



Chestnuts Primary School

'Encourage, Enable, Empower'

Tel: 01908 373748

email: office@chestnuts.milton-keynes.sch.uk

www.chestnutsprimaryschool.co.uk

Headteacher: Miss Becky Skillings
Deputy Headteacher: Mrs Katie Robins
Assistant Headteacher: Mrs Sam Sear

20 August 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope you are all enjoying the summer break and managing to get some family time in the sunshine (when it makes it's brief appearances).

The purpose of this letter is to outline for you our plans for the safe reopening of school in September, following the latest guidance from the Department for Education in relation to COVID. Obviously, this remains subject to change depending on the situation, but I felt that you would be better served, having earlier notice as there are some changes from previous years.

Breakfast Club

Breakfast Club will continue to run from 8am to 8.40am but will return to the school hall and dining room. This means that we will be able to serve toast and cereal alongside fruit and yoghurt to start the children off in the right way. Again, parents will be asked to leave children at the gate, which will close at 8.10am each morning. Places for Breakfast club can be booked via parentmail.

Arriving at School

I was very hesitant about how the children would cope being asked to come into school without you seeing them to their classroom doors. I was amazed and incredibly impressed with how well they managed this change. The start to the school day was so much calmer, time was able to be used efficiently, and children showed so much more readiness for learning that this is one aspect that we will be keeping. We also saw a large reduction in the number of complaints from local residents relating to parking as cars moved on much more quickly. We will therefore be asking you to leave your children at the school gate again from September.

We will however, be removing the staggered starts and the dictated gate entrances. You will be able to deliver your children to the gate of your choice – either Buckingham Road, or St Georges gate each morning. The gates will open at 8.40 each morning and children will go straight to their own classrooms. For the first few weeks we will have lots of staff on hand to help those who are unsure where to go. Registers will be closed at 8.55 and the gates locked again at this time.

The only exceptions to the gate opening time will be in weeks 2 and 3 when we will open them at 8.30 for our new Foundation children to enter on their own without the rest of the school. From week 4 we will revert to opening at 8.40.



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Fairfields Primary School

Apollo Avenue Fairfields, Milton Keynes MK11 4BA. The company number is 07698904 and is registered in England.



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Home time

Hometime for all pupils will revert to 3.15pm and we will invite parents onto the premises to collect their children. There will be some changes to where children are dismissed from and where we ask parents to wait, to reduce congestion. Again, you may enter and leave via either gate to meet your child. You do not need to wear a mask, but we would strongly recommend that you do as space for waiting is limited. Staff will be on hand for the first few weeks to show you where to go along with signs to show you where to wait.

For those of you familiar with our site, the children will be dismissed from the following locations:

Foundation Stage will leave via the rainbow gate on the front playground;

Both year 1 classes will leave from the fire escape in Ash class – the door nearest to St George's Road Gate;

Oak class will leave from their own door opposite the book corridor;

Birch class will leave from their fire escape under the covered way;

Blossom class will leave via the KS1 entrance under the covered way;

Year 3 will leave via the dining room door on the top playground;

Year 4 will leave via the fire escape and meet parents on the Mugga;

Year 5 and 6 will leave via the entrance nearest to Buckingham Road gate;

Orchard class will leave via the dining room door on the top playground;

Meadow class will leave via the entrance nearest to Buckingham Road gate.

Cleaning and hygiene

As COVID still remains highly transmissible in our community, children will continue to be asked to wash their hands regularly throughout the day. Staff will also clean commonly touched areas frequently throughout each day in addition to the main clean which takes place after school each day. Children will develop colds and we will continue to encourage them to 'catch it, bin it, kill it' and would be grateful if you could help us deliver this message too.

Play and lunch time

Playtimes across school will continue to be staggered to minimise the mixing and also allow the children more space in which to play every day. This means children will play with their peers from their own year group at morning play. At lunchtime however they will have the opportunity to mix with other children and two year groups at a time will be out to play together, giving the children the opportunity to mix with others, but by continuing to minimise the number of children in one area at a time.

Visiting school

Parents and carers will be able to return to visiting school to meet with staff as needed. If when you collect your child, you need to speak with the school office, you may do so, however we will be putting a limit of 1



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person/family in the reception area at a time, so will ask you to form a queue outside if someone is already talking to reception staff. Feel free to keep emailing and phoning with queries and sharing information to reduce queuing and waiting time. You will also be able to have a quick chat with the class teacher if needed at the end of the day. Year group emails however, will continue to be used to enable you to make contact with teaching staff to share relevant information.

If you need to visit school during the school day, deliver a forgotten lunch, or collect a child from school early, you will be able to walk down to the reception area rather than being asked to wait at the gate.

Testing, symptoms, isolation and close contacts

There have been some very large changes to government guidance in relation to the above which we will be following. School staff will continue to carry out LFD testing twice per week.

If a member of the school community develops symptoms, then we are still required to send them home, along with any siblings. It will be requested then that a PCR test is booked. An LFD test is not sufficient. Whilst waiting for the results of the PCR test, the whole family will need to isolate. When a confirmed positive result is received, school WILL NOT be sending anyone else in school home. NHS test and trace are now taking over responsibility for identifying any close contacts. Parents will be contacted and asked who their child has had contact with. Those identified by the child will then be contacted and asked to book a PCR test. They will NOT be asked to isolate. The change in isolation rules relates to all children under the age of 18 and to those adults who have been double vaccinated.

This means that no whole groups will be sent home to remote learn and isolate. School will continue for all children. Those who are isolating due to symptoms or positive case in their household will continue to receive googlemeet links to their classroom so they can continue their education remotely.

Foreign Travel

The guidance from the government regarding isolation after visiting another country continues to change frequently. Please can I ask, that if you have been abroad in the run up to returning to school, that you check the current guidance. Your children are very good at sharing information, and if you have been away it is highly likely they will tell and us should you not be following the current quarantine requirements you will be contacted and asked to remove your children from school. This is to keep us safe and I'd hate to ruin our trusting relationships.

Attendance

There have been changes by the Department for Education on how we code children who are absent in relation to COVID. Last year, all children who were absent due to isolation, or positive testing were coded X



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(not expected in school) which did not have an impact on their attendance levels. This year, isolation and waiting for a PCR will be coded X still, but any child with confirmed COVID will now need to be marked with an I (illness) which will reduce their attendance percentage. Unfortunately, the expectations on attendance levels have not changed and children who miss more than 10% of their school days will be considered a persistent absentee and school will have a duty to act to support families to improve their attendance! I'm sure you see the difficult position we have been put in with this!

PE Days

Last year the children came into school in their PE kits on both their PE days. This was done to reduce risk and mixing for changing however it has been very successful in terms of lost learning time whilst changing, and reduced lost property. Children will therefore continue to be allowed to come to school on their PE days in the PE kit.

Your children will be notified of their PE days on the first day of term.

I hope that there are no further changes to the plans for reopening, but please be aware that should government or local guidance change, then we will need to make further changes. We have also be advised to have an Outbreak Management Plan ready should we be asked to close the school or various year groups again. We have done this and hope that we never have to use it!

I hope you are able to enjoy the rest of the holidays and stay safe, and look forward to seeing you all in September.

Yours faithfully

Becky Skillings
Headteacher



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