

Monday 24<sup>th</sup> August 2020

## September Opening

Dear Parents

I hope this letter finds each and every one of you safe and well. I am writing to you ahead of our scheduled opening on Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> September to outline some of the arrangements for the beginning of the school year. As you might imagine this is not the usual start of the year we would experience in normal times and as the current public health situation is not yet rectified I felt it prudent to write to you all and detail some of the changes you will be faced with when school fully opens to all pupils once more.

You will have heard lots of different stories in the press over the last few months about schools opening fully again and I am sure been told lots of contrasting stories about what different schools are doing. What I can tell you is that we at school have designed all aspects of our autumn start in line with the regulations and guidelines set out not only by the central government, but also in consultation with Wigan council. We have worked to ensure the safety and wellbeing of each and every child in our care and any changes or alterations made to the normal school routines are designed to safeguard the children, staff and families of our school community as fully as possible. Each school will be working within their own context and this is why there are a variety of different procedures in place across schools. What I must also highlight is that any and all of the arrangements detailed in this letter are subject to change as the local and national circumstances change and the public health situation develops. We will endeavour to keep you all as fully informed as possible as we move through the coming weeks and months, but please, at any time you have a query, do not hesitate to get in touch and ask.

### Organisation

The beginning and end of each day will need to be staggered in an attempt to keep the flow of movement in and around our site as steady as possible. Each class will have a set drop off and pick-up time allocated to them. Parents will be asked to enter the school grounds via the pedestrian gate as usual

We will operate staggered drop off and pick up arrangements. Each year group will be allocated a drop off time, and parents will be asked to ensure they arrive at this time each day. It is important that parents do not arrive early, and that they do not linger once they have dropped off. This will ensure ease of flow and allow for social distancing between families. If a parent needs to speak with a teacher this will need to be done via email or by phone. The rationale for the closely spaced timings is first to minimise the disruption to families and is also based on the provision which was in place before the summer holidays.

<b>Year Group</b>	<b>Drop Off</b>	<b>Pick Up</b>
<b>Reception</b>	Separate arrangements are in place for our new starters	
<b>Years 1 &amp; 2</b>	9.05am	3.25pm
<b>Years 3 &amp; 4</b>	8.55am	3.20pm
<b>Years 5 &amp; 6</b>	8.45am	3.15pm

Queuing for drop off will be operated using a one way system and where possible one parent only should accompany their child. This is to reduce the numbers of adults on school grounds at any one time and to ease congestion at these peak times. Parents will be required to social distance queue through the pedestrian gate, along the main school path, drop off at the gate to the playground, and exit across the carpark out through the vehicle gate. At the playground

gate children will be directed to their allocated zone where they will be collected by their teacher. The same process will apply for pickups. During our wider opening in the summer term these arrangements worked very well with the pupils onsite, however with a full return of all classes we will be tripling the numbers involved. I would ask for your patience and understanding while queuing at these times, but know we will work as hard as possible to ensure a smooth transition at the beginning and end of the day for all families. Where families have children in several year groups they will be able to drop off and collect all children at the same time.

### **Onsite Routine**

We will be working very hard to ensure a level of normality is resumed for all our children. There will be changes to routines and procedures but will be endeavour to keep the impact on the children to a minimal.

All children will be asked to wash their hands on arrival and then periodically over the course of the day, and we will be promoting hygiene strategies with all pupils.

Lunches will be operating again from September however for the first few weeks only cold options will be available. Lunchtimes will be scheduled slightly differently to allow for social distancing between year groups, and multiple locations around the building will be utilised to facilitate the feeding of the children. This flexibility will mean that we are able to ensure all children are able to eat in a timely fashion and reduce the pressure on the main school hall space during the lunch period. Where at all possible, children will be taken out to have their lunch in the fresh air of the outdoor areas.

Break times and lunchtimes may need to be staggered for each year group, and children will not be allowed to mix with any other year group during these times. During these break times, children will still need to maintain social distancing where possible, and will only be able to take part in non-contact games and activities within their individual year group.

Social distancing measures will be in place throughout the school building and the recommended 2m rule will be enacted as fully as possible where appropriate. Common areas will be marked out with social distancing signage to establish distancing where possible. Corridors will be used as little as possible by children to reduce risk of contact with others.

Staff will follow a strict cleaning schedule throughout the day and deeper cleans will take place at assigned points throughout the day.

### **Curriculum**

Our initial focus will be on the wellbeing of the children and ensuring that they feel secure and happy at school on their return. We will then be addressing the academic side of each child and working to ensure that they are boosted up to the correct level as quickly as possible. The government have asked all schools to prioritise Reading, Writing and Mathematics from September, but this does not mean that the children will only be working on these areas. It is absolutely crucial that we offer a full range of curriculum areas and ensure that the passion for learning is fostered and developed as the children return. We have lost so much time together and a broad and balanced curriculum is essential for all. We will also be developing our mental health and wellbeing programme further with all classes from the beginning of September.

