St Michael's C of E Primary School
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Friday 10th July 2020

Dear Parent/Carer,

We are delighted that we can welcome all our children back at the start of the new academic year. We realise that the experiences of children during lockdown are hugely different. Some children have had a wonderful time, particularly if their parents have been furloughed at the same time, whilst others have really struggled with the differences to routines, having home learning to complete whilst parents are working from home or with the challenges of not seeing their normal family support networks. The information gathered from the parent survey has been very useful for us in formulating the school recovery plan and I thank you for your help with this.

We have also developed our school recovery plan in line with the following government documentation:

- *Department for Education Guidance for full opening- schools*
- *Coronavirus (COVID-19): implementing protective measures in education and childcare settings*

Before I document the plan I feel it is important to stress that, as a school, we agree with the government guidance that states that: *"The overarching principle is to minimise the number of contacts between children…It is likely for younger children the emphasis will be on separating groups and for older children it will be on distancing."*

So whilst our plan is to try and encourage social distancing as far as possible, we cannot guarantee that children will be socially distant from other children and adults at all times and we wish to make that explicitly clear to parents and carers.

Children attending school will:

- Be dropped at school by only 1 parent or carer
- Arrive and be collected at their group's allocated time only
- Be dropped at their entrance gate
- Operate in class groups of no more than 30 children
- Operate as a 'bubble' in school with the other children and adults in their class group only
- Only use one room inside the building during the day, including to eat their lunch
- Have a packed lunch, either provided from home or by Chartwells (these must be ordered in advance on ParentPay)
- Only use the external classroom door to enter and exit the building
- Have staggered break and lunchtimes so they do not come into contact with other class groups
- Regularly wash their hands including on entering and exiting the classroom, before and after eating and after coughing or sneezing and at other regular points in the day
- Sit on desks which face forwards - this will be the same desk each day
- Have their own stationery (provided by school)
- Bring their own water bottle (named)
- Wear school uniform
- Only use outside spaces at specific times, when other class groups are not using them
- Be taken to an isolation room if they display symptoms of COVID-19 during the school day

During this period staff have undertaken substantial training regarding the trauma that this period of time may have caused children and the impact of being out of school for 18 weeks may have had, not only on their academic development but, more importantly you may argue, on their emotional and mental development. It is for this reason that we have listened to the overwhelming advice, from trained professionals, that children will find the transition back into school easier if they come back to people and places they are familiar with.

On return the children will form a class bubble with the children in their class. This will allow for contact to be with one consistent group of children. Should a case of coronavirus occur in school, this limits the spread due to the limited contacts each child will have.

When the children return in September they will initially return to their original teacher and classroom before the COVID-19 closure. Although the way the school day is managed will be different (e.g. entry/exit, lunches and breaks), we hope that by returning to familiar adults and spaces, any anxiety for the children will be reduced. As the children re-familiarise themselves with school and become more confident with the new procedures that are in place to minimise contacts, we will inform them of their new teachers and allow them time to work with their new teacher in their new classroom. We do not want children (or parents) worrying about new teachers ahead of the summer break whilst we are unable to carry out our normal transition processes. This plan will allow the children transition opportunities they have missed this year and hopefully make returning to school easier. Over the past weeks I have spoken to many parents with children who are anxious about the return to school and they agree that this will help to ease a lot of unnecessary worry at what is already a worrying enough time. The first week back will therefore look like this:

<table>
<tr><th></th><th>Monday 7th September</th><th>Tuesday 8th September</th><th>Wednesday 9th September</th><th>Thursday 10th September</th><th>Friday 11th September</th></tr>
<tr><td>AM session</td><td rowspan="2">In old classroom with existing teacher</td><td rowspan="2">In old classroom with existing teacher</td><td>In old classroom with existing teacher</td><td>In old classroom with existing teacher</td><td>In old classroom with existing teacher</td></tr>
<tr><td>PM session</td><td>Transition session with new teacher in old classroom</td><td>Transition session with new teacher in old classroom</td><td>Transition session with new teacher in new classroom</td></tr>
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From the week beginning Monday 14th September all children will start in their new class with their new teacher having had 3 successful transition sessions.

