

# Newsham Primary School Blyth

Warwick Street, Blyth, Northumberland. NE24 4NX

Tel: 01670 353124 Email: [admin@newshamprimary.northumberland.sch.uk](mailto:admin@newshamprimary.northumberland.sch.uk)



Headteacher: Mrs. Anne-Marie Armstrong

28<sup>th</sup> August 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

We are really looking forward to welcoming your children back into class; we have really missed them and you. Thank you for your patience and support as we make our final arrangements to support the full reopening of Newsham Primary School next week.

Since I last wrote to you, I have formulated a comprehensive updated risk assessment and action plan. This is based on the very latest government guidance adapted to suit the physical layout of our school, the staffing capacity, and the wider needs of Newsham Primary.

In practical terms, I am sure you will be aware that Newsham primary School will be fully open to pupils from Wednesday, September 2<sup>nd</sup> and apart from the separate arrangements for children in Nursery and Reception classes, all children will be expected to be back in school from that date.

I can understand that the reopening of school will result in a wide range of emotions from delight and excitement to nervousness and uncertainty. It is my job as Headteacher to try and maximise those positive emotions and do whatever I can to remove the worries and concerns where they exist.

My experience, as Headteacher over many years, tells me that clear, open, and honest communication is fundamental to fostering confidence and support from everyone involved in the life of the school. This will be backed up with a willingness to listen, acceptance of feedback and where possible, modification of arrangements if necessary. I promise that myself, staff and governors will continue to operate according to these principles of communication and put the children at the centre of all decision making as always.

Please read the practical points listed below that will help to ensure everybody enjoys a safe and happy return to school next week.

- Attendance is compulsory for all pupils from September and school reopens on **Wednesday, September 2<sup>nd</sup>**.
- **School lunches MUST be ordered through 'School Grid' (our online booking system). Teachers are no longer able to order lunches for the children at registration time in the classroom.**
- Parents / carers need to **complete their child's Annual Blanket Consent form. The form can be found on the school website, in the 'About' section under 'Additional Information for Parents'.** Please ensure that this is completed in full for each child in school before Wednesday.
- PE will take place outside wherever possible and **we would like each child to bring a pair of trainers in a named bag that can be used on a daily basis for our outdoor work.** Children will need to remember to bring them home each weekend.
- **Only one parent or carer should bring their child / children to school**
- **Drop off and collection times must be prompt and punctual.** We will not have time to deal with late arrivals as children from other year groups will be arriving. Gates will need to be locked for security and parents should ring school for advice if they are late.
- **No parents or carers may come onto the school playground or into the school building without a prior appointment.** Staff will collect children from the appropriate gate (and for KS1 parents and carers, from the path on the school field).
- **Parents and carers must not linger at the school gates** once their child has been handed over to school staff. We will mark out the "no waiting zones" on the pavement.

- **Staggered start and collection times, please note slight changes from previous communication –**

<u>Year Group</u>	<u>Start Time</u>	<u>Finish Time</u>	<u>Gate</u>
Reception	9.00 am	3.15 pm	Barrier Gate
Y1	8.35 am	2.50 pm	Field Gate
Y2	8.40 am	2.55 pm	Field Gate
Y3	8.45 am	3.00 pm	Field Gate
Y4	8.50 am	3.05 pm	Field Gate
Y5	8.55 am	3.10 pm	Ramp Gate
Y6	9.00 am	3.15 pm	Ramp Gate

Mrs. Elton has tested these staggered times by walking at a slow pace around our school premises and has confirmed that these times will work for parents and carers taking children to more than one gate. I do apologise for the necessary use of multiple gates and the requirement to be very punctual but you will understand that I have made these timetabling changes to help parents and carers whilst maximizing safety for our entire school community.

- **Children must not bring personal belongings to school.** A named water bottle, and packed lunch in a disposable bag (if required) is all that should be brought onto the premises. PE shoe bags left in school weekly are allowed but no other bags unless previously agreed due to a child's care plan or additional need. More information about how reading books will be transported to and from school will follow.
- **Packed Lunch Bags** – We have purchased a large quantity of paper packed lunch bags that we can distribute to the children each week. We hope this will help you at home but if you can use your own disposable bags for the first couple of weeks until we get the first batch of bags home to you, that would be fantastic. Please ensure the disposable bags are really clearly named. The bigger and bolder the better as this will help prevent lunches from being confused with each other!
- **Uniform** - In line with the latest government guidelines and Public Health advice, children should arrive in school uniform and this should be washed as regularly as possible.
- **Bubbles** - Children will be taught in class bubbles and socialise outside in year group bubbles. Classroom furniture has all been rearranged to avoid children facing each other at tables and where possible, single tables have been organised to face the front in classrooms. Children from one bubble are to avoid mixing with children from another bubble wherever possible and staff also have to be separated from each other. I know this sounds the complete opposite from our normal life at Newsham and it will be very difficult, but staff and I will do everything we can to make sure children still feel loved and cared for.
- **Social Distancing** - Signage, staggered times and the redistribution of entrances, lunch environments and hygiene facilities have all been put in place to minimise any congestion in school for either children or adults. Assemblies and staff meetings will be conducted online, and it is unlikely that school performances, parents' evenings etc. will be held in school this term. Again, I completely understand that this does not feel like the school we all know and love but safety has to be the absolute priority and the responsibility I hold as Headteacher to maximise safety and minimise risk is one that I take very seriously. I would much rather be cautious and hope that you can continue to support the leadership decisions I am making for your children, the staff and you as our parents and carers.
- **Close Contact – First Aid and Illness** - PPE must be worn by staff whilst treating a child in close contact and hygiene measures followed after the event. The Haven and the Engine Room (which are two one of our learning spaces) have been set up as isolation rooms so that if a child displays symptoms of Covid-19 they can be kept away from anyone else. A parent or carer will then be contacted, and we will follow procedure for ensuring the child is taken from the site immediately.
- **Further Protective Measures** - Regular cleaning of used areas, social distancing, good personal hygiene, and thorough handwashing are promoted by the government guidance as being the most effective way of preventing viral spread. The school is subject to regular and comprehensive cleaning regimes and has been deep cleaned for the beginning of our new school year. I am as confident as I can be that school is ready to receive our children next week and that it is virus free. As we progress, cleaning will continue to ensure that door handles, desks etc. are disinfected and staff will wipe down areas used throughout the day. Children will need to play their part too by ensuring litter and tissues go in the bin, equipment is not shared, and hands are washed regularly.

The staff and I have worked hard to ensure that our school is as safe as it can be. We are doing everything we can to minimise the risk of viral spread and I will continue to monitor and review the situation closely, making decisions which

suit us as a school community. We will use telephone, email and other virtual communication systems to continue to keep in contact with you and would encourage you to send an email to our school admin address or phone our school office if you need any help or support during these unfamiliar times. There will be little opportunity to talk to a teacher face to face at the school gates as we need to keep these areas as clear as possible at the start and end of the day.

Finally, I really want to take this opportunity to thank you all for your constant support and faith in my leadership as Headteacher. The uncertainty we have lived with over the last six months is hopefully lessening as restrictions are lifted across the country but we all need to remain alert and be prepared for further cases of Covid-19 locally.

I really appreciate the fact that parents and carers have understood the need for my cautious, measured and carefully monitored approach to the easing of restrictions in school. Our safety record to date is highly successful and I want to do everything possible to ensure that continues when we welcome all children back to school in the next few days.

Thank you for your ongoing support.

Yours sincerely

*A-M Armstrong*

Mrs. A-M Armstrong  
Headteacher