



24 August 2021

Dear Parent

I hope that you have had a good summer and have been able to enjoy time with family and friends. As we start the new year it is once again under the shadow of Covid, however, vaccinations are making a huge difference. The recent surge in infections is reflected in our local area and I am aware that a number of children and families have tested positive for Covid.

It is with this in mind that we will take tentative and slow steps towards a new normal in school. As with last year, we will ensure that all necessary mitigations are in place in order that the children, their families and the staff and their families are kept as safe as possible.

CLASS BUBBLES

You will no doubt be aware of the media coverage regarding “bubbles” or “no bubbles”. The DE guidance still places a duty on schools to ensure, in the event of a pupil/member of staff testing positive, that we can accurately identify close contacts. DE suggest the use of “consistent class groups” in order to do this. Therefore, we will strictly maintain our class bubbles, both inside school and in the playground, at break and lunchtime. It is my hope that, as the rate of infection in the local area eases, we will be able to relax this in the playground, allowing year groups to play together. We will keep this under close review.

HAND HYGIENE

Children will continue to be required to sanitise their hands upon arrival at school and will be directed by their teacher to either wash or sanitise their hands at regular intervals during the school day. **ALL CHILDREN ARE ENCOURAGED TO BRING THEIR OWN PERSONAL HAND SANITISER TO SCHOOL EACH DAY.**

RESPIRATORY HYGIENE

Along with good hand hygiene, good respiratory hygiene is absolutely vital. **WE WOULD ENCOURAGE ALL CHILDREN TO BRING A BOX OF TISSUES TO SCHOOL OVER THE NEXT FEW DAYS.** These boxes are kept in the classroom for use by children. As they cough or sneeze all children are encouraged to **CATCH IT, BIN IT, KILL IT.** Should a tissue not be available, all children are encouraged to cough or sneeze into the crook of their arm.

UNIFORM

I had hoped that we would be able to have a full return to school uniform, however, DE have recommended that children do not change for PE in school. Therefore, we will continue to encourage children to wear tracksuit bottoms/leggings and trainers on their PE days. Children are still expected to wear their school polo shirt and

sweatshirt on PE days and, as far as possible, I would encourage children to wear navy tracksuit bottoms/leggings.
On non PE days children should wear their full school uniform with black shoes.

SCHOOL BAGS AND LUNCH BOXES

As with last year, children can bring school bags and lunch boxes to school.

PARENT/CARERS ENTERING SCHOOL BUILDING

Our school buildings are closed to all visitors except our children, staff and visiting workers in order to minimise any possible spread of the virus. All parents will have access to Seesaw and you should use this as a means to contact your child's teacher. Please be aware that teachers will not be in a position to check Seesaw first thing in the morning or during the school day when they are teaching. You can also phone school on 028 93 353280 or use email to contact Mrs Lowry at elowry738@c2kni.net or Mr Loughins at jloughins453@c2kni.net. **If you need to leave an item at school, please use the drop box just inside the external front door.**

DROPPING OFF AND COLLECTING CHILDREN

We will maintain our one-way system in the playground. The one-way system at the Islandmagee Road entrance will remain unchanged, however, the one-way system at the Donegall Avenue entrance will be changed slightly. We cannot use the staff car park and parents will be encouraged to keep to the left on the path from Donegall Avenue to the playground. I would ask that you continue to drop your children off promptly and collect them promptly. Please do not congregate or linger in the playground. Nor should children play with any of the toys in the playground or on the climbing frames. **SOCIAL DISTANCING SHOULD BE MAINTAINED AT ALL TIMES AND ALL PARENTS SHOULD CONTINUE TO WEAR MASKS ON THE SCHOOL PREMISES.** Year 1-3 children must be collected from the playground. Year 4-7 children can be collected from the playground, however, we would encourage you to meet your child outside school and away from the school gate in order to reduce congestion.

CHILDREN BECOMING UNWELL IN SCHOOL

If your child becomes unwell in school, we will contact you and ask you to collect them. All children can be collected from the front foyer.

TESTING POSITIVE FOR COVID

Should your child test positive for Covid, please inform Mrs Lowry by email elowry738@c2kni.net. If your child tests positive for Covid outside school hours, please inform Mr Loughins on 07359 015420. This number will be operational from Wednesday, 25 August. If your child tests positive for Covid they **MUST ISOLATE FOR 10 DAYS.**

IDENTIFIED AS A CLOSE CONTACT

Your child could be identified as a close contact of a positive case, for example if a member of their household, a member of their class bubble, a member of a sports club or someone from an event they have attended, tests positive. If your child is identified as a close contact, they should isolate and you should arrange for them to have a PCR test. **IT MUST BE A PCR TEST AS OPPOSED TO A LATERAL FLOW TEST.** In order to book an appointment at a test centre or to order a PCR kit online please visit <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/coronavirus-covid-19-testing>

The closest main testing sites are at:

- SSE, Odyssey Car park, Belfast BT3 9QQ
- Antrim Business Park, Randalstown Road, Antrim, BT41 4LD

3 Islandmagee Road, Whitehead, BT38 9NE
Tel: 02893353280 Email: jloughins453@c2kni.net Website: www.whiteheadps.com
Principal: Mr J Loughins BEd Hons, Med, PQHNI

There are also mobile testing sites at:

- Carrickfergus Rugby Club, 16 Woodburn Road, BT38 8HQ
- Abbey Presbyterian Church, Jordanstown Road, Newtownabbey, BT37 0LG

If the PCR test is negative, your child can continue their activities as normal, but must have a PCR test on day 8. Should your child develop symptoms at any point during this time they must isolate and have a PCR test.

