Date: 11/08/20

**August Update on Pupils Returning to School**

Dear Parent and Carer,

I hope that you are all safe and well and have had a lovely summer.

As you were notified last week, our pupils are returning to school through a managed return this week, as follows:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **School:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Date**  | **Managed Return Arrangements**  |
| Tuesday 11 August  | Inset Day, school closed to all pupils  |
| Wednesday 12 August  | Primary 1 pupils only  |
| Thursday 13 August  | Primary 1, 2 and 3 pupils only  |
| Friday 14 August  | Primary 4, 5, 6 and 7 pupils only  |
| Monday 17 August  | All pupils from Primary 1-7  |

 **Nursery:** Information was posted all to parents/carers at the end of June advising of arrangements for the managed return/start dates of all Nursery class pupils. These arrangements are still in place and Nursery pupils should attend at the dates/times specified on your individual letters.  |

This letter outlines some additional arrangements which have been made to ensure the safe return of all pupils and staff.

***\*Please note that should the school be required to implement a blended approach classes assigned in June will be reinstated\****

**P1 First day Wednesday 12th August 2020**

I fully the appreciate the significance of your child’s first day of school. However due to restrictions parents and extended family will not be permitted into the school building as has previously been allowed. I would regretfully also ask that that **only parents/carers drop off and collect their child** to avoid a large gathering.

On Wednesday morning only, P1 parents/carers should bring their children to school through the playground, and the pupils will be welcomed into the classroom by the class teacher from there. Pupils will be collected from this same area of the playground at the end of the day.

Please ensure that whilst in the playground a 2m physical distance is observed between you and all others who are not from your household.

To further minimise congestion on Wednesday, P1 pupils will have staggered start and finish times as follows:

* Those pupils whose surnames begin with letters A to M should arrive between 9.00am and 9.15am, and be collected between 2.30pm and 2.45pm
* Those pupils whose surnames begin with letters N to Z should arrive between 9.15am and 9.30am, and be collected between 2.45pm and 3.00pm

From Thursday, as other classes begin their return, no adults will be permitted into the playground with the exception of **ONLY P1 parents who will be permitted to enter the playground to collect pupils at the end of the day.** Staff will be there at school gates to support with arrangements at the start and end of the day.

**Arrangements for Accessing and Exiting the School**

In response to the Deputy First Minister’s statement on 30th July, arrangements for accessing and exiting the school have been updated. Schools are required to ensure that large gatherings of people are avoided and physical distancing between adults and children of different groupings is maintained.

To ensure your child and all in our community continued health and safety**, from Thursday, 13th August, pupils will enter the school via either of the two gates at the main playground and will go directly to their line where they will be met by their teacher**. They will not be allowed to mix with each other in the playground before school starts. Staff will only be in the playground from 8.45am and I must emphasise that **you should not drop your child off before this, as they will be unsupervised**. I would be grateful if relevant information regarding drop off and pick up could be passed onto grandparents, childminders etc.

A staggered entry and exit system will be in place for all pupils as follows:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Classes** | **Entry Time** | **Exit Time** |
| P1, P3, P5, P7 | 8.50am | 2.50pm |
| P2, P4, P6 | 9.00am | 3.00pm |

At the end of the day arrangements should be made to meet your child out with the school grounds (with the exception of P1 parents as above). Children will leave the building and proceed to exit the grounds via the gates at the main playground as per the drop off arrangements in the morning. **Please ensure your child knows where to meet the adult who is collecting them.** I would suggest that parents of older children arrange a safe meeting point further away from the school so that this leaves more space for parents with younger children. I would also ask that that only 1 person drop off and collect each child/family.

**Again, please adhere to social distancing whilst waiting to collect your child.**

Please note that there will be no Breakfast Club or after school Clubs running on our return in August, until further notice.

