Dear Parents,

Thursday 27th August 2020

**September 2020 Re-opening.**

I hope you all are well and that the summer break offered you opportunities to rest and spend time with your families. We are delighted that we can now look forward to seeing all our wonderful pupils back in school next term! We have been very busy planning, completing new and detailed risk assessments, and working out exactly what school will look like and feel like when your child returns.

Arrangements and dates

Firstly, an update on our wider opening. Thank you to all of the children and parents who brought their children back to school in July and who followed our arrangement so carefully. You made it an incredibly smooth transition - it was such a joy to see smiley children returning to learning.

The school is now ready to open fully for all children. Below, I have listed the key dates in September:

* Tue 1 September- Reception Children return to school.
* Wed 2 September – Reception and Year 6 children in.
* Thu 3 September – all children return to school.

Attendance

Attendance will be mandatory in September as the government expects all pupils to attend school. The usual school procedure regarding attendance and punctuality will apply, meaning we’ll be recording attendance and following up on any absences.

The Government has stated: ‘Given the improved position, the balance of risk is now overwhelmingly in favour of children returning to school. For the vast majority of children, the benefits of being back in school far outweigh the very low risk from coronavirus (COVID-19)’.

However, if your family is isolating, we shall continue offering learning resources via the Google Classroom or Dojo for those pupils who temporarily have to isolate at home.

**A summary of the arrangements for parents and families.**

We know that parents and families will have lots of questions about the reopening of school next week. We have used the Government Guidance to develop an action plan and carry out a risk assessment. This will be made available on the school website, in the ‘Key Information’ on the School page.

To help parents and families understand the actions we are taking to help keep everyone safe and our expectations of everyone, the information below summarises the main points in the risk assessment. We hope you find this information useful:

**When will the children start back at school?**

* Children in Reception start back at school on Tuesday 1st September.
* Year 6 return to school on Wednesday 2nd September
* All children back in school on Thursday 3rd September.

**Do they need to wear uniform?**

* Yes, we always expect all children to wear full uniform.
* Children will not need their PE kit in the first few weeks because we have adapted the way we will teach PE, but they will need to have a pair of trainers to change into. The trainers can be left in a bag, in their locker. Year 5 and 6 can come in their outdoor PE kits on their PE days.
* Children are permitted to bring a bag to school; however, they are not allowed to bring unnecessary items from home. They must only bring a water bottle, trainers, suncream, sunhat and other necessary items; all items MUST have your child’s name clearly marked on them.

**What happens if I need to use public transport to travel to school?**

* If you use public transport to travel to and from school, all adults and children over the age of 11 must wear a face mask. The advice for primary school children is not to wear masks in school.

**How should we travel to school?**

* We encourage all parents to walk or cycle to school to reduce congestion, help the local environment and improve the children’s fitness.

**What measures are in place to reduce mass gatherings of parents and children at the start and end of school?**

* Staggered start and finish times will be applied for all children (please see below). To make this easier for everyone, we have divided all children in families into two groups:

**Timings for September**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Start time | Pick up time | Entry/Exit to school via Gate by Reception class  Red Group | Entry/Exit to school via Side gate by Head’s office  Blue Group |
| 8.40 | 2.50 | Year 3 | Year 2 |
| 8.50 | 2.55 | Year 5 | Year 4 |
| 9.00 | 3.00 | Year 1 |  |
| 9.00 | 3.10 |  | Year 6 |
| 9.15 | 2.45 | Reception |  |

* Red and Blue groups will take a different route in and out of the school site and each year group will have different start and finish times. It is essential that parents be on time as government guidance states that classes/bubbles should not mix where possible. **If you are late then you will be asked to wait until all classes have gone in (i.e. 09.20).**
* If you have children in more than one class, then children can be dropped off at the earliest time and go straight to their classes. **Parents cannot accompany the children into the classroom.** For pick up, parents with siblings in other classes can wait (social distancing) on the grassy area in the staff carpark until the children are released. We will continue with the one-way system in place at school and parents are asked to enter the school via the small blue gate overlooking the front playground and leave via the staff carpark gate.
* Parents must not congregate on or around the school site before or after school. All adults must always maintain social distancing to reduce the chance of transmitting the virus and because they are role models for the children demonstrating how to behave in public places. Adults waiting to collect children must wait in the designated space either the front playground or the staff carpark. It is essential that all children arrive and leave at their designated start or finish time.

