*Thursday 11th March 2021*

*Dear Parents,*

***March Return to School***

*I am writing to you to give you further information on our reopening for Key Stage 2 (Juniors) on Monday 15th March. There is also information here which relates to our Foundation Phase (infant) children so please read through everything.*

*It has been lovely to welcome our younger children back to school. They have settled really well which makes me very hopeful that our older children will settle well too!*

*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, and hopefully final, chapter in the return to school.*

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

**Are all children required to attend?**

The expectation is that all Key Stage 2 children will return to school on Monday 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 what time my child starts and finishes?***

All children will start on Monday at the times set out below, so that we can ensure everyone is spread out. The times are very similar to last term.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Class** | **Start Time** | **Home Time** |
| **Year 3** | 8.40 | 2.50 |
| **Year 4** | 8.50 | 3.00 |
| **Year 5** | 8.50 | 3.00 |
| **Year 6** | 8.40 | 2.50 |
| **JSTF** | 8.55 | 2.45 |

Please help us to keep everyone well spread out by ensuring children arrive as close to their given time as possible.

***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, particularly the youngest ones. 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 where possible.

* 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 will 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 day back in school your child’s class teacher will remind your children how to wash hands correctly and thoroughly. 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.

**School Uniform Grant**

You should have received an email from the Local Authority if you are eligible for a School Uniform grant. Please note this year this is open to children in Reception, Year 1, Year 3 and Year 5. You have until 30th June to reply.

***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 wipeable 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 will be giving them each a plastic wipeable wallet to transport reading books and homework to and from school. So all you child needs to carry to school is…

* Plastic 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 children in through either the main front gate, the North Road gate or the St David’s Close gate. There will be a one way system in place which you and your chid should follow.

* If your child needs to walk from the infant yard to the junior yard they can take a short cut alongside the gym.
* If you enter through the main gates with your chid please leave through the small junior yard gate.
* The North Road entrance is two way but you are asked to keep left.

***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, taxi escorts and some key stage two children need 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. Thank you for your efforts so far to keep outside of this zone)
* Please also respect 2m social distancing from our Key Stage 2 teachers both at the door and in the yards.
* 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
* Travel by car to enjoy leisure time outside of your locality

***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.***

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. Sadly, we have already had to make use of this system.

*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?***

Breakfast Club will start on Monday 15th March from 8am for those who really need this facility. You should have had a message about this already and you will have seen this announced on the website.

There is a booking system for Breakfast as we need to limit numbers attending in each class in order to be able to spread out different contact groups. Please phone school by Friday lunch time each week to book your children in the following week.

***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 each child is*
  + *The first two weeks back will focus on checking on your child’s well-being, reminding them of hygiene routines, communicating high expectations of engagement in learning and informally assessing their progress.*
  + *We will take the opportunity to congratulate those children (and their families) who have worked so hard during school closure as we think this should be acknowledged.*
  + *We don’t want the children who have not completed much remote learning to worry about coming back. We realise that* *there are many reasons why they have not completed their work and we will consider Monday 15th March to be a fresh start!*
  + Everyone will have their own personal resources but if equipment has to be shared it will be disinfected frequently
  + 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.
  + Assemblies will take place with one class at a time
  + 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 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.
4. 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 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.
* School dinners will be served from the first day back
* 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 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 or the gym as we have large tables which are easy to clean and make social distancing possible. Use of the hall and gym for lunches will be staggered so there will only be two classes in there at any one time. Hygiene will be closely monitored by staff.
* Please note we are a ‘nut free’ school so please do not send your child into school with any foods containing nuts or nut products.
* Birthday Cakes – Some parents have asked if they can send in cakes for the class to celebrate their children’s birthdays. At this time I would ask you only to send in shop bought, individually wrapped items. Not so nice, I know, but safer!

**Texting System**

To receive texts, you need to download the ‘Schoop’ App to your phone. 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.

Many of you have done this already. Please note you must click on the link you have been sent to complete the registration process. This will help us to contact you quickly if we need to.

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 older children back to school and I hope it won’t be long before everyone is settled back into their classes ready to enjoy the final term of the year together! 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 months.

Best wishes

C M Hewitt