



St White's Primary School

Challenge, Commit, Conquer and Celebrate



Monday 1st March 2021

Dear Parents/Carers

We are really delighted to be able to welcome everyone back to school on Monday 8th March 2021. I know that some of you are bound to be anxious, especially those of you who have not been into school since Christmas, so I am writing to share with you what we are planning to do to make sure that everyone is safe. During the autumn term the school developed a robust system that worked well to keep everyone safe and the 'new normal' worked very effectively with the support of all stakeholders. Once again, I would like to thank everyone for their kindness and consideration throughout the pandemic.

Bubbles

Following government advice, from next week, the school will be running with full classes as normal, and like in the autumn term, the children will remain in their class bubbles. The school will maintain a distance between bubbles at all times to reduce any risks to the children and staff. Everyone in a bubble will enter and leave their classroom through the external doors; the internal spaces of the school will be used as little as possible to reduce the risk of spreading the infection. Wherever possible PE lessons will be held outside and bubbles will have separate break and lunchtimes too. The school has a very tight timetable which utilises all areas of the site and allocates time for PE, breaks, lunches and the daily mile. Teaching staff will, where possible, remain with their 'bubble' but some will work within groups of classes (super bubbles) to enable support to be offered to individuals and groups. Some staff may have to work across a wider range of classes but they will be scrupulous about following distancing advice. All staff will manage risk effectively by using the most up-to-date government guidance and will not, for example, mix with other staff who are not in their bubbles, without strict adherence to social distancing advice.

To further reduce the risk of infection, each child from Y1 upwards will have their own pack of resources, which they will not share with others. The school is also following the government recommendation that all children should sit at tables that face 'forwards' and have sourced additional furniture to allow this to happen. The youngest children in school cannot be expected to completely understand how to socially distance and the government and school accept this. There are enhanced cleaning routines, which will ensure that infection control is as effective as possible across the school, and distancing the bubbles from each other will further reduce the risk of infection spreading.

Opening and Closing Times

The government has made it clear that all children must be back in school full-time and the length of the school day must remain the same as normal. We will return to the staggered start and finish times which worked well in the Autumn Term.

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If you have more than one child to drop off/collect, please go to the 'earliest' class and then drop off/collect your other children immediately afterwards to/from their classes. It is very important that as soon as you have dropped off/collected your children, you leave the site. This is to reduce the possibility of spreading the virus.

Arrival times:

8.30 – 8.35am – Robin, Sparrow, Heron

8.35 – 8.40am – Kingfisher, Skylark, Woodpecker

8.40 – 8.45am – Wren, Swift

8.45 – 8.50am – Nightingale, Jay, Peregrine

Pickup times

3.00– 3.05pm – Robin, Sparrow, Heron

3.05 – 3.10pm – Kingfisher, Skylark, Woodpecker

3.10 – 3.15pm – Wren, Swift

3.15 – 3.20pm – Nightingale, Jay, Peregrine

Although schools are re-opening, Government guidance at the current time is still to Stay at Home. Bringing your children to and from school is classed as an essential journey, but it should be done following all current government guidance and in a way which minimises your contact with anyone else either on or outside the school grounds. The government is particularly recommending that schools advise parents to remember social distancing rules while waiting to drop off or collect children from school.

We are asking only one parent/carer per family to drop off and collect. If you have to bring younger children with you, they must remain under close control with you at all times. We do understand that sometimes people forget and would ask that you please forgive us if we have to gently remind you of the 'new normal'. One of the real positives of the lockdowns has been the increased independence of our children. If you would like to leave your KS2 (year 3, 4, 5 and 6) children at either main gate and allow them to walk in on their own, we are very happy for you to do so. If you come to the Sneyd Wood gate, you can also do this for any children in KS1 (year 1 and 2).

When you are on the school site, we would ask you to wear a face mask unless exempt, keep to the left of all areas and paths, and keep to social distancing regulations at all times staying at least 2m from any other individuals. There are marks on the ground to help you with this including footprints showing you where to queue for the classes. The steps to the amphitheatre are one way with the slide steps going up, and the central amphitheatre steps going down

We completely understand that you may wish to have a conversation with your child's class teacher or teaching assistant. If this is the case, please will you telephone the school and we will take a message to pass on to the teacher, who will call you back if necessary, probably at the end of the day as they will be teaching. If teachers need to speak to you, they will telephone you too. This is to simplify and speed up

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the opening and closing of the school and to keep everyone safe. There will often be senior staff on the gates and they will be very happy to make a note of any message that you would like to be passed on.

