

## **Wednesday September 1st 2021**

### **Dear Parents,**

## **Welcome to Autumn Term 2021**

A warm welcome back to school at the start of a new academic year, especially to any new families joining us this year. I hope you have enjoyed a restful break over the summer. The staff and I are very much looking forward to welcoming back our pupils this autumn term, and meeting our new starters in nursery and reception class. After such a challenging year for everybody last year, we understand that some children may be feeling a little bit nervous about starting their new classes next week. Please be assured that staff are aware of this and will continue to ensure that the pastoral care of the children is their first priority to enable all children to settle into their new classes well.

This letter is to update you about the arrangements for the new term. Please help us to make the opening of the school run smoothly and safely by reading the following information carefully. Just a reminder that Monday 6th September is a staff training day.

**School reopens for the children on Tuesday 7th September.**

### **Nursery & Reception classes**

Nursery and Reception classes please follow the separate advice for timings given by staff for the beginning of term.

## **Morning drop off and afternoon pick up arrangements for Key Stages 1 & 2**

### **Morning drop off**

The main gate into the playground will be unlocked each morning at 8.40am and locked again at 8.50am. The children can come into school between these two time slots, but they **must** be in their class ready for registration at 8.50am. If you arrive late, please bring your child to the main entrance where Mrs Griffiths will sign them in and take them to their class.

### **Key Stage 1 - Years 1 & 2**

Please bring your child in through the main gate any time between 8.40am and 8.50am. Your child can go straight in through the Y1/2 entrance door and into their classroom. A teacher or teaching assistant will be at the entrance door to welcome them so that you can leave promptly without needing to queue. (Miss Dixon will also be at the Y1/2 entrance on the first day, so that the new Year 1 children will recognise a familiar face.) **In the interest of safeguarding please make sure that you see your child enter the school building before leaving the school premises.** After dropping off your child, please leave the yard promptly by using the 'sports day' gate to enable us to continue operating a one-way system in the yard. (This gate will be signposted in case you are not familiar with it. Staff will also be in the yard to guide you).

### **Afternoon pick up**

#### **Pick up time will be back to the normal time of 3.15pm**

Please wait in the area just outside of the Y1/2 entrance. The class teacher or teaching assistant will ensure that your child is handed over to you safely at the end of the day. Please be patient with staff as the safety of your children is of the utmost importance to all of us.

### **Key Stage 2 - Years 3 -6**

#### **Morning drop off**

Please bring your child in through the main gate any time between 8.40am and 8.50am. Your child can go straight into the junior yard where a member of staff will be there to welcome them and guide them to their entrance. After dropping off your child, please leave the yard promptly by using the 'sports day' gate to enable us to continue operating a one-way system in the yard. (This gate will be signposted in case you are not familiar with it. Staff will also be in the yard to guide you).

### **Afternoon pick up**

#### **Pick up time will be back to the normal time of 3.15pm**

Please wait at the end of the yard to collect your child at 3.15pm. The class teacher or teaching assistant will line the class up and release the children as soon as we can ensure that someone is there to collect them. Please be patient with staff while they do this as your child's safety is of the utmost importance to all of us. The classes will be lined up with Y6 closest to the fence followed by Y5, Y4 and then Y3 will line up closest to the school building. To help the staff to release the children as quickly and safely as possible, it will be helpful if you stand roughly in line with your child's class line as this will help us to spot you more easily.

### **COVID-19 measures**

The latest schools 'COVID-19 operational guidance' issued by the DfE reflects a new phase in the government's response to the pandemic. As COVID-19 becomes a virus that we have to learn to live with, we now have to ensure that we minimise as far as possible any further disruption to our children's education. Please be assured that we will continue to follow all advice from the local Public Health board in order to keep the members of our school community as safe as possible and will keep you updated with any new developments or necessary changes. When school opens next week, we will be making the following changes to the way school operates:

#### **Mixing and Bubbles**

Our current system of separating year groups into 'bubbles' will end. Year groups will now be allowed to mix together throughout the school building, during assemblies and at break times. This will also mean that we can return to having more than one year group accessing the dining hall at the same time, so the children will no longer need to have their lunches in

their classrooms. The mixing of bubbles will proceed with caution and with everyone's safety at the forefront of decisions. If there is an outbreak in school or numbers rise significantly locally, then it may be necessary to revert to the previous bubble system for a temporary period to reduce mixing between groups. We will of course keep you well informed of any necessary changes as they arise.

### **Continuing Good Hygiene**

We will continue to encourage the following measures to minimise the spread of COVID-19:

Frequent and thorough hand hygiene should now be regular practice. We will continue to ensure that pupils clean their hands regularly throughout the school day. Hand sanitiser will still be available in all classrooms and staff will encourage the children to use this on a regular basis.

The 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach continues to be very important especially with the winter months approaching which will inevitably lead to an increase in coughs and sneezes. This message will continue to be shared with children and tissues will be available in all classrooms for children to use along with access to hand washing facilities.

Classrooms will also continue to be well ventilated and cleaned throughout the school day.

### **Close Contacts and Isolation**

Close contacts will now be identified via NHS Test and Trace and education settings will no longer be expected to undertake contact tracing.

We will continue to adhere to Public Health advice. The latest government guidance states that:

*"Individuals are not required to self-isolate if they live in the same household as someone with COVID-19, or are a close contact of someone with COVID-19, and any of the following apply:*

- *they are fully vaccinated*
- *they are below the age of 18 years and 6 months*

*Instead, they will be contacted by NHS Test and Trace, informed they have been in close contact with a positive case, and advised to take a PCR test. **We would encourage all individuals to take a PCR test if advised to do so.** Children and young people aged under 18 years 6 months who usually attend school, and have been identified as a close contact, should continue to attend school as normal."*

It is important to continue to follow Public Health advice on self-isolation. Pupils should not come into school if they have symptoms, have had a positive test result or other reasons

requiring them to stay at home due to the risk of them passing on COVID-19 (for example, if they are required to quarantine).

If anyone in our school develops COVID-19 symptoms, we will continue to send them home and instruct them to follow the latest public health advice.

The most important symptoms of COVID-19 are recent onset of any of the following:

- a new continuous cough
- a high temperature
- a loss of, or change in, your normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia)

### **Protocols**

If you have a queries, please send an email to [info@st-bedes.s-tyneside.sch.uk](mailto:info@st-bedes.s-tyneside.sch.uk) or telephone the school office on 0191 456 0108 and Mrs. Griffiths will help you or will arrange an appointment time for you to speak to me or a member of staff.

Apologies for the length of this newsletter, but I wanted to keep you well informed about all of the latest updates for the start of the new term. Thank you in advance for your continued support in ensuring that the new school year gets off to a positive start. I am excited to see the children all back in school next week and am looking forward to a happy and successful year ahead.

With very best wishes,

Carol Devine

Acting Headteacher