Teachers will be using our new assessment, feedback and planning tool 'Balance' from September. This system was introduced in the spring term and is a fully comprehensive system which allows for personalised learning journeys for the children as they move through school. Teachers will be providing verbal feedback only as we move through the autumn term

and this will align with the 'Balance wheel' that was introduced with all classes in the spring term. Feedback will be personalised and tailored, and will support all children in their learning and development.

### **Illness & Injury**

If your child becomes injured during the day, normal first aid practices will be in place with the additional provision that staff will be following government guidance on wearing PPE whilst administering first aid.

If a child becomes unwell with COVID-19 symptoms, they will immediately be isolated in our quarantine and first aid area. Parents will be contacted and asked to collect their child immediately. The entire household would be expected to isolate for 14 days and the child should be tested. If tested positive, their whole school group and their designated staff would also have to isolate for 14 days.

### **Attendance**

School attendance will once again be compulsory for all children from the beginning of the autumn term. This will mean that the usual regulations and penalties will be in place from September. I realise that many families may feel anxious about the return of pupils to school but it is crucial that we get the children back into a regular routine as quickly as possible. It is essential that they attend each day and I would strongly urge that no family takes their child out of school during term time for holiday purposes. This time will be crucial in ensuring the educational development of all pupils after this prolonged absence from school regardless of the levels of work completed at home.

### **Uniform**

School uniform policy will be as usual from the beginning of school in September. The DfE have stated that normal school uniform is fine for pupils' return and no additional cleaning measures need be introduced by families outside of their normal washing routine. Polo shirts are permitted until the October half term and then a standard white school shirt and tie are compulsory. On your child's allocated PE day they may attend school in their PE kit with no need to change into uniform once their PE session is complete. This will allow for easier organisation for families and reduce the amount of bags and additional items being brought into school.

School bags are permitted in school to transport lunches and reading books, etc. However we would ask that large backpacks are not brought to school and smaller, less bulky alternatives used where possible.

Our school uniform policy is compulsory, and will be enforced from the beginning of the school year. That said, I am mindful that this has been a very challenging time for many families financially as a result of the national issue. If any family needs assistance, in any way, regarding uniform please do not hesitate to contact me at school.

### **Wrap Around Provision**

As stated in my summer newsletter we will be offering our Breakfast Club from the beginning of the academic year for all families. The government have stated that schools can begin to provide wrap around care from September but that this should be done in a phased manner over time. We have decided to open our Breakfast Club for working families. By prioritising the breakfast provision we will be able to ensure that working parents are able to drop their children at school and be assured they will get a full breakfast at the beginning of the day.

Afterschool clubs will not be available for the first half term but we will look to begin returning this aspect of wrap around provision after the half term holiday where possible.

Breakfast Club will be open from 7:30am daily and will be charged at a flat fee of £4.50 per day. Children will be organised by year group so as to maintain Pod integrity as fully as possible. It is essential that places are booked ahead of a session so that provision can be arranged. We will also be moving to a cashless system for Breakfast Club so families will be invoiced rather than paying at the door.

### **School Office**

Our school office times are from 8:30am till 4:30pm each day. From September I would ask that where possible, parents contact school via telephone or email rather than entering the building. If it is necessary to come to the school office we would ask that you follow the social distancing measures in place. The foyer area is limited to one person at a time – unless part of the same family.

### **Snacks**

Normal provision will be in place for toast, fruit and milk. Our healthy snack policy will also be enforced from the beginning of the year for all snacks brought from home. Toast and fruit should be purchased via our ParentMail system rather than with cash.

### **School Events**

All physical school events are currently suspended and will be reviewed periodically as we move through the academic year in line with government guidance. This will mean that no Parent Faith Assemblies or Collective Worship events will be taking place until further notice.

### **Educational Trips**

There are no school trips planned for the beginning of the autumn term and all future trips will be assessed against the changing public health situation. Residential trips are currently prohibited but school are in communication with providers regarding possible future arrangements. Further information will be given as the year progresses.

School are also in communication with Wigan regarding swimming lessons and the transport arrangements involved. Further information will follow.

### **Government Pack for Parents**

The government have produced a document containing information about the return of all pupils to school in September which you may find useful. The document can be found by using the below address.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/what-parents-and-carers-need-to-know-about-early-years-providers-schools-and-colleges-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak/what-parents-and-carers-need-to-know-about-early-years-providers-schools-and-colleges-in-the-autumn-term>

My apologies for the length of this letter and for taking the time to read through it all. I hope that it addresses all of your questions and concerns regarding the new school year. We are very excited to get all of the children back and cannot wait to get started back.

May God bless each and every one of you, and keep you all safe.

Mr Doherty

Headteacher