



ST PATRICK'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL BIRSTALL



Return to school September 2021

02.09.21

Dear Parents/Carers,

As the start of the new school year fast approaches, the staff and I are very much looking forward to opening our school to all pupils once again, hoping that this academic year will be a little more “normal” for the pupils, yourselves and staff. I know that it is an exciting time for pupils and families but with a sense of nervousness and apprehension as we are still in an area of higher infection rates. I wanted to send out this document to provide you with some information about the arrangements that will be in place for the start of term, following the publication of the updated government guidance for schools and the approval of our Risk Assessment and Outbreak Management Plan by the Full Governing Body at a virtual meeting last night – Wednesday 1st September.

On our website, under policies, you will be able to view our 2021-2022 Covid-19 Risk Assessment and Outbreak Management Plan, following the approval from the full governing body, which outlines all of our measures in formal documents. We have put this information letter together, about the key arrangements and measures, to provide you with some reassurance about what we have put in place and how the start of term will look and feel for you as parents/carers and your child/ren.

We must however always remember, keeping our school and children as safe as possible is a joint responsibility between school and families. In order to keep everyone safe, please make sure you continue to follow all government guidance, testing as a family regularly and keeping to the arrangements and measures outlined in this information letter. I know if we all work together we can have a very successful year for our pupils, trying to make the school experience more “normal” for them.

The very important arrangements agreed by our governors in our risk assessment are as follows:

Arriving and Leaving school:

As I stated in my final letter before the summer holidays, the start and finish times for school will once again be 8:55am in a morning for all classes and finishing at 3:20pm for EYFS / KS1 and 3:30pm for KS2.

Start of day arrangements:

At 8:45am the pedestrian gate will open for access to the playground once again, however, access is for adults with the younger pupils (EYFS/KS1) in school only. For EYFS / KS1 pupils one adult will be able to enter into the playground to look after their child/ren until the bell goes at 8:55am. The pupils will then line up in their class lines and parents must leave straight away through the driveway gate, creating a one-way system. The driveway gate will be closed as quickly as possible by 9:10am.

KS2 pupils (Class 3 to 6) will enter the school grounds without an adult and go straight to their classroom entering through the fire doors as they did last year. They will not wait in the playground and can arrive anytime from 8:45 to 8:55am but must be in class by 8:55am, for the start of the day. There will be a member of staff on duty outside each morning from 8:45 to 8:55am to ensure they are safe.

I please ask that parents make sure the pupils do **NOT USE THE FITNESS TRAIL or TRIM TRAIL before and after school** for Health and Safety - insurance reasons. Children in EYFS are not allowed on the newer fitness trail even during the school day as it is not deemed safe for them – they have their own in the EYFS outdoor area.

It is very important that adults waiting in the playground do so safely, at distance and not in groups to chat – if we find this is happening, our risk assessment will need to be looked at again and we may have to go back to only pupils entering the school grounds. I know that you will make every effort to follow the risk assessment if in the playground – thank you.



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End of day arrangements:

EYFS and KS1 pupils will be brought out at 3:20pm to meet with one adult per family only in the playground where it is expected they will all leave through the driveway gate straight away. Only if you are collecting a KS2 child can you wait safely.

KS2 pupils will be brought out at 3:30pm to meet with one adult per family only where again it is expected you will all leave through the driveway gate as quickly and sensibly as possible.

The driveway gate will be open for exiting the school grounds until 3:45pm when it will then be used for vehicle exiting and not for pedestrians. It is really important every effort is made to have left the grounds by 3:45pm if this has not been possible the pedestrian gate will be available to exit until 3:55pm when the gate will then be locked.

It is expected that adults will not use the playground as a social space at the start or end of the day, leaving as quickly as possible – we are trying to transition back to the usual start and end of day arrangements however if we feel that this is not allowing for us to maintain safety then the risk assessment will have to be looked at again and the playground may not be used.

