



INFORMATION REGARDING FULL SCHOOL REOPENING ON SEPTEMBER 2nd 2020

Dear parents & carers,

Firstly, I just want to say how pleased I am to be writing this letter at a time when we are in a safe enough position to welcome all of our children back to school. We are very excited and eager to get all of our children back into good learning habits as quickly as possible. I am sure, like me, you have been hearing and reading the vast amount of information on science, data and government guidance regarding the start of the new academic year.

As you will be aware, the government have now stated that they expect all children to be back in school from September (our term starts on Wednesday 2nd). This decision has been backed by scientists and accompanied by hefty guidance documents that I have spent the summer reading and putting into place.

We were in a fortunate position to be able to welcome back 90 of our pupils before the summer. Our staff team are relatively young, fit and healthy; we have had no reporting of symptoms within our staff team. Those final few weeks allowed us to see how school can, and does, operate effectively within the safety advice.

I fully understand that there will be very valid anxieties regarding children returning to school. Everyone's individual circumstances are different and alongside that, our views on this matter differ from household to household. I have outlined the measures put in place below for our school in the hope that it answers some questions and eases anxieties regarding returning.

Class bubbles

Just like before the summer, the children will be kept in bubbles wherever possible. The bubble arrangement has changed however in that they are now full class bubbles. The classrooms have all been arranged to be forward facing or in a horseshoe arrangement so no children are working opposite each other. Resources within the bubble can be shared, and resources shared between classes will all be sanitised or quarantined in between use.

Attendance

Attendance at school has returned to compulsory for all children. Our usual rules on attendance, absence and our reward systems are all returning to normal. After six months of disrupted education, it is more important than ever that our children make use of every school day in the coming year.

Staggered times

You should have all received text messages within the last week with your allocated arrival and collection time. IT IS REALLY IMPORTANT THAT YOU STICK TO THIS AND HELP US OUT by not arriving with other families, not coming down to school early and waiting around. Science is showing that the greatest risk in schools is from adults being close to each other, not children! We have reduced this staggered time to 15 minutes at the start and end of the day as we are protecting 9am-3pm for our children to return to their full curriculum entitlement. The one-way system on our yard remains in place.

Break and lunchtimes

Our break times will also be staggered to ensure each class bubble has their own space in which to play outside. They will also be allocated their own box of equipment which will remain with the bubble and will be sanitised each evening. At lunchtime only two classes will use the dining room at any one time, kept at opposite ends of the room. We will also be making use of the main hall for children in Key stage 2 who bring a packed lunch (again kept in class bubbles).

Symptoms

It will also be very important for parents, carers and school to remain vigilant of any symptoms of covid within any of our school community. If a child becomes ill during the school day, they will be quarantined (with Mrs Mac for company!) until collected. Government guidance on getting a test and isolating remain in place for us all. We will keep our community informed on guidance related to this as it is expected to change with the addition of usual winter illnesses as we get further into the term.

Handwashing

Just like before the summer, all pupils will be regularly timetabled and monitored whilst washing hands. This will include on arrival, before and after breaks and lunchtime and before leaving. We have bought a mobile handwashing unit for Mr Mac's class which is the only room without a sink! There is also hand sanitiser available in every classroom and throughout the building.

Toilets

Our toilets will remain limited to 1 pupil at a time for boys and 2 pupils (from the same class) at a time for girls. This is due to restrictions on use of urinals and the girls having more toilet cubicles. As we have staggered breaks, this works well as staff can monitor the usage of this at key times. If children go to the toilet during lessons, they will be asked to come out and wait if another child is in there. Our toilets will be regularly cleaned throughout the day by a cleaner on site.

Face coverings

You may have seen the recent news on face coverings in schools. This is only for secondary age pupils and our advice on face coverings has not changed. Pupils are free to wear them to and from school if this is what parents wish, however they will be handed to their adults on arrival as they pose more of a risk in our building when they are lying about. PUPILS AGED 11+, COMING TO SCHOOL ON PUBLIC TRANSPORT MUST WEAR FACE COVERINGS WHILST TRAVELLING.

Visitors to our school, who do not regularly work with our children, will be asked to wear a face covering in all public areas of the building.