If your child tests positive, then they must isolate for 10 days. In the event that your child tests positive and is unable to attend school, we will arrange for work to be sent home.

WEDNESDAY 25TH, THURSDAY 26TH AND FRIDAY 27TH AUGUST

You have already received information regarding Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, however, I have set out a reminder below.

- Nursery & Y1 will follow their own induction programme.
- On Wednesday 25 August children will be encouraged to arrive at school at the following times:
Y2 & Y3 – 8.45 Y4 & Y5 – 8.50 Y6 & Y7 – 8.55
- On Wednesday 25 August, Y2 teachers will meet their children in the Y1/Y2 playground and Y3-Y7 teachers will meet their children in the Y5/6/7 playground.
- On Thursday 26 & Friday, 27 August all children should arrive at school between 8.45 – 9.00 am and should go directly to their class.
- On Wednesday 25, Thursday 26 & Friday 27 children will finish school at the following times:
Y2 & Y3 – 12.30 Y4 & Y5 – 12.35 Y6 & Y7 – 12.40
- **CHILDREN SHOULD BRING A SMALL HEALTHY BREAK WITH THEM EACH DAY, BUT WON'T REQUIRE A LUNCH.**

TIMINGS FROM MONDAY 30TH AUGUST

From Monday, 30 August we will move towards our “New Normal” timings as suggested in June.

All pupils should arrive to school between 8.45 & 9.00am.

Children will finish at the times set out below, which are based on our new normal but are slightly staggered.

Year 1	Follow your induction programme until Friday 17 September. From Monday 20 September Y1 will finish school at 1.45pm (Monday-Friday)			
Year 2	Monday-Friday	1.50 pm		
Year 3	Monday & Tuesday	2.35 pm	Wednesday-Friday	1.45 pm
Year 4 & 5	Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Friday	2.45 pm	Wednesday	1.50 pm
Year 6 & 7	Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Friday	2.50 pm	Wednesday	1.55 pm

SCHOOL CANTEEN AND BREAKFAST CLUB

PLEASE REMEMBER THAT ON MONDAY, 30 AUGUST Y2 – Y7 CHILDREN SHOULD BRING A PACKED LUNCH AS NO DINNERS WILL BE SERVED.

Breakfast Club and School Dinners will begin on Tuesday, 31 August.

Breakfast Club will operate from 7.45 – 8.45 am. All children who wish to avail of breakfast must be in school by 8.15 am. As a trial parents will be able to park in the staff car park and use the rear entrance to the canteen in order to drop their children to Breakfast Club. Children will be encouraged to sit in class bubbles while in Breakfast Club. In order to make Breakfast Club viable we require a minimum of 20 children per day and the canteen will keep this under review.

Breakfast Club can be booked using the School Money system on a weekly basis, similar to school dinners and the cost will be £2.50 per day. Payment will go live on the system on Wednesday, 25 August. Breakfast Club is open to all children in school including Nursery. If you would like your Nursery child to attend, please contact Mrs Lowry in the school office to enable her to ensure you are set up on School Money.

As with last year canteen lunches will be sent to classrooms in order to preserve class bubbles.

FREE SCHOOL MEALS

If you feel you are entitled to free school meals and have not already done so, please apply online using the link below.

<https://www.eani.org.uk/financial-help/free-school-meals-uniform-grants>

PLEASE REMEMBER THAT WE CANNOT PROVIDE YOUR CHILD WITH FREE MEALS UNLESS WE HAVE HAD CONFIRMATION OF THEIR ENTITLEMENT FROM THE EDUCATION AUTHORITY. MEALS WILL NEED TO BE PAID FOR VIA THE SCHOOL MONEY SYSTEM UNTIL CONFIRMATION IS RECEIVED.

AFTER SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

I had hoped to start after school activities had we been operating more on a year group bubble basis. However, given the level of infection in the local area, I have decided to postpone after school activities and this will be kept under review.

HOMEWORK

Children will complete their homework in homework books which will be provided by their teacher as opposed to completing their homework on Seesaw. Occasionally the teacher may use Seesaw for homework.

SEESAW

Teachers will continue to upload photos to Seesaw giving you an insight to your child's day in school and Seesaw will remain as the main tool for remote learning should we be forced into a school closure due to Covid.

I do apologise for the amount of information contained within this letter. If there is anything that you are unsure of, please do not hesitate to contact your child's teacher, Mrs Lowry or myself.

In anticipation I would like to thank you for your ongoing support and once again I would urge you to err on the side of caution if you are unsure whether your child should attend school or not. I want as many children in school on as many days as they can be there but I want to ensure that school is as safe as it can be, for all of our community.

Kind regards.



J LOUGHINS
Principal