



Ripponden Junior and Infant School

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“Challenge and enjoyment leading to excellence for all”

Headteacher: Mrs L Bamforth

30th August 2021

Dear parents and families,

As we draw towards the end of the summer holidays, I hope that you have had a wonderful time together and have kept safe.

As promised, at the end of last academic year, I am now writing to you with details of how things will look when we come back to school next week. Bear with me – it’s a long one!

The guidance from the DfE has made it very clear that the aim is for schools to return to as much ‘normal’ as possible. We are delighted, in the main – but we will be approaching this with caution. The staggered starts and ends to the day will no longer be in force, nor will the ‘bubbles’.

School return

School will start back on Tuesday 7th September. Monday 6th is a training day for staff. Little Acorns staggered start times have already been communicated with them.

School start times and organisation

Little Acorns will go straight for the gate at their Bungalow (please notice the nice new sign!) at 8.45am. Little Acorns staff will be ready to receive the children.

For Years 1-6, we will go back to the ‘soft start’ to the day, where gates are opened at 8.40am and children filter their way into their classrooms to begin an early morning task. Gates will be locked at 8.50am and any children arriving after this time will be deemed as late and will need to enter via the school office.

The government guidance states that we should avoid large crowds mixing, wherever possible, so if your child is able to come into the playground without an adult, please do so, to avoid many adults mixing in the playground. I will be in the playground and will be able to answer any questions you may have and will also be there for the children to guide them in to class. Children from Saplings and Great Oaks will go in the Learning Zone One door, children from Chestnuts and Willows will go in the



Learning Zone Two door and children from Maples and Redwoods will walk around the building and go into the cabins that way. Teachers and teaching assistants will be in the classrooms ready to receive the children and begin early morning activities.

Assemblies

We will be moving back to face to face assemblies – no more Zoom – hurrah! However, these will be very controlled. Again, to avoid mixing, we will be holding assemblies in the hall in phases; so Years 1 and 2 together, Years 3 and 4 together and Years 5 and 6 together. For the younger children, it will be more about getting the children used to being in the hall together. We will also be holding Celebration Assemblies together again, but at this stage we will not be inviting parents in, again to minimise mixing. We will review this regularly, with the hope to increase numbers and invite parents back in at some point too.

Lunch times and playtimes

We will be minimising contact between classes, again keeping in the phases, so children will be playing in the same area as children from either the year above or below (so Y1/2, Y3/4, Y5/6 together). Lunches will be served in the hall again, with a full menu (menu to be sent out separately) and again, children will share the hall with the children from their phase.

Toilets

Toilets will be shared between children from their phases. At lunch time, children from Maples and Redwoods will use Busy Bees toilets and children from Little Acorns will use the Key Stage One toilets.

Clubs

A full range of clubs will be on offer again – we will send a list and how to sign up for them in the first week of the term.

Face coverings

Thank you to everyone who wore a face covering before the holidays. It is now no longer mandatory to wear a face covering in public spaces, but it is advisable in crowded areas. If you choose to wear one when dropping off or collecting your children, we totally respect that. Some staff will be wearing face coverings as they feel more comfortable with this and this is fine too.

Visitors and communication with school

We are trying to limit the number of people in school and the number of people mixing. We are able to have some visitors in, especially therapeutic and specialist services – but they have to adhere to the risk assessment in terms of hygiene. Pre-planned volunteers are also able to return, again on the basis of areas being well ventilated, only working with one class, being double-jabbed etc. In terms of parents' communication with school, as previous, please either email or call the office in the first instance. Your child's class teacher will call you back/respond to your email as soon as they can, but please be mindful that they have a teaching commitment and this may not be until the end of the school day. If it is urgent, please let the office staff know this and they will do what they can.



Ventilation

Ventilation is the biggest mitigating factor in the control of the virus. This means that doors and windows will need to be opened and remain opened as much as possible. If your child feels the cold, please send them in layers to maintain a comfortable temperature – things like base layers and school hoodies to go over the school jumpers/cardigans. Please remember that hoodies should be in addition to the school jumpers/cardigans, rather than instead of.

