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Friday 10th September 2021

Dear Parents/Carers,

Welcome Back!

It has been great to see the return to School over the last week and the opportunity (finally!) to get back to some of the pre-Covid school routines that are now permitted from the beginning of this term. The children in Years 1 – 6 have settled in very well to their new classes, and this week has seen us able to have assemblies again as well as singing assemblies for year groups on Wednesday (with Elena). The new Reception children had their first half day sessions today, with children brand new to Bounds Green having an excellent first session this morning.

Update on Changes to School Routines

With the changes to Government guidance since 16th August we are no longer required to keep some of the 'Control Measures' that have been required since March 2020. **Critical in this respect is the fact that there is no requirement to have (or keep) the children in 'bubbles'**. This is because it is no longer a requirement for children under the age of 18 **OR** adults (most particularly for our staff) who are double vaccinated to **self-isolate if they are identified as a close contact of a positive case**. Adults who are NOT fully vaccinated will be required to self-isolate if they are identified as a close contact however. This means that **we do not have to keep the children in strict bubbles** as if a child gets a positive test result there will not be a requirement to send whole class or group bubbles home to self-isolate.

As a result we are all delighted assemblies have begun again this week. However whilst we are finally able to return to most pre-covid school routines, there are a few aspects that will have to remain the same as per last year and into the future. These are not due to COVID, but due to the fact that **our school has expanded** to have 60 more pupils than we did 18 months ago.

- We cannot now hold a whole Yr 2 – 6 **Assembly** on Mondays and Fridays as we have too many children to fit in one hall. We now hold a morning assembly for Y4 – Y6 children at 9.05am on Mondays & Fridays, and an afternoon Y2 – Y3 assembly after lunchtime at 1.05pm.
- With just under 600 children across Reception – Y6 **our lunchtime** needs to be longer (as per last year) to get all the children through in our lunch hall. **This means the Reception children will continue to need to come to lunch at 11.30am (with their lunch break lasting from 11.30am – 12.30pm)**, otherwise the last Junior classes would not finish their lunch until after 1.30pm imbalancing their day.
- This last fact has particular importance in relation to **Start / End times for the School Day**. We have looked very carefully at this as we know that the staggered starts and ends of the day posed a difficulty for parents with children in different year groups having to wait (particularly at the end of the day) after collecting a Reception or Y1 child at 3.10pm then having to wait 25 minutes until 3.35pm for a Y4 – Y6 sibling. Whilst the weather is pleasant now, we have winter fast approaching.

Therefore we want to minimise waiting time as much as we are able to address this issue, without compromising the education and well-being of our Reception Year Group children.

- **From Monday 13th September** the school playground gates will continue to be opened for all at 8.40am.
- **From Monday 13th September the start time for all children from Y1 – Y6 will be 08.55am, for Yr 2 and Yr3 children to line up and be collected by their teachers, and for Yr 4 – Y6 children to 'soft start' and enter the building to go to their classrooms on their own.**
- **The Y1 – Y6 children will have the same end of day time which will be 3.25pm.**
- The Nursery day remains unchanged (once the children are fully settled in) with a start time of 9.00am and an end time of 3pm.
- **The Reception classes will continue with their start time of 8.45am and end at 3.10pm.** This has been very carefully considered by our Reception team. Our findings from the last year are that keeping Reception to this

time is in their best interests in terms of learning and development. As mentioned earlier their lunch has to start at 11.30am now due to the increased numbers of children at the school. The Reception children need to start washing their hands for lunch 15 minutes before this. By starting at 8.45am this means that their day is better balanced rather than having a short 2 and a quarter hour morning session when they are at their freshest and a 3 hour afternoon session.

- **This will mean that the ‘wait time’ is reduced to 15 minutes at the end of the day and maximum 10 at the beginning.**

COVID Update

All of the above changes (or return to prior routines) are possible due to the impact of vaccination and its impact on heavily reducing the link between COVID infection and serious illness, hospitalisation and fatality. We have seen aspects of life return to re-Covid normal. I have seen parents and carers return to the playground now without masks talking to each other with broad smiles on their faces. I have seen staff return more relaxed. We are all enjoying a sense of liberation.

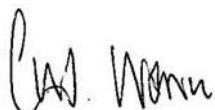
However I feel I need to raise a note of caution. There remains the need for us all to remain careful. Daily positive cases of COVID-19 remain high at just under 40,000 per day at present. Scotland, where schools went back in August, has seen a huge rise in daily case numbers to levels they only experienced at the worst in last winter. With the majority of adults now fully vaccinated, people may feel carefree and consider there is no longer a reason to be concerned or follow simple measures to continue to keep ourselves and others safe.

We need to continue to be careful. None of us want rising transmission rates, and then hospitalisation rates, lead to the re-imposition of ‘bubbles’ and other control measures such as staggered starts and so on. Over the last 7 days we have had 2 positive COVID-19 test results for members of our community who were both fully vaccinated, and in one case someone who had also previously had COVID last year. As Reception parents are aware one of these cases is Lydia Pavlou, our brand new EYFS Leader and teacher for Paddington class, who is having to self-isolate for 10 days. Just because we may be fully vaccinated we aren’t immune from catching COVID. Also there are members of our community who are not vaccinated or yet fully vaccinated.

I feel the sense of relief and joy as you at a return to some form of normal. I just ask that we all continue to take care, consider social distancing, consider the wearing of masks when appropriate and so on. I have given the same reminder and message to staff, particularly about the importance of continuing with the twice weekly Lateral Flow Tests.

You all know that the rules still remain the same in relation to if your child (or you) develop one of the common symptoms of COVID, the requirement to self-isolate until a PCR result comes back. This remains the same.

Yours sincerely,



Will Wawn
Headteacher