Over the first few weeks, senior leaders will be assessing whether the new arrangements are maintaining safety levels or if too many adults are gathering and we need to look again with our governors at the arrangements. I know some local schools are maintaining the arrangements from last year, with drop offs at gates only to try to keep everyone safe but I would like to try to use the grounds in a safe way this year.

Uniform:

All pupils will be expected to wear full uniform to school from September, this includes plain back school shoes or plain black trainers with no big logo designs and they must have black laces. On their PE day the pupils must wear their PE kit to school – School PE T-Shirt, School PE shorts or **plain black** tracksuit bottoms, a school jumper and trainers. They will bring their black pumps only on PE days and will not be changing into them each day (these cannot be left in cloakroom which must be emptied at the end of every day for a careful clean). Each day pupils must bring a coat for playtime/lunchtime outside, a lunchbox if having packed lunch, a water bottle and a SMALL bag / school book-bag for their reading book and to bring homework or essential paper letters home. The coat, lunchbox, water bottle and bag must be brought home daily so the cloakroom is emptied.

Drinks:

Children should have their own named water bottle in school so that they can drink water through the day. This will be returned home for a thorough clean and needs to be brought back to school so that the children can access water across the day. They are not allowed to bring juice, warm tea or any other drink – it is water only please.

Break Times:

We have decided to keep break times separate for KS1 and KS2 pupils so that we have a reduced number of pupils interacting and we believe this change has been very positive for the pupils.

KS1 break will be 10:30 – 10:45am/ 2:15 – 2:30pm and KS2 break will be 11:00 – 11:15am

When the pupils are outside they will be able to interact with pupils in different classes as we are not being restricted by class bubbles in the latest guidance unless we have an outbreak. In that situation we will be guided by the Director of Public Health to put our Outbreak Management Plan into place, which means school will become more like the last academic year.



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Lunchtimes:

Reception – at 11:30am children in Reception will go into the hall for their lunch (30 mins) and then use the EYFS outdoor space for a 30 minutes playtime before beginning the afternoon session at 12:30pm. We believe that the separate sitting for the youngest pupils was very successful and aim to keep this moving forward.

There will be a 15-minute cleaning slot once the Reception pupils leave the hall.

KS1 and KS2 will have lunchtime from 12:15 – 1:15pm

There will be two sittings:

One sitting will be for KS1 classes plus Class 6, and the other will be Classes 3, 4 and 5.

When one sitting is in the hall having lunch for 30 minutes, the others will have a 30-minute playtime outside.

This means that all pupils will be able to have their lunch in the hall once again and we will have a lunchtime that lasts an hour again.

Hygiene:

We will continue our careful focus on pupils and staff regularly cleaning their hands through handwashing or with sanitizer across the day. We have sanitizer units in all classrooms and in shared areas such as the hall and corridors. We will also continue with the “Catch it, Bin it, Kill it” response to hygiene encouraging children to use tissues and throw them away safely. If your child does have a runny nose or sneezes regularly please remember to send them with tissues.

Cleaning:

Each classroom has its own cleaning equipment which is used across the day to wipe surfaces and high touch points such as door handles and light switches.

Other areas of school that have enhanced cleaning during the day are the pupil toilets straight after lunch by our caretaker Mr Senior. The whole school is cleaned every afternoon, after school by our super team of cleaners who are from Kirklees Contract Cleaning, led by Mr Senior.

Equipment:

The government guidance does not recommend that we need to have individualised equipment this year and so the equipment will again be shared within a class such as pencils, rubbers, sharpeners and rulers. Chromebooks are allocated to each phase such as KS1, LKS2 and UKS2 to reduce sharing of devices and fairness of provision. Reading books will once again be sent home each week as they have always done and changed on a specific day – this information will be shared by the class teacher in the coming week.

Organisation of Seating:

The latest government guidance does not make any suggestion as to how the tables and chairs are arranged and that will now be the decision of the class teacher once again, ensuring the best learning environment for the pupils in that specific class. Some teachers may choose to have tables in groups once again.

