



25th February 2021

Newsletter Number 4 – Spring Term 2021

Dear Parents and carers,

We are so excited that we can fully open our school on March 8th and welcome all the children back. It has been such a long time coming!

The government has issued guidance for schools to fully open on Monday 8th March and as a result of that guidance we are taking a very careful and planned approach to how we operate from that date. Thankfully the vast majority of the guidance mirrors how the school operated just before this lockdown, so it will be very familiar to you and the children.

Does my child have to return?

School attendance from 8th March is statutory. There may be an exceptional circumstance you wish to discuss. If this is the case please call the school office as soon as possible.

What time should my child arrive at school and what time will they leave school?

We are continuing to operate a filter system for arrival and departure each day.

The school gate will be unlocked at **8.40am** and locked at **9.00am**. You can arrive at any time within this time slot – but the gate will be locked promptly at 9.00am so you should factor this into your arrival time. You will walk your child to their outside classroom door and they will enter their classroom. There are signs on the playground indicating where adults must stop.

Handy hint – do not arrive before 8.40am as this is a popular time and often there is a queue at the gate!

If you arrive after 9.00am you will need to wait at the gate until the classroom staff can arrange for someone to come and open it. This may mean you will be waiting for some time so prompt arrival at school is essential.

At the end of the day the gates will be opened at **3.10pm** and locked at **3.30pm**. Again, you can come and collect your child at any point in that slot, walking to their classroom door to collect them. The gate will be locked promptly at 3.30pm so you should factor this into your arrival time.

If you arrive after 3.30pm you will need to wait at the gate until the classroom staff can arrange for someone to come and open it. This may mean you will be waiting for some time so prompt arrival at school is essential.

Handy hint – do not arrive before 3.10pm as this is a popular time and often there is a queue at the gate!

You may allow older children to walk to school and leave school independently (please inform your child's class teacher through Seesaw). However, they must not mix with children and families outside their class bubble and must be trustworthy enough to walk directly to/from home.

How should I walk my child/children to school and out of school safely?

When using the paths stick to the side and keep to the left at all times. There are red arrows on the main path indicating the direction you should go. To keep pedestrian traffic to a minimum, only one adult should bring their child/ren to school or collect them.

You **MUST** make sure your child or children stay next to you and do not run ahead. They should be by their adults side. Staff will be reminding you all of this – and they will be positioned along the path. They will be shouting to be heard! Keep everyone safe by keeping your child or children glued to your side!!

Use of the drop off area

From 8th March we will be very strict about vehicles using the drop off area. You **MUST NOT** leave your car in the drop off to walk children into school. A member of staff will be on duty in that area and will monitor its usage and they will move vehicles on.

Face Masks and coverings

All visitors must wear a face covering or mask. If you are exempt from this you need to let us know by calling the school office. We will discuss this with you and we will support this whilst still protecting all site users as well. This may mean we ask you to arrive/leave the site at a different time, or give you an area where you drop off/pick up your children. All site users must understand that we are trying to protect everyone and we will all need to adapt our patterns to achieve this.

I'm looking forward to chatting to other parents at the school gates again!

You will not be able to stand in groups and chat at the start and end of the day as you used to. All adults must leave the site promptly after arrival or pick up, adhering to social distancing guidelines.

Can I chat to the staff at the gates?

We need to keep everyone safe. Of course we like to greet you and say hello. However, if you have something you need to talk about you should email or call the school office. All adults on site need to adhere wherever possible to social distancing of 2 metres.

The school office will be there to help me if I need to pop in

Of course our office staff is here to help. Please only approach the school office in an emergency. If you do come to the school office, the staff will assume you have an emergency and ask you what your emergency is. If they feel it is not an emergency they will ask you to leave the school site and contact the school instead by email schooloffice@pensbyprimaryschool.org or call 0151 348 4145. Please be polite to the staff at this difficult time. The glass hatch will not be opened in order to protect the office staff so conversations will be very difficult.

If your child needs to be sent home from school due to illness, the office staff will contact you. You will be allowed to park in the drop off point/car park whilst you collect your child. A member of the class staff team will then bring your child to the main school gate.

If your child has an appointment, or you need to pick them up early for any reason, please notify the school office preferably via email schooloffice@pensbyprimaryschool.org or via Parent Mail with a copy of the appointment letter if possible. Arrivals and departures within the school day will be very difficult for the office team to organise as there are less of them on site each day so that social distancing can be maintained for their safety. Therefore you may be waiting for quite some time and will need to be patient and understanding that we are doing all we can.

If your child is ill, please phone the school office and leave a message on the answerphone before 8.30am. Please do not send messages through Seesaw about child absences/appointments. You must indicate if they have any COVID symptoms.

If your child forgets their packed lunch they will be provided with a school lunch and you will be charged accordingly.

New wider COVID symptoms

In our letter of the 9th February we informed you of the following information from Wirral that is still in place:

The three main symptoms of COVID-19 are a high temperature, a persistent cough or a loss of smell or taste. If you experience any of these symptoms you should self-isolate and get tested. But there is also a wider set of symptoms which people have also been testing positive with.

They include:

- Diarrhoea
- A persistent headache
- Fever and chills
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting

If you or your child have any of these wider symptoms, you should get a test at one of Wirral's symptoms-only testing sites and then self-isolate if your result is positive. If your child displays any of these symptoms in school you will be asked to collect them promptly and take them to be tested.