Please remember:

* The school car park will **ONLY** be available for staff and blue badge holders
* The Drop Off Zone within school grounds will **not** be in use
* Please park and stride from surrounding streets
* A one way system will be in operation for those pedestrians entering via the main gate at the car park.
* Please do not congregate, particularly in areas where others need to pass.
* No unplanned access to the school buildings or grounds will be permitted for parents and visitors. Any contact with the school should be made by telephone or email to the office in the first instance. Please note that this includes your child’s forgotten packed lunch, snack or water bottle. The school will provide your child with these items should you forget. Our Office Staff will not accept/handle any late items.

I know that this is such a big change for us all, but it is vital that we all do everything that we can to ensure that the school operates as safely as possible. I therefore ask that you respectfully adhere to all the information to ensure the health and safety of not only yourself and your child, but also the health and safety of all children and adults in the school community.

**Staggered Break and Lunchtimes**

Guidance from the Scottish Government advises that, wherever possible, efforts should be made to keep children and young people within the same groups for the duration of the school day. Children, therefore, will be required to stay with their class mates all day and will eat and play with each other. Contact between classes will be minimised.

Consequently it will still be necessary to stagger both Breaks and Lunchtimes to ensure that children are safely adhering to their groupings. The playgrounds will be divided into zones and each class will be allocated an individual zone to minimise contact between classes.

The process for lunch service will be as follows:

* Pre-ordering will continue in the same way
* Payments via ParentPay will continue.
* Pupils who wish to purchase milk with their lunch should bring the correct change of 20p which will be placed into a collection jar beside the lunch counter. They may pay £1 for a week if that is preferred.
* Pupils with special dietary requirements or allergies will continue to be catered for. Please advise the school office immediately if your child has any allergies. In this case you must complete the necessary documentation.
* Packed lunches are allowed.
* Hands will be washed/sanitised before and after eating.

For the foreseeable future, each class will be designated set dining tables to eat their packed lunch or school dinner. Classes will enter and leave the eating areas at the same time. These will be cleaned by catering staff between each sitting.

Primary 1-3 will continue to receive free school meals as will any child who has an entitlement. Please visit the South Lanarkshire Council website for further information about how to apply for free school meals and clothing grants.

Children must bring their own filled water bottle for use during the day. Communal water areas can be accessed if required with the requirement to sanitise hands before and after use.

Facilities Services have produced the menu for the new school session.

School: <https://www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk/info/200259/education_benefits/291/school_lunches/2>

Nursery: <https://www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk/info/200184/early_learning_and_childcare/1855/nursery_lunches_and_snacks>

This will also be posted on the school and South Lanarkshire websites.

**Uniform**

As previously communicated, we are very proud of our uniform and it remains unchanged for August. We feel this is important as, with so many changes being put in place, we want to create the most authentic school experience we can under present circumstances and our uniform plays a big part in our school identity. We recognise the need for regular changing and washing. We will be engaging in outdoor learning and all PE lessons will be out of doors. For these reasons pupils can wear polo shirts with their school trousers /shorts/ skirt pinafore. Shoes should be black and suitable for outdoors as they will not be changed.

Please ensure your child is dressed appropriately for the weather. If it is sunny please apply suncream in the morning.

Pupils will be sitting at their individual desks and their blazer/jacket will hang over their seat.

Your child should also come to school with a school bag, filled water bottle and healthy snack. Children may bring stationery for their sole use but **should not bring any toys to school or share any of their personal belongings**. Please label all items with your child’s name.

Any resources, lunch boxes etc will remain in your child’s school bag in the classroom and will leave with your child every night.

**Hygiene in the School Building**

Please be assured that all South Lanarkshire Council cleaning procedures have been followed. Risk Assessments and Safe Systems of Work are updated as required. Every class has a soap dispenser and hand gel. Children will use these on entering the classroom and at other appropriate times during the day. Hand gel will also be available at every access point in the school.

Cleaning products used meet the BS 14476 standard for enveloped viruses and all touch points and surfaces in establishments will be cleaned daily. This includes desks, tables, switches, door handles, handrails & push plates, and sanitary ware.

