



St Patrick's RC Primary School, Dipton

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Headteacher: Mrs J Burgess

We follow in Christ's footsteps

Thursday 17th September 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

I would like to begin by again extending my thanks for your on-going co-operation regarding this unusual return to our new academic year. Your children have been a credit to you. They have worked hard getting to grips with new regimes and expectations with minimum fuss. School is very different for everyone but we are all trying our best to adapt! Thank you also for your many emails of support – it provides a real boost to us all!

Welcome to our full Reception class of 25 pupils who are now with us full-time! What a delightful group of children!

As we are now a couple of weeks into our new term, I thought it would be helpful to offer a few points of clarification.

- Please do not send your child to school if s/he has any coronavirus symptoms or is generally unwell. If any member of your household has coronavirus symptoms, current government guidelines state, a test must be booked for the person displaying symptoms and the whole household must self-isolate until a clear result is obtained. We acknowledge tests are proving very difficult to access and there is now a longer waiting time for results, but we cannot accommodate pupils in school if they are unwell or if a member of their household displays any of the coronavirus symptoms. The wealth of information given can be confusing so we have added a checklist to our website which provides a good reference point <http://www.dipton.durham.sch.uk/covid-19-absence-a-quick-guide-for-parents-carers/>

You may be aware; Richard Holden MP has stated anyone in our area who is having difficulties accessing coronavirus testing should email him and he will help.

Richard.HoldenMP@parliament.uk

- If your child has had a coronavirus test, the result is negative and your child appears well enough to return to school, they are welcome back at any point in the school day. Please ring the school office, however, before your child returns so we know to expect him/her.
- If a child is unwell or self-isolating, school will provide work as soon as practicable (via Purple Mash). Children in Y1-Y6 will receive an alert notification (the purple bell). It is very important to note, however, that staff are dealing both with full-time teaching workload as well as supporting pupils at home. Staff are also covering additional duties including helping with extra cleaning protocols. If a whole 'learning bubble' needs to self-isolate, school has plans in place to ensure pupils can continue to access learning from home. There are currently many scenarios to deal with regarding pupil absence. Your child may be at home poorly, for example, or self-isolating due to a family member displaying symptoms (and otherwise well). Engagement in home learning will be monitored appropriately, but will consider individual circumstances.

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- Speaking of Purple Mash, I would like to remind parents to hear your child read at least 3 times and record appropriately. If you have any queries or problems accessing Purple Mash, please contact the school office and a member of staff will provide support.
- A separate Reception newsletter will be issued shortly to give updates particular to that age group.
- We very much appreciate that the vast majority of parents/carers are sticking to the designated drop-off/collection times. We ask that everyone complies to the times given. We need to operate this staggered system to manage the flow of people both on and around the site, which is why it is important that you only arrive at your allotted time. I also fully understand that this means some of you have to wait for a sibling slot and 'lap the yard'. Thank you for good humour and for bearing with us. I know this will get more frustrating as time passes and the weather worsens but, unfortunately, this is not something we can alter until guidelines change. All I can advise is to 'wrap up warm', bring a sturdy umbrella and focus on the need to keep everyone safe (which is how we are approaching this challenging and constantly changing situation).
- Please maintain social distancing, at all times, during drop-off and collection. We all need to work together to keep our whole school community safe and well. Pupils in Reception to Y4 must be accompanied by one adult, who must stay with them in the line. Please do not just 'drop and go'. Pupils in Y5 and Y6 may enter and leave our school site, unaccompanied, if we have emailed permission.
- A concern has been raised today by a parent regarding comments made on a social media platform about the presumed reason for a pupil absence etc. Under no circumstances should parents use social media (e.g. Whatsapp year group forums) to presume/comment on other pupils in school and we respectfully ask that this stops immediately. If there are any issues that all parents need to be made aware of, school will share information through appropriate channels
- If your child attends Breakfast Club, please park off site and walk onto school grounds with your child. Only staff vehicles are permitted on school grounds in the interests of pupil safety.
- If you have changed any of your contact details e.g. phone number, email or home address please let us know immediately so we can alter our records accordingly. Up to date phone numbers are particularly important as we need to be able to get in touch with parents throughout the school day if necessary.
- We encourage every child to bring a water bottle to school. Please ensure it is leak proof!
- On a completely different note, Durham Local Authority have commenced the process for Reception admission for September 2021. Please follow the link <https://www.durham.gov.uk/schooladmissions>

If you have any general queries or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact Mrs Clarke or Mrs Charlton in the school office.

Many thanks, as always, for your support.

Mrs J Burgess, Headteacher

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