*Monday 22nd February 2021*

*Dear Parents*

***February Return to School***

*I am writing to you to give you further information on our phased school reopening for Foundation Phase (infants) this week. There is also information here which relates to our Key Stage 2(junior) children. We have considered all the latest guidance and amended our advice and procedures accordingly so that we can keep everyone as safe as possible as we enter this new chapter.*

***Please take a look at the video link below which is a personal message from myself and the Chair of Governors and which includes some other important news!***

***A Special Message from Mrs Hewitt and Rachel Rees, our Chair of Governors***

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1eBQc0dkhTcxZjupv32OcdrItdytoJ5\_z/view?usp=sharing](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fdrive.google.com%2Ffile%2Fd%2F1eBQc0dkhTcxZjupv32OcdrItdytoJ5_z%2Fview%3Fusp%3Dsharing&data=04%7C01%7CHewittC23%40Hwbcymru.net%7C74c54068dba94f6c8c0808d8d679359e%7C4f3f0e52b734416494091b601d147993%7C0%7C0%7C637495163366030346%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=zY01e1waGcgQDBsDakLWj9qW%2BDHzIOv4xPzDF6hjqPE%3D&reserved=0)

I have outlined below the answers to some questions you may have.

**Are all children required to attend?**

The expectation is that all Foundation Phase children will return to school by Friday unless you have had medical advice that they should stay at home. Also if your child or anyone in your household has symptoms of coronavirus (high temperature, new persistent cough, loss of taste or smell, general unusual illness) your child should not attend.

If you or your children have anxieties about returning to school, we will work closely with you as a family to address any worries*.* If you do not feel able to return your children to school yet we will be supportive of this and will advise you on how you can keep your child learning until you are ready for them to return.

***How will I know when and at what time my child should attend?***

This information is in my Newsletter of 12th February which you will find on the website in the News section. You should also have received an email. For the first two days (Wednesday 24th and Thursday 25th ) only half of each class in Nursery – Year 2 will attend, after which they will attend full time every day (from Friday). You should now have received a message to tell you whether your children are attending on Wednesday or Thursday in this first week. If you haven’t received this please contact school directly or your child’s class teacher today.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Class** | **Start Time** | **Home Time** |
| **Nursery** | 8.40am12.45pm | 11.10am3.15pm |
| **Reception** | 8.50 | 3.00 |
| **Year 1** | 8.40 | 2.50 |
| **Year 2** | 8.50 | 3.00 |
| **ISTF** | 9.00 | 2.50 |

On-site provision for the very small numbers of families who absolutely need this, and have already booked, will begin on Tuesday 23rd February and will run from 8am – 3pm. This is only for Key Stage 2 (junior) children on Tuesday.

*It looks possible that our Key Stage 2 (junior) children will return to school from 15th March. I will keep you informed if I have any definite information on this. Fingers crossed!*

***How will the children and staff be kept safe in school?***

While there is a strict 2m social distancing requirement between adults, the guidance we have is that we do not need to socially distance between children. However, we must try to keep them from very close face to face contact. We must also keep them in class groups, with no direct contact with other classes. They will be taught and supervised by the same adults throughout the day.

* Children will be seated side by side rather than face to face.
* They will not be allowed to hug each other or their teachers.
* They will be spread out at lunch times on a staggered timetable
* There is a one-way system in corridors and visits to the toilets will be monitored to ensure there are never too many children using these areas at the same time.
* Lots of time will be spent outside as this is good for your child’s health and well-being and we have plenty of space to spread children out.
* Playtimes will be staggered so that each class can play in one large outdoor area without contact with other classes.
* Staff are required to *try* to keep some distance away from children where possible. Where this is not possible staff may wear a face covering.
* Staff will need to wear aprons, gloves, masks and visors when administering first aid or if they need to help with toileting.

***How will we monitor strict hand cleanliness?***

* On their first induction day back in school your child’s class teacher will remind your children how to wash hands correctly and thoroughly. This will be supervised as much as possible throughout the day, particularly with younger children.
* There is plenty of anti-bacterial hand soap available in toilets and in classrooms.
* As the children enter the building they will use hand sanitiser. Once children are in the building and have deposited their coats and lunch boxes they will each be sent to wash their hands, maintaining social distancing where possible.
* Although the most important thing is hand washing, hand sanitiser will also be available at the entrances to eating areas and frequent touch points such as toilet block doors.
* All staff will have twice weekly tests so that we are immediately aware of any asymptomatic covid infections in the school and you will be informed if your child’s class needs to isolate

***Does my child need to wear school uniform?***

Yes we would rather your child wore school uniform as this will help to make school feel more ‘normal’ and to make children feel part of a community of equals. They should wear clean uniform each day if possible.