After the last drop off time, the outside gates will be closed promptly. This is because of the tight timetable of PE and the daily mile – children will be using areas of the site all day and it will not be safe if parents have not left. Because the children will not be allowed to use the reception area or corridors, unfortunately, this means that if you are late, you will not be able to enter the site. No-one will be allowed to enter the school reception area at any stage throughout the day including to use the toilet or speak to the reception staff. Again, this is to safeguard the class bubbles and staff on site. This makes us very sad as we love it when we see you in person so again, please do talk to senior staff on the gates, or give us a ring if you need us for anything.

As there will be no access to the administration area of the school, it will not be possible for you to deliver anything for your child after they have entered their class. Don't worry though, because we will manage this within school making sure that your child/ren do not miss out on anything.

At the end of the day, please follow the above expectations and **collect your child with the earliest slot and then collect any other children from their classes**. Because we cannot send children out of class to the office if you are late, we would ask that you are punctual when collecting. If an emergency occurs and you will not be able to collect your child on time and you cannot make other arrangements, please telephone the school office. Children who are not collected by 3.25pm will be placed in wraparound care and you will be charged. This is really important as it is crucial that the classrooms are empty when the cleaners are working.

PPE and Testing for staff

All school staff are currently using lateral flow device tests twice a week, to ensure that anyone with an asymptomatic case of covid19 will be picked up and action can be taken to prevent transmission. Staff have been offered the opportunity to use masks and visors and some will do so at the start and end of the day when pupils arrive and leave and when working closely with individual pupils in class. Staff will also wear masks in school when it is not possible to socially distance from other adults. Masks will not be worn in class as they make teaching very difficult because they inhibit communication and the government is clear that the bubble system is sufficient safeguarding for staff and children.

Symptoms

If your child, or anyone in your household, has any symptoms of Covid-19 e.g. a temperature and/or a cough, and/or a loss of the sense of taste or smell, we would ask you not to bring them to school. If any child develops symptoms in school, they will be immediately brought to the administration corridor and you will be contacted to collect them. Testing is available for everyone and if symptoms are observed, the school will be able to direct you to where you can obtain a test. It is really important that anyone with symptoms is tested so that we can ensure that others self-isolate if necessary. For this reason, we would encourage you to engage with testing and inform the school of the outcome. If you choose not to do so,

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we will ask you to keep your child at home and isolate your family for 10 days in line with government guidance. If anyone in your household has been contacted by NHS Test and Trace and instructed to isolate, you must follow their instructions and we ask you to inform the school. This will help us keep everyone safe.

If your child suffers from hay fever we ask that they are given appropriate medication before being sent into school. To minimise the risk of exacerbating hay fever symptoms the school has arranged wherever possible not to have the grass cut during the day.

Lunches

Very sadly we will be unable to provide hot lunches because of the risk of having all the bubbles use the gymnasium to eat. Currently, there is no practical way of getting hot lunches to classrooms safely. Children will therefore eat their sandwiches in class as part of their lunchtime timetable. We are constantly reviewing this and will restore the hot lunches as soon as possible.

Children can bring sandwiches from home or parents/carers will need to contact the school office to ask for their child to have a school packed lunch. Unfortunately parents will not be able to order lunches online using ParentPay although, once you have ordered through the office, you will still be able to pay for them through ParentPay. Lunches consist of a cheese, tuna, egg or ham sandwich (please specify when ordering), a piece of fruit, some raw vegetables and/or salad, and a piece of cake or biscuit.

School lunches are free for Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 pupils and for Free School Meals pupils in other years. For other pupils we would ask you please not to allow debts to build up on ParentPay for school meals as this will be closely monitored. If you are having trouble paying your debts, please contact the office as soon as possible so that we can offer support and advice on what to do.

Uniform

The school uniform policy remains in place and we expect all children to wear full uniform. If any parents have problems sourcing uniform items, please contact the school as we have a supply of good quality second hand uniform which we can provide.

Resources

Please ensure that your child has a water bottle and PE kit in school. PE kits can be kept in school for the term to reduce the possibility of the virus being passed between here and home. If you would like to wash your child's PE kit part way through the term, we ask that you do this on a Friday - please ask your child to bring it out with them.

Children should bring back any books that they have at home on their first day back, along with any home learning work which they would like to show their teachers. Children will be able to bring a bag to school each day along with their coat, hat, healthy snack and packed lunch if required. Reading books will be sent





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home once a week, and parents are advised not to touch them for 72 hours before reading. If the forecast is sunny, please apply sun cream to your child before bringing them to school.

Most PE will be taking place outside, so we ask parents to provide trainers as well as daps and to consider providing track suit bottoms instead of shorts. If it is cold or raining slightly, children will wear their coats out for PE. Children will also be taking part in the daily mile so we also ask that all parents ensure their children have sturdy school shoes.