Staff testing

Staff will still be carrying out Lateral Flow Tests (LFTs) twice weekly, as per before the holidays.

Home time routines

As previous, home time for Reception and Key Stage 1 children is 3pm, for Key Stage 2 children is 3.05pm.

For Little Acorns children, they will be taken to the Bungalow Gate and handed over to a parent or carer. Busy Bees staff will come over and collect those children who are going to Busy Bees.

For Saplings and Great Oaks, they will be brought up onto the playground at 3pm and handed over to a parent. Children going to Busy Bees will make their way down there.

For Key Stage 2 children, they will be brought up onto the playground at 3.05pm and handed over to a parent. Children going to Busy Bees will make their way down there too. For children in Redwoods, if you want them to walk home by themselves, we need this in writing please, otherwise we will not allow them to leave. This could be in the form of a note handed to Mrs Lomas or an email to the office. No one below Redwoods will be permitted to walk home without an adult. We are on a very busy road and we must take safeguarding seriously.

In all cases, please let us know if someone different than expected will be picking your child up, as we won't allow the children to go with someone we are not expecting. Also, while waiting for your children to come out of school, please observe social distancing measures.

Positive Cases of Covid-19

It is important to note that Covid-19 has not gone away. Numbers locally and nationally are still relatively high and it is important not to become complacent.

If you suspect your child may have Covid-19, please do not send them into school. Please arrange for a PCR test and isolate until they have the result. If they are positive, then they will need to remain isolated, in line with guidance from Track and Trace. If they are negative, they can return to school, as long as they are well.

If we are informed that a child or member of staff tests positive, I will inform relevant parents as soon as is practicable. From 16th August, the need for others who are under 18 or have been double jabbed to isolate has gone – meaning that there should be no 'blanket' bubble closures. If your child



has been identified as being a close contact, they will be advised to take a PCR test, but they can still come to school while waiting for the results, unless they have symptoms, in which case they should remain at home until they have their result.

Track and Trace from the NHS will be making direct contact regarding being a close contact, not me, but in the interests of transparency I will let classes know, so parents can arrange a PCR if they so wish. The school Covid mobile will be operational again – so please either text or call 07399 326030 and keep me informed of any tests being taken and any results. Alternatively, of course, you can always email the office – office@ripponden.calderdale.sch.uk

These guidelines are subject to change at any time, following either a local or national issue. I will, of course keep you up to date with any changes as I get them.

I do suspect that we will see a rise in cases as the children come back to school. In terms of outbreaks, we have an outbreak management plan and this will come into force should 5 people who have mixed test positive, or 10% of a class. As always, we will be consulting with Public Health throughout. If this were to happen, we may then need to look at localised class or school closures and remote education – but this is only at a last resort. Obviously, we need to be mindful of the country's position too, but I have no control over that!!

We also have risk assessments in place and contingency plans and all of these documents will be reviewed regularly as the days and weeks go by.

As always, if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask.

On another note, building works to the roof and heating system have been going really well. When the children return, there will still be work ongoing, but minimally. There will still be scaffolding up and the car park will be compromised. We will be cordoning off part of the large playground for staff cars to minimise disruption to Greenacres. Please be mindful of this when dropping off and picking up. The aim is to have this work complete by the end of September, so the disruption should be minimal.

Once again, thank you all so much for your support over the couple of very difficult years. I hope I don't jinx it now, but I am really hoping that we can have a stable and settled year with minimal disruption, so that we can get back to 'normal' and enjoy life to the full here at Ripponden. We will all be working hard to 'Rise Up at Ripponden' so that every child can meet their full potential and following the Branch Out philosophies, to be wonderful individuals by doing so.

I look forward to welcoming you all back on Tuesday 7th September,

With kindest regards,

Lorraine Bamforth
Headteacher

