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Principal: Mrs G Hay B.Ed. (Hons.) PQH

17th March 2021

Dear Parent,

I'm sure many of you have seen the news that the Executive have agreed for P4-7 to return to school on Monday 22nd March with P1-P3. This is very welcome news to us all although a longer period of notice would have been preferable.

Schools have received no further guidance from the Department therefore we are resuming on Monday with the same precautions in place as before this lockdown. If anything changes between now and then I will be in touch with another letter.

The precautions are as follows:

Pupils are to be dropped off at school between 8.45am and 9.15am. Pupils must **NOT arrive before 8.45am**. Parents are asked to avoid peak drop off time around 9am if at all possible.

Pupils are only to bring the following items into school: coat, water bottle, home learning pack, pencil case (Mr Potts' and Mrs Timoney's classes, to remain in school) and washable lunch box.

Pupils will remain in their protective bubbles (classes) during the day and classes will not mix.

Classrooms will be well ventilated and outdoor learning will be encouraged therefore ensure children are well wrapped up.

Home time will be staggered:

P1 and P2 siblings: 2pm

Remainder of P2: 2.15pm

P3-P7 A-H surnames 2.50pm

P3-P7 I-Z surnames 3pm

Parents are asked to remain off site. Any adult who does need to be onsite (prearranged essential meetings only) is asked to wear a face covering.

Parents must socially distance and wear a face covering at the school gate, using the yellow markers as a guide as to where to wait for children at home time.

Children must not attend school if they or anyone in the household has ANY Covid-19 symptoms. Inform school immediately and keep school up to date if there are any symptoms within your household.

If your child has Covid-19 symptoms, book a test and inform school of the result.

Pupils may return to school if the test is negative, providing they are well enough, have not had a fever for 48 hours and haven't been advised to isolate by the PHA Contact Tracing Service.

If the test is positive you must inform school immediately and follow PHA advice which includes your household isolating.

If you are unsure if your child should attend school, keep them at home and ring us for advice. Ensure children using the school bus use face coverings as per guidance previously issued.

If your child would like school dinner between now and the Easter holidays please complete the form <https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=-yeCOETeDkaBkAVAK4mNqDNWutJd051FloE34TPJKtUMFdINjRRNjBBRzhZTkIZRjNOWUxKUDhZSi4u>

Please note

- homework will not resume until after the Easter holidays however children are encouraged to participate in spelling shed and AR
- our annual Easter Egg competition will take place on Thursday 25th March 2021 (more information will follow for new families)
- Wednesday 31st March is a half day and pick up times are as follows:
 - P1, P2/3 and older siblings 11.45am
 - P4/5, P5/6 and older siblings 12noon
 - P7 12.15pm.

I wish everyone a very happy, healthy and safe few days off and we look forward to welcoming all our pupils back to school on Monday. All of TeamDPS want to express their thanks and say a BIG WELL DONE to you all for your hard work and dedication over the past few months. This period of home learning hasn't been easy but you have all done an amazing job for your fabulous kids – well done to you all. You can now enjoy a break from it all as we happily take over again and hopefully you all have time to unplug, unwind and enjoy a quiet cup of tea ☺



There are a few tips below for helping to prepare your children for their return to school.

Preparing Your Child For the First Day Back in School

As schools begin to open to more children, parents and children may well be feeling anxious. Here's some ideas of how best to prepare.

Be Calm.

Your child will take their lead from you and be reassured if you are steady and matter of fact.



Be Curious.

These are strange times and their imagination may run away with them. Listen, and try not to dismiss or minimise their fears but validate how they are feeling – "It's completely fine to feel like that at the moment" or "I can really understand why you would feel like that"



Be Positive.

Remind them of all the ways they have learnt to keep themselves safe: washing their hands regularly, sneezing and coughing into their elbow, not hugging others and staying in their own space.



Be Thankful.

Help your child think of things they are looking forward to: being with their friends, seeing their teacher, favourite activities but be mindful some of these may not be available for them



Be Supportive

Younger children particularly may struggle with separation anxiety and may become tearful, clingy or act out. Reassure them that you will miss them too and think of them through out the day. It might be helpful to draw a little heart on their wrist and one on yours too. You can call it the hug button and when they find they are missing you they can press the heart and know that you will be doing the same at home. Sometimes having a little object to remind them of you through the day helps but please check this out with your school first.



Be Prepared.

Support your child to be aware of changes that may have happened to their classroom environment since they were there last and rehearse any new routines that school may have shared. Rehearse and practice your 'goodbye' routine and create a 'hello' greeting for the end of the day for them to look forward to.



If you have any other questions about the full return of school on Monday 22nd March 2021 please contact me via email (ghay546@c2kni.net) and I will do my best to get back to you as soon as possible.

Kind regards,
Mrs G Hay
(Principal)