The information below is relevant to your child for the new academic year, from the 7th September:

Arrival Time: 8.30am

Collection Time: 3.00pm

Site Entrance and Exit Point: Infant Gate

It is absolutely imperative, for social distancing of groups, that you and your child only arrive at the allocated time above and you are on time when collecting your child at the end of their session. It will make it very challenging for your child to enter their class if you arrive after your designated time. Please remember only 1 adult should accompany their child to school.

We will be operating a one-way system for parents to drop off their children. Infant Gate - Enter via the gate, drop your child to the teacher who will be waiting and continue around the infant building and up the path adjacent to the main school car park. Exit via the Penberthy Road gate. I strongly advise that you discuss this with your child, as this is something they will be unfamiliar with.

Please ensure when you approach the site your child is carrying all their own belongings so the drop off is as quick and smooth as possible.

When you arrive to collect your child you will repeat the above process, when you enter the site through the Infant gate staff will release your child to join you and you will both leave through the Penberthy Road gate. I reiterate that your prompt arrival and collection is key to social distancing procedures working. Other groups

will have arrival and collection times either side of the ones you have been allocated. Whilst I have no responsibility for the actions of parents and carers outside of the school gate, schools have been asked by the government to remind parents and carers not to gather at the school gates.

Attendance will be mandatory from September, therefore our normal attendance procedures will apply from the 7th September. If your child is not attending on a particular day you should still communicate this with the school via text using the normal absence number 07731 842640.

Collecting children outside of arrival and collection times should be avoided if at all possible, however if you do need to do this you must ring ahead and arrange this with the school office. **There will be no unauthorised access on site and any visitors will have to stop at the main gates.**

All children will have a packed lunch at lunchtime each day. Packed lunches must either be provided from home or, if you wish the school to provide a paid packed lunch, you will need to order this in advance via your ParentPay account in the normal way. If your child is eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) or Universal Infant Free School Meals (UIFSM – this applies to ALL children in Reception, Year 1 & Year 2) please ensure you still order your child's lunches via ParentPay. Please provide a snack from home for your child's break time if they are in the Juniors. Infant fruit will be provided by the school at break time during this period. Milk will be provided for those children who are eligible or for those who pay for milk through Cool Milk.

Due to social distancing we have had to make changes to our Behaviour Policy as some of the existing procedures would not work in the current climate. The government have also issued very clear guidance around behaviour that increases potential transmission of COVID-19 (e.g. coughing and spitting) and these have to be made explicit in the Behaviour Policy. As such we have created an addendum to our existing policy that has been shared with the staff and School Monitoring Council. I have attached a copy to this letter and, upon return to school, class teachers will share this with the children and together draw up a class Code of Conduct.

When we reopen in September, school will be a very different place than when you last attended in March. I have taken some time to produce a FAQ document that covers the main questions we have been asked over the past 16 weeks. Please refer to the FAQ alongside this letter.

We have also compiled a welcome back pack that accompanies this letter. This contains resources that you may find useful ahead of a return in September. You as a parent or carer will be best placed to know how much or how little support your child will need when returning to school so the following resources can be used if you think they may be useful:

- Countdown calendar to mark off the last week at home before a return to school
- A wellbeing questionnaire for the children that can brought to school with them on the first day back
- Serpentine and the Magic Bubble story you can share with the children- nice even for older children
- SWAN resources- for parents - The swan looks like they are gracefully gliding across the surface, whilst in fact they are frantically paddling beneath the water. Right now, our children need us more than ever to be the swan
- Social story- to help children understand about coronavirus

All the staff have worked incredibly hard to prepare for the children returning in September, however, please remember this is a new situation for all of us. Although we feel we have established systems and procedures to mitigate risk as much as we can, we may still need to make tweaks and changes to procedures as we go forward. We will aim to communicate, as always, as openly and transparently as we can.

I thank you for your continued support throughout this whole situation, you have been amazing!

Mrs Claire Johnson
Head of School