Illness:

Please do not bring your child to school if they are displaying any symptoms of COVID19. If a child develops symptoms of COVID19 at school, we will ring parents immediately and the child will be taken to wait away from all other children in the medical room until they are collected. We will not expect them to wait alone due



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to their age – a member of staff who is looking after them will wear PPE and ensure they keep at a good distance wherever possible. It will be very important that parents book a PCR test for as soon as possible so that if it returns a negative result they can return to school as soon as possible. Following the latest guidance, we will not send siblings home but monitor that they do not start with symptoms. When the PCR test result from the symptomatic child arrives, if it is positive the sibling and other household members must also book a PCR test to confirm that they do not have COVID also. We kindly request this is done swiftly to eliminate the possibility of a spread across school as we are not being asked to stop the sibling from coming to school at that point. It is **VITALLY IMPORTANT** the symptomatic child does **NOT** come on the school run if siblings are continuing to come to school.

This PCR test result needs to be photographed and emailed to school – either the office or myself, whether it is positive or negative. Should the pupil return a positive result the Remote Learning Policy will begin and you will access learning resources for your child on the TEAMS educational platform, if you feel they are well enough to work. If you require support with technology during their isolation period, please contact the office.

If your child is unwell with other childhood illnesses, please ensure they are fit for school and not displaying significant symptoms as we do not want to exacerbate the possibility of an infection spread. If your child is taking medication it must be administered at home before and after school – apart from asthma or diabetes medication within a care plan. These care plans must be updated by parents and sent into school at the beginning of the year, following the usual procedures. **ONLY** if your child is taking a doctor prescribed course of antibiotic medication that is four times a day can you request the medication be given at school – this must be arranged through the school office and agreed by myself.

Communication:

Communication will continue to be through the school APP so please ensure you have this downloaded onto your mobile device(s). This will be both messages through the news section and any letters through the newsletter section. If you would like to contact a class teacher, please use the class dojo but in order to ensure we look after the wellbeing of our super staff they will reply between the hours of 8am to 5:30pm only unless they feel it is exceptional circumstances. If you need to speak to the class teacher, please phone the office and we will arrange for them to ring you either at lunchtime or after school. If you need to contact the school SENDCO – Miss Wolanski, please contact the school office.

After School Clubs:

I am really happy to share that we will once again be having a range of after school clubs for different year groups. In the first half term the after school clubs will be focused on KS2 with some lunchtime clubs beginning for KS1. The information about these will be coming out next week:

Tuesday: Archery club for Class 3 and 4

Wednesday: Multi-skills for Class 3 and 4

Thursday: Football club for Class 5 and 6

Friday: Dance club for Class 5 and 6

Places at the clubs will be limited so when the letters come out please reply quickly. The clubs will begin in week 2 up to half term. Unfortunately, with only one hall and no guarantee of dry weather we are limited to one sporting club each day.

The School Office:

The school office will remain closed at this time and you will need to contact our administration staff by phone or through email. If it is vital that you see someone in person, an appointment will be made for you to come to the office or see a member of staff. We continue to be a cashless school with the payments for lunches and after school clubs made through parent pay, so the need to access the school office is vastly reduced.



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I do hope you have found this information useful in your preparations for the start of the new school year, sorry it is quite late but I needed to have the arrangements and risk assessment agreed by the governors before I wrote to you.

Over the summer we have had many developments to the school environment including upgrades to some classrooms, new oak doors across school and new flooring. This development is ongoing and there will be further work over October half term and hopefully next summer too if budgets allow! I hope to be able to arrange a curriculum meeting, after school, for each class in the coming weeks to give you chance to meet your child's class teacher in person, listen to them sharing the plans for the coming year and also have chance to feel part of our school family once again. I know it has been a long time since you were able to visit and a lot has changed and improved over the last eighteen months that we look forward to sharing with you. Further information will come out in the coming weeks.

As a staff we are very much looking forward to having all our wonderful pupils back in school once again for the start of a new year and look forward to seeing them all on Tuesday 7th September at 8:55am.

Kind Regards

Mrs Clare Moulding (Headteacher)