Most importantly your child needs to wear footwear which they can run around in as there will be plenty of outdoor activities and we won’t be getting the children changed for these.

We will let you know when your child will be having PE lessons and we will ask you to send in children already in their gym kits with their school jumper over the top.

***What about Face Masks?***

* The wearing of face masks for children of primary school age is not recommended as they have a tendency to touch them frequently, risking poor hygiene.
* However if any child’s family feels that wearing a mask is essential in order to be safe in the school environment they will not be stopped from doing so. Well-being and a feeling of safety is of paramount importance. They will need to bring a plastic bag in which to store the mask when eating and will need a clean mask every day

***What should my child bring to school?***

We provide all the stationary and equipment your child needs and your child should have been provided with a washable see-through zip wallet or a tidy, clean tray, with all their own pens, pencils, rubbers etc. These items will never be shared. If you have bought new stationary for your child for return to school please keep this at home and use it for homework tasks.

Your child won’t need a book bag this term as we have given them each a washable zip wallet to transport reading books and homework to and from school. Apologies if you have already bought a new book bag but we feel this is a safer option in the short term. Please keep any new book bags safe, ready for when things are ‘normal’ once again!

So all you child needs to carry to school is…

* Zip wallet with reading book (and homework once a week)
* A drinks bottle
* Snack and Lunch (if needed)

***Which gate shall I bring my children in through?***

You can bring your Foundation Phase (infant) children in through either the main front gate or the St David’s Close gate. There will be a one way system in place so that you can leave the infant yard through the large gates or through the infant outdoor area to St David’s.

On-site provision will be in the Junior building. If your child is in on-site provision please use either *the junior side gate or the North Road entrance to enter and leave.* There is a Keep Left system in place on the North Road path so you can use this path to enter and leave the premises.

If you need to bring in *both* a Foundation Phase (infant) child and a child in Key Stage 2 (juniors) on-site provision please drop off your Key Stage 2 child first before waiting to enter Foundation Phase classes.

If it is *absolutely necessary* for your Foundation Phase child (infant) to be in on-site provision from 8am before going to class please note that they will need to be fully isolated from the other children before being taken to class at their start time. You will need to have booked this provision in advance.

***Where does my child wait to enter the school building?***

There are markings on the yards to show where each family should wait before children are invited into school.

Please arrive with your child only at the time you have been given as this staggered start is an important part of social distancing. If you have two children starting at different times you may need to wait in your car or in the designated place in the yard. If this is causing you difficulties staff will be on hand to help you out.

As we found last term, If you arrive at the times you have been given and not too much before there will be very little waiting and your child will be taken into school pretty quickly. This is especially important if it is raining so we can take children straight into class without delay.

***Can parents come on to the premises?***

* We know that parents of infant children and escorts will want to bring their children into the yard and this is fine as long as you stay with your child at all times.
* Please arrive to collect your children only at the time you have been given and wait a good distance from others on the yard.
* If you need to bring junior children with you to drop your infant children off, they must stay close to you, at a 2m distance from other families at all times.
* Please ensure your children stay with you at all times while waiting. They are not allowed to run around the yard, even with members of their own classes.
* Parents will not be able to have long conversations with teachers when dropping off or picking up children as we need to keep a strict 2m distance between all adults. Yellow dotted lines have been marked out at a 2m distance from infant external doors as a reminder of this. Please do not cross these lines.
* If you need to hand anything over to the class staff please place it in the box provided near this area. If you need to discuss something at length please phone school to make an appointment. Preferably the conversation could take place by phone.

***How can parents help to keep our community safe?***

We have been asked to remind parents that, despite the reopening of schools, we are otherwise still under Tier 4 restrictions. School will be operating under strict guidelines with no close contact between adults and strict hygiene routines in place. Until a further review, in order to preserve safety and to limit contact between families we would urge you NOT to do the following;

* Hold birthday parties and sleepovers for children
* Meet together to socialise after dropping the children into school
* Gather in large groups outside of school, even if the children are in the same class
* Share childcare

I’m sure you will agree that these next few weeks could be ‘make or break’ in terms of the lifting of further restrictions and we mustn’t do anything to risk another wave of infections.

*Most importantly, we want our junior children to return to school as soon as possible and need to show that the opening up of schools does not encourage parents to engage in risky behaviour.*

For the safety and well-being of everyone, we have been given a system for reporting any breaches of restrictions which we have been made aware of.