Walk-in slots are available at our symptoms-only testing centres in Birkenhead, Bebington, Liscard and Heswall but we recommend you book to guarantee a timeslot at www.wirral.gov.uk/test or by calling **119.**

We also have symptoms-only mobile testing by appointment only at:

- **West Kirby Concourse on Saturday 6 and Sunday 7 February 10am to 3pm**

- **Europa Leisure Centre on Sunday 7, Monday 8 and Tuesday 9 February 10am to 3pm**

Book a symptoms-only test at our mobile testing centres via www.wirral.gov.uk/test

If you test positive at one of our symptoms-only testing centres you must self-isolate for 10 days. You will be contacted by NHS Test and Trace to identify any close contacts who also may need to self-isolate to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Guidance and support on self-isolation can be found here:

www.wirral.gov.uk/covidpayment

Further support is also available from Wirral Infobank at: www.wirralinfobank.co.uk

What will my child's classroom look like?

From the 8th March all children will be in their class bubble. In most classes the children will usually be sat at tables in rows, shoulder to shoulder facing the front, as stated in the DFE guidance (it will be different in EYFS). At times there may be some opportunities for group work in a class. If this is the case the pupils will need to wear a face covering. This will be provided by the school. Staff will be socially distancing as much as they can.

Classes will not be mixing. Classes will have specific playground areas and different playtimes.

There will continue to be enhanced hand washing in place and desks will be sanitised several times a day. Each class will have a male and female toilet allocated to it. No items will be kept in the cloakroom areas. Coats will be placed on each child's chair. Additionally only pumps/trainers and jogging bottoms need to be sent in as a PE kit. PE kit will be kept outside the classroom areas

Will staff and pupils be wearing PPE?

There is no requirement for anyone to wear PPE, but in some circumstances staff and pupils may be asked to do so. However, if staff or children do wish to wear masks we will support this.

What will be taught?

For the first week we want to help the children settle back into school. Staff will be organising a range of wellbeing activities that will be enjoyable and address any concerns pupils may have. Following that the staff will be assessing pupils to find the gaps in their learning. More emphasis will then be placed on teaching to close those gaps, particularly in English and maths. However, a broad and enjoyable curriculum is essential so this will be delivered as best we can within the DFE guidelines.

For the first half term at least, there will be no homework set except asking you to support your child with their reading, time tables and spellings at home.

When are parents evenings and when can we see our child's work?

After Easter we will arrange a phone call with you to go through how your child is doing in school. In the meantime please check Seesaw for updates and information.

What will happen at lunchtime?

The kitchen will be fully open and you can send your child to school with a packed lunch or they can have a school lunch. When the children arrive in class each day they will order what they want to eat at lunchtime.

All pupils in Reception, Year 1 and year 2 are eligible for Universal Free School Meals (UFSM). Children eligible for FSM can also have a free school lunch. Paid lunches for other pupils cost £2.20 per day. Payment for school lunches must be made through Parent Mail.

All classes will eat their lunch in their class bubble. All meals will be delivered directly to each classroom.

What should my child wear for school?

We expect all children to be wearing full school uniform. This comprises:

White polo shirt (polo shirts with school emblems are available from our supplier www.gooddies.co.uk). Plain polo shirts can also be worn and are available from many retail outlets)

School tie (optional)

Black trousers, shorts or skirts

Burgundy Sweatshirt or cardigan with the school logo- these are available from our supplier www.gooddies.co.uk.

Black footwear this can be trainers but they must be totally black. No exceptions!

Will my child bring a reading book home?

Not yet! We have Reading Eggs that is a fabulous reading resource and all families have access to this - staff will support home reading through this programme for the time being.

Will breakfast club and after school club be open?

We will be operating both Breakfast and After School club. You can book places online and pay for them through Parent Mail. The club will continue to operate from the school hall.

What do I do with the home learning equipment and work my child was doing whilst they were not in school?

Please return any equipment and work to school via your child.

Will families still be able to use Seesaw like they do now?

We will continue to use Seesaw as much as possible we will return to our precious use of Seesaw.

What you can expect from us:

- As a result, staff were asked to use Seesaw at least twice a week to post evidence of work across each of the subject areas, showing paired or group work and capturing moments of celebration, so that you were able to share in your child's learning.
- Seesaw is operated between the hours of 8:30-4:30 for the purpose of sharing your child's learning or for reminders from teaching staff about upcoming events. Sadly, it cannot operate as a messaging service either during these hours or after these hours so messages will be responded to with an automated reply.

What we expect from you:

- Seesaw gives you instant access into your child's day and their learning opportunities. Through the like and comment options, you are able to share in the successes and achievements of your child through their online journals, enabling you to strike up conversations at the end of the day.
- Correspondence between parents and class teachers should be made via the school office as Seesaw is not checked throughout the day when staff are teaching. Please send all messages to the school office who will pass the information on to the necessary people.
- Seesaw is operated between 8:30 and 4:30 as a tool to share your child's learning and should not be used for complaints or even the slightest niggles. All complaints should follow the school's complaints procedure and should be referred to the school office or Mrs Brown or Mrs Wright who are on the gate each morning.

What else can my child bring into school?

Apart from a coat when needed and their PE kit as detailed previously, your child should bring in some sun cream and sunhat (labelled with their name) ready for the hotter weather. The sun cream will remain in school and the hat can be worn to and from school (please 'train' your child to be able to apply sun cream to their face, arms and legs themselves). You can judge when to send these items in as the weather improves. Your child should not bring anything else to school at this time. If your child has a birthday celebration and you wish to send in class treats please contact your child's class teacher through Seesaw about this and we will accommodate that request.

My child is really worried about coming back to school. What can I do?

We understand that some children will be worried about coming back to school after such a long time. Please email the school office if this is the case and we will arrange for your child's new teacher to contact you to discuss how we can help. Most children will just be very excited to see their friends again and be back in school – but probably not as excited as their grown-ups are that they are back in school!



Mrs K Brown
Headteacher