In addition to this, the janitorial daily workplan has been revised to allow time for increased disinfecting of high-density touch points during the day. This will take place after 9am, morning break and lunchtime.

Every Wednesday an electrostatic spray will be used in all classrooms and used areas within the building.

Toilets will also be cleaned regularly throughout the day and will be monitored at break times.

**Vulnerable Pupils**

There is some wider evidence that children, young people and adults with particular health conditions or from a Minority Ethnic background who are infected with COVID-19 seem to be at higher risk of severe disease. If you feel your child falls into these categories and requires additional protection then please contact the school so that we can discuss your concerns and support your child.

**Physical Distancing**

As per the Scottish Government guidance, children do not have to physically distance while in school. However, we will encourage physical distancing where possible to further minimise any risk. In addition, we will avoid bringing children together in large groups such as school events or assemblies. Physical distancing will also be in place between staff and children where possible and some staff will use face coverings.

**Face Coverings**

The school will support anyone (child or adult) wishing to wear a face covering in school.

As per Scottish Government advice, where adults cannot keep 2m distance and are interacting face-to-face for a sustained period (about 15 minutes or more), face coverings will be worn.

**Staying vigilant and responding to COVID-19 symptoms**

The whole school community should be vigilant for the symptoms of COVID-19, and to understand what actions they should take if someone develops them, either onsite or offsite. The most common symptoms are:

* new continuous cough
* fever/high temperature
* loss of, or change in, sense of smell or taste (anosmia).

All staff working in the school, along with the children in their care, will be supported to follow up to date health protection advice on household or self- isolation if they or someone in their household exhibits COVID-19 symptoms, or if they have been identified by NHS contact tracers as a close contact of someone with the virus. It is essential that people do not attend school if symptomatic, but instead self-isolate (along with their household) and follow guidance on NHS Inform and from Test and Protect.

All children and staff must know that they must inform a member of staff if they feel unwell with symptoms of COVID-19. If the individual affected is a child, parents/carers will be contacted and asked to make arrangements to pick the child or young person from school (preferably this should be another adult member of their household and not a grandparent) and follow the national guidance for households with possible COVID-19 infection including testing and self-isolation.

Our Support for Learning Base has been identified as an isolation area in the event of a member of staff or pupil developing COVID 19 symptoms.

**What Learning will look like**

Following Scottish Government guidelines, children will focus on Numeracy, Literacy and Health and Wellbeing and will work outdoors whenever appropriate.

**Other Practicalities**

* Extensive Risk Assessments have been developed with South Lanarkshire Council
* Everyone will be encouraged to walk on the left hand side of corridors at all times
* Initially, movement around the school will be very limited. No assembly, ICT, etc and will be reviewed as further guidance becomes available.
* All PE will be out of doors.
* As per SLC advice, there will be no Breakfast Club, Lunchtime or after school clubs for the foreseeable future.
* There will be no blended learning as pupils are returning to full time education but there will still be homework! Homework may take the form of online learning/Google Classroom.
* Any reading books, paper resources etc. which are sent home will be quarantined for 72 hours before being used again
* Posters will be displayed highlighting social distancing and hygiene.

I am aware that this updated letter contains a tremendous amount of information regarding children returning to school but it is intended to reassure you that your child will be safe on their return to full time education.

Although the present situation appears more hopeful, we are still facing extraordinary restrictions and challenges at this time but if everyone works together as a school community and adheres to the guidelines contained in this letter everyone: pupils, parents and staff should remain safe.

I would urge you to use the school website, school app or Twitter to keep up to date with school communication. These will be the main sources of communication from the school. Please also ensure your ParentPay email account is up to date and checked regularly.

The staff and I very much look forward to welcoming our children back into the St. Mark’s School family.

In the meantime, please continue to take care and stay safe,

Yours sincerely

Mrs Elaine O’Donnell

Head Teacher