*May I assure you that our staff are also subject to these rules and Governors have asked that this be communicated very clearly to them.*

***Will there be Breakfast Club and Kids’ Club?***

I’m sorry but breakfast club will not be available until we have this phase of return to school safely established. I know this is important to some of you and I will let you know as soon as possible what the arrangements for this will be. It is possible that numbers will be limited to allow for class groups to be kept apart, as last term.

We will also let you know when we feel able to reopen Kids’ Club.

***Will my child have a normal school day?***

* We aim to make school as enjoyable, welcoming and positive as possible but to keep risks low a few things will be different;
	+ Your child’s relationship with staff will be just the same as before but please warn them that hugging will still not be allowed!
	+ The curriculum will be just the same as before but we realise that some children may need to do some catching up before they move on to new learning. *We will start from where the children are.*
	+ The first two days back this week will focus on checking on your child’s well-being, ensuring they feel secure and happy in school and reminding them of hygiene routines.
	+ Everyone will have their own personal resources but if equipment has to be shared it will be disinfected frequently
	+ No soft toys, furnishings or dressing up clothes will be used but if children in Nursery, Reception, ISTF and Year 1 would like to bring a small, soft, washable ‘cuddle toy’ in case they are feeling sad, they may do so. This will never be shared with other children and must be taken home to wash weekly.
	+ Role play areas will be used but the children will only use these areas with a small set group of children
	+ There will be a staggered timetable throughout the day which will not allow classes to mix.
	+ Computers, Chrome Books and iPads will still be used but will be disinfected between uses.
	+ There won’t be assemblies until we have worked out how to do this safely!
	+ There will be Interest Groups on Friday afternoons from next week but children will always be in a group just with members of their own class.

***What happens if a child or member of staff shows symptoms of COVID 19?***

(You will be sent an online form very soon for you to confirm that you understand our rules and your responsibilities. You only need to complete this once.)

1. If a child or member of staff becomes symptomatic (eg persistent cough, temperature, loss of taste and smell) they will be taken to our designated isolation room (not as scary as it sounds!) away from other people and will need to be collected immediately.
2. The child’s temperature will be taken, using a remote device. The isolation room will then be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected before it is used again.
3. If a child or staff member in your child’s class group has shown symptoms we will let you know so that you can be vigilant in checking for any symptoms in your child. We would ask you not to panic if this happens as it’s more than likely that the symptoms have a different cause.
4. If a positive test confirms a case of COVID 19 in the school children and staff *within the class group only* may be asked by Track and Trace to isolate.
5. In the unlikely event of an outbreak in the school (two or more linked cases) Public Health Wales will decide how to proceed.

***What about lunch and snacks?***

* *All* children will need to bring a packed lunch, a fruit snack and a drink in a plastic bottle for this first week back as no meals or snacks can be provided in school. All lunch bags and bottles should be very clean, clearly named and where possible children will need to refill their own water bottles throughout the day.
* Families entitled to free school meals will have received either a BACs payment for meals or a food parcel. This enables you to either buy ingredients for packed lunches or to use the ingredients you have been given. This payment/food parcel will stop from 1st March for infant children and school meals will resume. Children entitled to Free School Meals will be provided with a meal in school. If you pay for your school meals please ensure your sQuid account is topped up. Children can, of course bring in a packed lunch instead.
* Please continue to send in a drinks bottle and a fruit snack for your children.
* For junior children, the payment/food parcel will continue until the children return to school.
* For younger children, please send in items which they can open themselves so that we can avoid close contacts between staff and children.
* Children will eat their lunch in the hall as we have large tables which are easy to clean and make social distancing possible. Use of the hall for lunches will be staggered so there will only be a few children in there at any one time. Hygiene will be closely monitored by staff.

**Texting System**

You should have received a text last week to let you know that we are starting a new texting system this week. To receive texts, you need to download the ‘Schoop’ App to your phone, iPad or other device. When you are asked for our school ID, this is **8821**. You should then be able to sign up to receive messages for the classes of each of your children. We are having training today so will be able to give you further support with this in the next couple of days.

We will also be continuing to contact you through the website, DoJo and your sQuid email address.

*It is very important that school has your correct current phone numbers in case we need to contact you in an emergency so please contact us today if there are any changes.*

We are really looking forward to welcoming our younger children back to school and I hope it won’t be long before we have a full and final return for everyone!

May I thank you once again for your support in these very difficult circumstances. We know how hard you and your children have found these past few weeks. Routines for remote learning for our junior children will continue from Tuesday and I hope they will do their best to engage with this for just a little bit longer.

Hoping for good news on the return of our older children within a couple of weeks!

Best wishes

C M Hewitt