Friday 26th February 2021

Dear Parents/Carers,

I hope you are all well and enjoyed the half term break.

I am sure you will have seen the Prime Minister’s announcement on Monday 22nd February about the roadmap out of lockdown and it feels good to be on the way back to something like “normal”. We will all have our own opinions on whether the return is too slow or too fast, but the amazing progress of the vaccination programme gives me hope that we are on the right lines. There will, undoubtedly, be a lot of speculation in the press and on social media about how schools can open and continue to operate safely. This will almost certainly intensify over the coming days. However, we are so looking forward to having all the children back in school on the **8th March** and we will consider our actions very carefully in order to lower the risk of COVID transmission in our school.

The safety of our children, staff, parents/carers and the wider community is always our over-riding priority; the Senior Leadership team (who are also liaising with staff, governors and the Trust) are working very hard to put together plans to ensure a safe return. Over the past year, we have successfully put into place highly effective protective measures, which have been continuously reviewed and amended where needed. We are now carefully reviewing these measures to consider what else we may decide to implement.

Once again, it will require a new way of working to which everyone will need time to re-adjust. It may, inevitably cause concern for some children and parents/carers. However, if we look at the overwhelmingly positive way the children and families responded last September to returning as a whole school, we are confident that the children can do this again this time too. This is another priority we are working on; to ensure that the children coming in feel welcomed back, happy and safe. We have really missed seeing all of the children and yourselves, and we are looking forward to welcoming you all back to school. We remain committed to helping our school community feel safe and secure as we move forwards.

Restrictions that we were aiming to use following the Christmas holiday remain the same and it is crucial that we all follow these restriction particularly between now and Easter.

Please see below a list of some reminders for parents and some new restrictions that have been put in place for everybody’s safety:

* All parents that come onto the school site to drop off or pick up children **must** wear a **facemask**.
* Parents **must not** cross the new blue lines at the gates at drop off times.
* Parents **must not** cross the new blue lines at the gates onto the playground until the gates are open at pick up time.
* Parents must leave the site **promptly** as soon as they drop off or pick up their child.
* Only **one** parent/carer is permitted to accompany a child onto the site.
* Please **do not** approach members of staff with messages. Please email the **office** with any messages so that they can be forwarded onto the appropriate person. ([office@oldstratford.northants.sch.co.uk](mailto:office@oldstratford.northants.sch.co.uk)). Please do **not** use the teacher’s emails now that remote learning has finished.
* Children must come to school organised with everything they need for the day. Forgotten items **must not** be dropped off at the office.
* Hot lunches and packed lunches will be available for your children to order in the normal way.
* Please arrive at school at your allocated time. Arriving early disturbs the flow and encourages gathering in limited space.
* Please pick up your child on time, we have had a number of children picked up late which causes disruption to the rest of the school.
* Children arriving on scooters or bikes must dismount before they enter the school gates.
* Children waiting to enter school must stand either on a cross or with an adult.
* If any member of your household are unfortunate enough to test positive for COVID you must inform the school **immediately** and isolate your whole household.
* If anybody in your household develop symptoms, you must isolate the whole family until a test result comes back negative.
* If a child tests positive and has been in contact with the rest of their class 48 hours before, the whole year group bubble will be asked to isolate for 14 days.
* Siblings of children in isolated class bubbles will not be asked to isolate unless somebody in their family develops symptoms or we have been instructed by Public Health to do so.

If a class bubble is asked to isolate, the class will move to remote learning within 24 hours.

* Please **do not** send your child into school if they are poorly or are ‘off colour’. Most children who are COVID positive do not have the same symptoms as adults and could just seem slightly unwell.

Teachers and support staff are making changes too as their restrictions tighten. Staff will be testing themselves with Lateral Flow Tests twice a week to check for asymptomatic cases. Masks will be worn in classrooms when close to children and in corridors and communal areas. Staff will not be able to mix at any time for breaks, planning or any other reason. Staff will not be able to walk freely around the school but must stay in their allocated area. Staff on gates will wear masks at all times.

After school clubs will be able to resume and year groups will be kept separate. Breakfast Club will also be available for those parents that need early morning childcare.

Please familiarise yourself with the staggered drop off and pick up times for each year group.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Year group** | **Gate** | **Door** | **Drop off time** | **Pick up time** |
| EYFS | EYFS Gate ( Car Park) | External EYFS | **8.40 am** | 3.20 pm |
| Year 1 | External Year 1 | **8.50 am** | 3.30 pm |
| Year 2 | Main Front Gate  (Willow Grove) | External Y2 Door | **8.50 am** | 3.30 pm |
| Year 4 | Side door at front side | **9.00 am** | 3.40 pm |
| Year 3 | Back Gate (Dickens Drive) | Hall door | 8.40 am | 3.20 pm |
| Year 5 | External Y5 Door | 8.50 am | 3.30 pm |
| Year 6 | External Y6 Door | 9.00 am | 3.40 pm |

The government has also advised that once schools are open fully on March 8th that it will again be mandatory to send your children to school. Attendance Policies will resume.

So that the teachers can prepare for Monday 8th March, there will be **no Zoom lessons on Friday 5th March.**

Please do not hesitate to contact the school if you have any questions regarding the reopening of the school on the 8th March to all children.

At the end of the Spring Term Mr Beel, our Site Supervisor will be leaving the Old Stratford team to retire. He has worked in schools for 16 years and at Old Stratford for over 3 years. He has been a valued member of our team especially during this period of uncertainty. He has played a critical part in ensuring the school is ready and safe for the children to come back to and he will be very difficult to replace. An advert has been placed on our school website so if you know anybody who would be interested in the role please find more details on our vacancy page.

We will continue to keep in contact with you and to offer you as much support as we can during this ever-changing time and look forward to seeing you all on Monday 8th March.

Kind regards,

Mrs Sarbutts