



# Chestnuts Primary School

## 'Encourage, Enable, Empower'

Tel: 01908 373748  
email: [office@chestnuts.milton-keynes.sch.uk](mailto:office@chestnuts.milton-keynes.sch.uk)  
[www.chestnutsprimaryschool.co.uk](http://www.chestnutsprimaryschool.co.uk)

Headteacher: Miss Becky Skillings  
Deputy Headteacher: Mrs Katie Robins  
Assistant Headteachers: Mrs Sam Sear & Mrs Nicola Tearle

4 November 2020

Dear Parents/Carers

Welcome back to the second half of the autumn term!

I'm sure you are all aware that the country is due to go back into a second lockdown tomorrow. The key difference with this lockdown, compared to the one in March, is that schools remain open to all children, not just the children of key workers and vulnerable children.

Just before and during the half term holiday, the Department for Education issued more information on how schools can remain safe for all staff, pupils and parents. Each of their suggestions have been included in our revised risk assessment, and information shared with staff on any new measures. I would like to outline to you some of the changes we are making to ensure everyone stays safe.

### Uniform

One of the key things that I feel you need to be aware of and can help us with is ventilation. Since March, all windows in all classrooms and communal areas have been opened to allow as much air flow as possible. We must continue with this, even during the winter months. Although we will have the heating on, we will continue to ensure windows and interior doors always remain open. It is highly likely to get a little chilly in classrooms this term.

For this reason, I invite you to send your child in with extra layers on – whether that be vests and long-sleeved tops under their school jumpers, or additional fleecy layers to go over their uniform. I do however, request that children still wear their uniforms at this point.

### Extra-Curricular clubs

It is with regret that we need to postpone all clubs that run both at lunch time and after school from 5 November. Some of the clubs are run by outside providers and we are now going to be restricting the number of adults coming onto the school site even further. Clubs run by school staff will also be suspended to allow staff the time to carry out the extra safety measures that we are now putting into place in school.

### Children's workbooks

Staff will no longer be allowed to take children's books home with them to mark as they all do at present. Staff will do their best to mark all work, but we will be reviewing our policy to enable them to



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give more verbal feedback to children at the lesson rather than spending the time at home marking. This does not mean that children won't get feedback about how they are doing, but it may not be as evident in their books.

## Trips and Visitors

We have not had any trips this term yet but have had visiting experience days for some year groups. At present, we are not planning any until after 1 December when we will review this decision.

## Visitors into school

Although we have massively reduced the number of visitors into school this term, we are now tightening this restriction even further. No planned maintenance work will take place whilst children are in school. If children are supported by external agencies such as occupational health or the speech and language team for example, they will continue to support your children. However, they will be wearing masks at all times and the sessions will take place at least 2m from the pupils. We will obviously still allow the emergency services to attend school should the need arise.

## Lettings

The school is often used in the evenings and at weekends by private providers. We will be suspending these activities to ensure there is no chance of the virus being brought into school by others not directly involved in our children's education.

## Breakfast club

There will be no changes to breakfast club. This will continue in year group bubbles. Please can I remind you of the need to book in advance. I have to ensure that the correct staff ratios are available to each year group and organise additional staff should bookings go above the maximum number. We cannot guarantee that staff will be available without prior warning.

## Attendance

School attendance continues to be compulsory. As much as we fully understand everyone's unease during these difficult times, I do firmly believe that continuing with a full education is vital to ensure that all children thrive. We are doing all that we can, and more than we have been requested to do, to keep the school safe for your children and for our staff.

## Masks

All staff will now wear masks or visors when they move around school. Staff have been restricted from entering bubbles they do not work in already but any staff that work in more than one bubble will



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now wear a mask in the bubble they aren't primarily attached to. We will be wearing the masks in corridors and whilst in the staff room unless we are eating. The number of staff allowed in our staff room has already been reduced to ensure 2m distance is always maintained between them.

If you would prefer your child to wear a mask in school, and they are old enough to remember the rules of not touching and playing with the mask, then this will be allowed. They will be asked to remove it and store it in a plastic bag if they are playing with it.

Please can I ask that parents wear a mask when picking up and dropping off children. We still see a higher than acceptable number of parents not maintaining social distancing and so need to ask you to do this to protect yourselves, your children and the staff.

## Staggered starts

Please can I take this opportunity to remind you of the timings for arrival at school. We have started to see some children arriving or leaving outside of their time slot. This means that we run the risk of the bubbles mixing. Should we need to close a bubble due to a case of COVID, we may end up having to shut the whole school as we cannot guarantee who the children have had the chance to mix with. Please help us to keep as much of school open as possible by not allowing your children to arrive outside of their time slot.

EYFS and Year 2 arrive at 8.30

Year 1 and Year 3 arrive at 8.40

Year 6 arrive at 8.45

Year 4 and 5 arrive at 8.50

If you have siblings, arrive at the earliest time for any of your children.

Please could only 1 person bring children to school.

## Home Time

Please ensure that you arrive at the correct time slot for your child. We aim to have the minimum number of children waiting in the dismissal area to prevent mixing. If you arrive late, we are increasing the number of children who may potentially mix.

EYFS and Year 2 leave at 3.00

Year 1 and Year 3 leave at 3.10

Year 4 and Year 5 leave at 3.20

Year 6 leave at 3.25

If you have siblings, arrive at the latest time for any of your children.

Please could only 1 person collect children from school.



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## Social distancing

Please can I remind you that as we enter a new lockdown, socialising with those outside of your household is prohibited and politely request that you do not stand and chat with friends whilst waiting at school.

## Childcare

Childcare provided by one other household is still allowed however, it must only be provided by one other household. Please restrict the number of different people who collect your children.

## Bubble Closure

I will do everything I can to ensure that all bubbles are able to come to school, however I think it pertinent to inform you that there may be cases where I simply do not have enough staff available to ensure the safety of the children. I will not be inviting supply teachers into school to cover classes during this period of lockdown and therefore may have no option but to ask you to keep your children at home. This will obviously only happen if there is absolutely no alternative in school.

Prior to closing for half term, a questionnaire was sent to all parents regarding their children's access to technology for learning whilst at home. If you did not reply to this questionnaire, we will be contacting you by telephone in the next week as we must ensure we have this information to provide your child with learning at home should the need arise. It is now a legal requirement that schools provide and monitor learning for pupils who need to isolate due to COVID or bubble closure and therefore we must ensure all pupils are able to access the work we are setting.

## Personal belongings

Lunchboxes can still come in to school but should only be plastic and therefore able to be thoroughly cleaned at the end of each day. In addition to this, the only other personal possessions that should be brought into school are the children's reading books and reading records (on a Thursday). These will be kept in school, changed and new books and the reading record sent home again on the following Monday. Those who may need a change of clothes may continue to bring these into school.

## Dogs

I have been made aware that we have some children who are very apprehensive around dogs. The rules have always been that dogs should not come onto the premises unless a full risk assessment



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has taken place. Unfortunately, I therefore need to ask those of you who drop off or collect from the staff car park entrance not to bring your dogs with you from now on.

The Department for Education have said that they will issue further guidance this week in response to the national lock down and I will keep you informed of any changes that we need to make. Please rest assured that the risks to your child are minimal and we are going above and beyond to keep us all safe. Working together we can keep Chestnuts open, and all pupils, staff and parents safe and well.

If you have any queries or concerns, please do get in touch with us.

Yours faithfully

Becky Skillings  
Headteacher



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