



Mill Water School

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Friday 17th July 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

RETURNING TO SCHOOL IN THE AUTUMN TERM

It has been lovely to see so many of our pupils either in school or in the community over the last few weeks. We have now seen the majority of our pupils in some capacity and staff have loved every minute. In general pupils have been overwhelmingly happy to be back and we are amazed at how settled they have been after so much time away from school.

Thank you to all of you who have supported this, getting your child to school when there was no transport available and helping to make it safe by arriving at different times. It has really helped everyone to feel positive and reduced anxiety.

The current Government guidance remains the same since my last letter to you with the assurance that no significant changes will be made over the summer period. Therefore, at this present time, we are planning for all pupils to return to school on Monday 7th September, with a specific timetable for the youngest pupils. Some pupils will be anxious about coming back to school and we will support them to make this positive for them.

To remind you, these are the precautions that we are taking which will be described fully in our school risk assessment:

- Updating our risk assessments and following all government guidelines to ensure we are as safe as we can be
- Maintaining social distance as far as is possible in a school setting
- Maintaining group 'bubbles' in school to avoid unnecessary mixing of pupils
- Staggering/spreading playtimes and lunchtimes to ensure fewer pupils are in shared spaces
- Ensuring that all pupils and staff wash their hands and use hand sanitiser regularly
- Ensuring the school is cleaned effectively and regularly, especially shared spaces like toilets
- Asking parents who transport their child to school to drop them and collect them at specific times to avoid everyone arriving and leaving at once
- Ensuring that anyone who shows symptoms does not attend school and follows advice regarding self-isolating
- Making tissues widely available to 'catch it, bin it, kill it'
- Ensuring where possible pupils are encouraged to follow good respiratory hygiene
- Minimising contact with and limiting the number of visitors on site (including parent/carers)
- Arranging virtual meetings where possible (such as Annual Reviews)
- Implementing one way systems in shared areas to minimise contact

Curriculum

Our teachers are already planning the curriculum for next year to make sure our pupils have safe access to all the fantastic opportunities that we usually provide. Some activities will be adapted and the use of shared teaching rooms will have to be limited.

Transport

We have been informed that school transport will operate as normal from September. Transport will contact you about this over the summer, but this is sometimes just before the start of term. We are expecting new guidance from DFE/DCC transport about safety precautions on school transport.

Face masks

Guidance has just changed on wearing face coverings in public. From 24th July this will be mandatory in shops, however there is no change to guidance for school communities.

Thank you

This has been the strangest and most challenging of years. I'd like to end by again thanking all the staff who have worked tirelessly throughout this crisis and showed such commitment to our pupils and their families. We have had to keep reopening more and more along the way really, even before government guidance came on how to do that safely. We were making arrangements for pupils and staff to be safely in schools long before the idea of bubbles became popular.

I thank you as parent/carers for supporting and encouraging us and for doing the best for your children in times of huge challenge. Lastly, I thank our pupils for generally astounding us with how resilient they are and for continuously making us smile. They have continued to make us proud even when we haven't seen them. The sense of community has been very strong and we've supported each other. Thank you all.

We are all aware that things **may** change over the summer. If they do, I assure you that we will adapt our plans and share them with you so that you know what to expect.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'S A Pickering', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

S A Pickering

Headteacher