**I use a childminder to drop-off and collect my child, what arrangements are in place for them?**

* The childminder must drop-off and collect your child according to the above timetable. It is the responsibility of parents to share the details with childminders and make sure they are clear about the arrangements.

**What hygiene measures are in place? What are you doing to keep the school clean?**

* We have hygiene kits in each classroom, including cleaning products and equipment. Surfaces are cleaned regularly, and all equipment is cleaned in between use.
* We will conduct an additional ‘midday’ clean as well as cleaning in the morning and after school.
* We have removed lots of the equipment and items from the rooms to ensure surfaces are easily cleaned.
* Most soft furnishings have been removed from classrooms.
* Children are expected to wash their hands multiple times throughout the day; members of staff will be available to support and supervise handwashing where it is appropriate, and we have visual reminders in all the toilets and sink areas about good handwashing.
* We have plenty of tissues and remind children about good nasal hygiene.
* We have supplies of hand-gel throughout the school.

**How will you make sure children are socially distant with each other?**

* Children have been organised into class groups that will stay with each other for most of their time in school. You may have heard them being referred to as ‘bubbles’.
* All bubbles as much as possible will maintain social distancing from each other.
* Playtimes will be staggered so that fewer children are outside the classrooms. This way, the groups will not routinely mix with each other. Each group will have their own play equipment in their zone and their supervising adult will initiate games with the children.
* Children will not move around the site as much as they used to.
* We recognise that social distancing with the younger children is a challenge so we will remind them regularly about it, but we cannot guarantee that it can be maintained with the younger children. The government guidance states that schools do not need to insist on social distancing with the younger children. We want our children to learn through play and interaction with others.

**How will staff social distance?**

* Staff will continue to maintain 1m+ social distancing wherever possible. Our staffroom will not be used for staff to congregate and our school office is out of bounds to all but a few members of our team.
* We will not allow visitors or parents into the school building to maintain good social distancing, however, we are still available to talk to parents either over the phone, email or online meetings such as Zoom.

**What will the classrooms look like?**

* The classrooms do look a bit sparser than they usually do, this is so that the surfaces are easily cleaned.
* In Years 1 to 6, the desks have been arranged into front facing rows.
* Teachers are planning learning activities that reduce the need for close face to face interaction.
* Adults will give feedback to the children at the adults’ level rather than the adult moving to the child’s level.
* In Reception and Year 1, we will allow a more ‘free flow’ approach to the provision so that the children can learn through play. In Year 1, the children will sit in front facing rows as part of their transition from Reception. They will be allowed to sit in small groups but will be expected to distance themselves as much as possible.

**What equipment will be available to the children? What will they need to bring from home?**

* All children will be given their own stationery set with their own equipment because they are not allowed to share equipment such as pens and pencils.
* Any equipment that does need to be shared will be cleaned thoroughly in between uses.
* Children will be expected to bring a named water bottle to school. This will stay on their desk to reduce movement around the classroom.
* Reading books will be sent home once per week. They will be cleaned after they have been returned.
* Children must bring a pair of trainers to change into before PE lessons; these trainers can be kept in school but do not replace the school shoes. PE Kit is not required when we return in September because the spaces we have for children to change into their kit are very small and we cannot maintain any distancing. We hope to be able to re-introduce PE kits as soon as possible and will update all parents on this in the Autumn Term.

**Do the normal rules and expectations still apply?**

* Absolutely! We have very high expectations for behaviour and attitude at Holy Trinity and we expect all children to meet our expectations. Some children may need additional support and guidance to meet the expectations and we have a team of staff who can provide this.
* It would be very useful for parents to begin to talk to their child about the school routines before the start of the Autumn Term.