Uniform and belongings

Children are to begin the new academic year back in full uniform, including suitable school shoes. They will also need to bring in correct PE kit and trainers as they will be getting changed for PE. Pupils can start bringing a school bag again for their books and belongings. We ask that packed lunches are still sent in in a hard plastic box that can be wiped down. The same applies for water bottles. We ask that pupils still consider having sun cream applied at home on warm days.

Curriculum

Our children are returning to full curriculum entitlement and every lesson will be taking place. There are a few minor restrictions within music and PE so don't be surprised if the children come home and

tell you they were singing or playing their recorders outside! The teaching staff have worked very hard to look at the potential gaps in learning due to the varied response to the remote learning provided on dojo and we will work tirelessly this year to ensure those gaps are plugged. All statutory tests return in 2021; reception children will be assessed against the early years' profile, year 1 and 2 children will sit the phonics test, year 4 children will sit a times table speed check and years 2 and 6 will do SATs in reading, GPS and maths. This is certainly not something for our pupils to be worried about; they just need to focus on returning happy and safe to school.

Clubs

Clubs are going to be an area where our usual school provision looks very different for now. As we have to remain within class bubbles as much as possible, we cannot offer clubs where children from different cohorts mix together. Our plan is to ask the children, once we're settled in, what they would like to do and run a class club one night a week. There will also be opportunity for booster sessions (particularly in key assessment year groups) to allow us to work on catching children up or stretching their skills even further.

Wraparound care

Our breakfast and tea club provision will be returning as this is a very limited number of children mixing and is essential for parents who need the childcare for work. Children accessing this provision will be kept at a distance from each other wherever possible.

Other events

Academic year 2020-21 looks like it is going to be a very different one to any we've ever experienced, and probably tougher, in a lot of ways, to the one we've just had. One of the big changes immediately will be that we cannot have whole-school assemblies for the time being. Our usual busy calendar of events will need to be re-examined and adjusted to fit in with national and local guidance. Parents' attendance on a large-scale is going to be our biggest barrier but we are determined to look for ways round any obstacles; covid will not become an easy excuse to use to simply not do things! That's not the West Rainton way and we are determined that the pupils we have, for however long we have to work like this, get just as rich an experience as those who have come before them. We also value the relationship with parents and how important it is to keep you informed of your child's progress so, again, we will look at ways round the barriers to our interaction with you. Hopefully, restrictions ease and change over the course of the year, allowing us to get back to a more normal way of running things.

Please contact me via phone, email or dojo if you have any further questions,

Mrs Alison McDonough



Dear children,

I am going to start by saying how proud I am of all of you. 2020 has been a very challenging year and I think you have coped brilliantly with all of the changes.

We are so excited to be able to start the new school year with everyone able to come in. It is going to be very different and may even keep changing as the year goes on but the important thing is that you get back to learning and playing with your classmates.

Many of you returned to us before the summer so you have seen the changes within school and very quickly learned to live with them. As we welcome everyone back, and lots of new starters, it will be really important to use your expertise to support others.

For now, I thought I would give you a few little ideas to get you prepared:

Things that will be different	Things that will be the same
You will not see very much of the other groups of children and adults in school.	You will be in a class bubble with everyone from your class.
There will be limits on how many people can use the toilets at once.	You will be taught a full timetable of lessons and won't see much difference at all in the work you do. You will get changed for PE.
There are cool looking stickers all over the floors and wall to show us what 2m looks like, and a one-way system in corridors. This only applies in public areas.	You will be seated with your class for lessons and lunch. Lunch will return to the dining hall or main hall.
We will not be able to meet as a whole-school for assemblies but there will be other arrangements in place.	You will be able to play in the outdoor areas safely.
You will have your own set of resources and equipment. Other things in the classroom may need cleaning down more regularly.	You can have your school dinner or packed lunches sitting safely with your friends indoors or outdoors.
We can't have trips, clubs and events with parents in school just yet. Clubs may have to be within your class.	You will get back into a routine where home and school are separate. You are expected to attend every day!
You will wash your hands- a lot!	School will be a fun and happy place to be!

We have always been a fabulous team here at West Rainton Primary, and this year we need to help and support each other more than ever before. We need to attend school every day and work hard in all lessons but, most importantly, we need to have fun and enjoy our safe and happy school again.

I can't wait to see you all on September 2nd!

Mrs Mac