not possible for all of you to order new uniform before the end of term. If your child's uniform no longer fits you can order new uniform directly from School trends at the following website:

<https://www.schooltrends.co.uk/uniform/DurhamGilesgatePrimarySchool>.

The website shows the range of uniform and PE kit; there is a good size guide on the website to help you choose the right sizes and orders are being dealt with quickly. Using the website helps reduce the number of parents calling into school and the need to handle cash. Alternatively, parents might want to consider buying a non-badged sweatshirt or polo shirt from Tesco or Asda.

On **PE days** we will be asking your child to come to school wearing their PE kit. They can wear jogging bottoms and a school sweat shirt over the top for warmth. They will go home in their PE kit so you can wash it. On PE days, staff teaching PE lessons will do the same. (A timetable of PE days will be made available on the school website to help you prepare for this) We have also used some of our Sport Premium funding to purchase jogging bottoms for children so that classes doing PE have a common dress code and school identity on the days that they do PE. These are ready for children to bring home with them in the week beginning 8th March.

Coats and Bags?

It is fine for your child to come to school wearing a coat, and this is still important as we progress through the end of winter and into spring. They will not need backpacks; they will just need an easily cleaned vinyl or plastic bag to put their packed lunch in, if necessary; there is no need for a large bag to be brought into school.

Lateral Flow Testing

Twice weekly lateral flow testing for all school staff started in January, these are self-administered tests which give a result in 30 minutes.

From March 2021; any adult with a school aged child or children can order lateral flow tests to administer at home. These can be booked using the following links:-

Self Collection Sites (Two in Durham that are open from 1:00 pm each day)

<https://find-covid-19-rapid-test-sites.maps.test-and-trace.nhs.uk/findatestcenter.html>

Booking Lateral Flow Tests to be delivered to your home (Find and click the 'Start Now' button)

<https://www.gov.uk/order-coronavirus-rapid-lateral-flow-tests>

Please only book and use tests if you meet the following criteria.

- you're 18 or older
- you live in England
- you do not have coronavirus symptoms
- you have not been told to self-isolate
- you or someone in your household, childcare or support bubble attends a primary or secondary school (including sixth form students) or works at one
- you cannot get tests from a test site or your work

Whilst lateral flow tests are not mandatory and can be difficult to administer with very young children the use of them does give another layer of protection in picking up coronavirus and we would strongly recommend that as a minimum all adults and children in Years 4, 5 and 6 completed these twice a week.



PTO

And Finally...

We would like to thank every single parent, carer, and grandparent who has helped to home educate in the past two months. We appreciate how hard it is to manage your work and help your child/children with their home learning. You have worked with us and it has been brilliant to see the amount and quality of work that has been completed by most children. You have done a brilliant job.

Last week we were able to show the quality of the children's work to Her Majesty's Inspectors who work for Ofsted and I would like to thank all of you who found time to complete the Ofsted parental questionnaire within the short timescale; as that helped inspector's know how much you have valued the work that we do here. Whilst we are awaiting the written letter from that monitoring visit I can tell that we are very happy with the feedback that we were given.

It will be a delight to see the children return in Monday 8th and I look forward to meeting you again.

Kind regards
Mark Turner