**How will you make sure the children settle into their new class and teachers? How are you going to support their wellbeing after such a difficult time?**

* The activities for the first two days of term will be planned to support the transition for everyone. We understand some of our children will not have been in school for over five months, so the teachers are planning to take their time to make sure the children can settle in.
* The week commencing 7th September is going to be Wellbeing Week. In Wellbeing Week, the whole school will focus our energy and thoughts towards strategies for supporting our wellbeing and character strengths. Lots of discussions and activities will take place to give pupils the opportunity to explore our school values and how they can help us with our wellbeing. It will help to re-establish relationships, and to set the tone for the rest of the term.
* Many members of our teaching team have completed a mental health and wellbeing qualification to support our children. We have used this training to help us to plan how we will support all the children from September.
* We are also lucky to have two qualified SENCos, Mrs Bates and myself, and we will be working closely to ensure that we help any child who is anxious or worried. If you are concerned about your child returning to school, please contact the school office (either by email before 1st September or by telephone) and either Mrs Bates or I will be happy to speak to you.

**How will you help the children to ‘catch up’?**

* Our priority initially will be around wellbeing and health.
* When the children have settled in, their teachers will assess them all during the first few weeks and will plan support for anyone who needs additional help in Reading, Writing and Maths.
* All teachers and leaders have reviewed the curriculum and adjusted our plans so that it enables the children to repeat aspects they may need to, but also supports rapid progress.

**What will happen at lunchtime?**

* Our normal lunch menu is on offer.
* Hot lunches will be served to the children and they will eat with the rest of the children in their group/ bubble.
* Hot lunches will be served in the hall and cold lunches will be eaten either in classrooms or outside, weather permitting. All children in Reception will eat their lunch in their classroom.
* Children can bring a packed lunch; parents must ensure the lunch box is cleaned thoroughly every day.
* We do encourage all children to have a school meal because they are fresh and well balanced.
* Lunch times will be staggered to reduce mixing.
* Like morning playtime, each group/ class will have their own section on the playground, and they will not be allowed to mix with other groups of children.

**What happens if a child gets ill in my child’s group?**

* No child or adult showing signs of infection are allowed on the premises.
* Staff and pupils are required to have immediate tests if they show symptoms. If a child is sent home with symptoms, we expect parents to arrange a test for the child. We will request evidence of a negative test result (i.e. the text message from the NHS) before the child is allowed back to school.
* Thermometers will be used if any child or adult displays symptoms and their temperature will be recorded on a central Covid/ illness spreadsheet by our admin team.
* Any child who displays any symptoms of Covid must be collected immediately and we expect parents and families to make provision if they are not based in the local area during the school day. When the child is awaiting collection, they will be moved to a room where they can be isolated behind a closed door with a window, with appropriate adult supervision.
* The adult supervising the child will wear PPE clothing when dealing with a suspected case; this includes a face mask, face shield/ visor, apron and gloves.

**What if my child, or one of our family members, becomes ill?**

* If any child in school tests positive for Covid, every child and member of staff in their group will be required to self-isolate for 14 days.
* If a member of a child’s household tests positive for Covid, the child and the household members must self- isolate for 14 days. The other children and staff in the child’s group do not have to self-isolate.

**What if I live with an extremely clinically vulnerable household member? What if my child is still shielding?**

* If any families have a household member who is continuing to shield, please contact the school office before the start of term so that an appropriate risk assessment can be carried out.
* The government guidance states that all children will be expected to attend school from September, and we want to work with any parents who are worried to reassure you that we are taking every precaution to keep our community safe.

If any parents have any questions, please contact the school office and we will endeavour to answer your queries.

Everyone’s health and safety is our priority and we hope that, by reading this document, all parents and families are reassured that the school staff are taking every possible measure to create a happy, healthy and safe learning environment for all our community.

We look forward to seeing you all next week.

Lorna Buchanan

Headteacher