Clubs, Extra-curricular activities and other settings

From the week of 8th March, we hope to start allotment sessions on Wednesday afternoons – we will send a timetable out separately. Until the Easter holidays there will **not** be any before or after school clubs or activities apart from Wraparound Care (see below). We will let you know as soon as we have plans in place to start them. Government advice is that children should limit the number of different settings which they attend, and there should be no more than one other setting (apart from school) for each child. This refers to external childcare providers, and any external sports clubs, holiday clubs or any groups such as cubs, sea cadets etc. Most of these are not currently meeting face to face, but if there are any parents whose children attend more than one external childcare setting, please contact the office.

Health and Safety in School

Before leaving home, we would ask you to ensure that your children wash their hands, and on their arrival home at the end of the day. On arrival, and during the school day children will wash and sanitize their hands regularly and be taught to cough or sneeze into their elbow or preferably a tissue washing their hands afterwards. We will use the 'Catch it. Bin it. Kill it' slogan to educate children about how to keep safe and we will teach them about social distancing in a way that is age appropriate.

In classes, children from Year 1 upwards will be able to sit, side by side, facing forwards. To reduce the risk of spreading the virus further any resources used will only be shared within bubbles and will be washed regularly to minimise risk.

We know that some children have chosen to wear facemasks when out and about during the pandemic. If any child wishes to wear a mask on the way to and from school for reassurance, that is absolutely fine, but we ask that parents take responsibility for removing the mask before the child enters the classroom and take it home with you. This is because handling and storage of masks can create hygiene issues in the classroom.

Behaviour

Because it is essential to maintain the class bubbles, there are fewer options available to the school when managing behaviour.

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Good behaviour and excellent learning will be rewarded with positive marking strategies, smiley face stamps in books, and positive messages delivered by teaching staff, peers and by phone by senior leaders. In addition, they may receive a mention in our virtual assemblies!

Any incidents of poor behaviour will be dealt with restoratively wherever possible where the children and staff will discuss what happened and agree any consequences. We will continue to share with parents any concerns so that we can work together to get to the root of any problems and help solve them together. In the current climate, the school does not have the usual range of behaviour management tools available to it, as children cannot be asked to learn in another class or in isolation. Despite this, the school will do everything possible to keep the children in school.

Some behaviours are currently completely unacceptable. Children will be taught about the risks of spreading the virus and how to keep themselves and others safe. However, if any child deliberately coughs, sneezes or spits at, or in the direction of another person, there will be serious consequences.

We know that parents have done a fabulous job of teaching your children about the need to socially distance and keep themselves and others safe. We are all extremely grateful for this and once again would like to thank you – it makes everything much easier for us in school.

Attendance

The government has decided that school attendance will again be compulsory from 8th March. Therefore, we expect all children to return to school and attend every day unless they have a reason which can be authorised by the school. If any children have advice in writing from a health professional that they should not attend school, please let us know. Any child who shows any symptoms of the coronavirus should not attend school until a test has been carried out and a negative result received.

While we are anxious for all children to be back at school so that we can make up for the time lost during the pandemic, it is very important that we do not take any risks of spreading the coronavirus, so if your child appears unwell in the morning we ask you to telephone the office to discuss with staff the symptoms and whether you should keep them at home, seek medical advice or send them to school.

Wrap Around

We are delighted to tell you that wrap around care will be continuing with a limited provision again from 8th March using the bubble system. A separate letter has been sent to families who regularly use wraparound care. If there are any new families who need information please contact the school office. We can reassure you that every effort is being made to minimise the risk for Wrap Around children and for the wider school community.

If you have any questions, please do get in touch. In the first instance please send any queries by email to admin@st-whites.gloucs.sch.uk.

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Once again, I would like to share with you how excited we are to get back to nearly-normal. We will do everything we possibly can to ensure that everyone is safe but I do completely understand that some of you will be very anxious. Do please give us a ring if you have any concerns that you would like to discuss. In addition, we will be having a parent Teams meeting on the afternoon of Tuesday 2nd March between 1pm and 2:30pm when you can come online to a Teams meeting and have a chat about anything that you are unclear about. If you would like to come, please click on the link below or see your parentmail as we are sending it out that way too:

https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting_ZGVjNGM1YWQTNmJlMS00NDNhLTlmM2MtZDAyOTUzNjAwYjFi%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%22f45cfd16-2a28-42de-a802-fa828d0e8c1b%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%22ab3dcec6-aa62-48cc-907d-f201591f5b6c%22%7d

Kind regards

Clare Tilling
Headteacher

Matt Bishop
Chair of Governors

FOREST OF DEAN

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