

Newsham Primary School Blyth

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Headteacher: Mrs. Anne-Marie Armstrong

28th May 2021

Dear Parents / Carers,

Firstly, I hope that you are all fit, well and coping as can be expected during the continuation of this pandemic, which is lasting far longer than any of us could ever have imagined. The latest situation surrounding the Indian variant and the increase in cases across North Tyneside is a reminder that we all need to remain vigilant and cautious as we move forwards together.

The implications of the pandemic for Newsham Primary School has been incredibly challenging in so many different ways over the past 14 months and I am incredibly grateful to you all for the support and encouragement you have extended towards everyone in school during this time. We have been significantly affected by positive cases of Covid-19 and the number of children and staff having to self-isolate has had a tremendous impact across school.

I hope you have all felt supported by staff and leaders throughout the pandemic and that you have received everything you have needed from us in all aspects of school life. Whilst it has been wonderful being able to be back together as one community since March 2021, we have to deal with the academic regression, uncertainty and anxiety that our children have experienced as a result of Coronavirus and the unfamiliarity of a world that has changed beyond recognition. The routines and structures in school have helped everyone but we still need your support and continuing to adhere to our systems and structures is going to be extremely important in the weeks and months that lie ahead.

As Headteacher, I make no apology for progressing with caution while things remain so uncertain. For example, I want to be really honest and let you know for example that I have no current plans to bring parents and carers back onto our school site or to reintroduce Breakfast Club or After School Club. These clubs involve children mixing from different bubbles and this is not a risk I am currently prepared to take. I am hoping that the next national update on June 21st will signify a further easing of restrictions but the day-to-day organisation of Newsham Primary School remains my responsibility and I am not even able to confirm at this stage that some of the restrictions I have put in place for everyone's safety will be lifted in September. With this in mind, I fully appreciate the faith you have in me as Headteacher and that the decisions I make will have the health and safety of the school community as the absolute priority.

I am attaching the latest risk assessment for Newsham Primary School to this email so that everyone can see the detail that supports my decisions. The risk assessment will also be uploaded to our school website.

In terms of the information you need in readiness for the final half term of the academic year, which begins on Monday, June 7th and in an effort to keep this letter to a reasonable length, I will detail the main information in bullet points below:

- School closes for half term on Friday, May 28th. Staggered start and finish times still apply and all staggered arrangements and school entry and exit points will be maintained throughout next half term.
- Only one parent or carer should continue to bring their child / children to school where possible. Drop off and collection times need to continue to be prompt and punctual. We still do not have time to deal with late arrivals as children from other year groups will be arriving and / or gates will need to be locked therefore please ensure prompt arrival at your allocated time. Parents and carers must not linger at the school gates once their child has been handed over to school staff. We have marked out the “no waiting zones” on the pavement. Face coverings outside will not be required next half term unless the advice from Public Health England and / or the Department for Education changes. That said, we welcome their continued use if that provides additional reassurance.
- No parents or carers are permitted to come onto the school playground (other than via the new dedicated walk way) or into the school building without a prior appointment.
- Children should bring a water bottle to school next half term as water fountains are currently out of use and cups cannot be shared. Hydration is always important and particularly as the warmer weather approaches. Our Sun Safety information has been emailed to all families so please make sure you read and follow these protocols, as this is an area of responsibility for parents and carers.

We will continue to use telephone, email and other virtual communication systems 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 times.

I hope this letter is not negative or pessimistic. We have so much to be grateful for and Newsham remains the very special school community that we have created over time.

I really do appreciate your constant support, hope that everyone enjoys a happy and safe half term break and I look forward to welcoming all our wonderful children back to school on Monday, June 7th.

Take care and stay safe.

A-M Armstrong

Mrs. A-M Armstrong
Headteacher