



Explore, Learn and Grow Together

Brewery Road
Wooler
Northumberland
NE71 6QF

Wednesday 26th August 2020

Dear Parents/Carers

I am writing to update you on the plans and essential information for welcoming all children back into our schools at the start of the new academic year next week. We are all really looking forward to getting all of the children back into school and into lessons (as I am sure all parents and carers are!). Rather than have another long letter for you to read I have also included in this communication my letters from 15th July which give specific detail on how we will be working from next week. Guidance has not changed our plans so please re-read the letters taking note of what parents and carers need to do to enable us to safely start the term. It is important that you also share the information with your child/children as their understanding and cooperation are essential to making these systems work effectively.

I have also been asked to share with families information on school transport from the County Council (two letters – one to parents/carers and one aimed at the children themselves). These letters are also included in the email to families today. County have also asked that we share wider information regarding travel which I have copied onto the back of this letter. The key message is to consider carefully how and when you need to travel, and importantly for, us to reduce unnecessary congestion around Brewery Road to increase safety for children and families.

There are four main actions that families need to focus on in preparation for the start of term:

1. Ensure that parents/carers and children know and understand the systems of control that we will all be using here in school (detail in my letters dated 15th July 2020).
2. Follow the rules and systems for dropping off and collecting children (detail and images in my letters dated 15th July 2020). It is vital that everyone is in the right place at the right time to enable us to get children in and out of school safely each day. Everyone who needs to come onto the school site will be expected to follow the rules and directions from staff – remember there will be no vehicular access to the school grounds apart from school transport providers and only one parent/carer will be permitted on site when dropping off/collecting children.
3. Ensure that children are well prepared for coming back to school with good home routines in place over the next week.
4. Do not send children into school if they are ill or displaying symptoms of coronavirus.

A hot topic at the moment is the use of face coverings in schools. I have been monitoring the various political announcements (and u-turns) this week before writing to you all and we have considered as a staff and governing body how best to manage this aspect of the children's return to school. We have determined that we will start the term in the follow way:

- All adults coming onto the school grounds will be expected to wear a suitable face covering. This means when parents/carers of younger children are dropping off and collecting they will need to wear a face mask while on the school grounds. We believe that this is important to limit possible transmission of the virus as there will inevitably be some congregating of parents particularly at home times as children are safely handed over from teachers.
- Staff and older children (we will try this from Year 3 upwards next week) will wear a face mask when moving around the school. Face masks will not be worn in classrooms during lessons where we have consistent bubbles of children and movement around the school will be limited.

Please prepare for next week by talking with your child/children about face masks, how to wear them correctly and ensure that they have a suitable one ready for Thursday morning. Below I have added some images of the most common face masks which most people will already have at home for use when out shopping. Children will need to have their masks named and also have a small bag (a sandwich type bag will be ideal) for them to store their mask when not in use – this also needs to be named. Face masks must be plain or with simple patterns and not have words or inappropriate images on them as these could scare our younger children.

1) Surgical type mask



2) Reusable type mask



3) cotton pleated type mask



We have a number of the surgical type masks in the first image here in school that can be used in an emergency.

Below is an example of an illustrated mask that will not be allowed in school:



MASKS LIKE THIS WILL NOT BE ALLOWED IN SCHOOL

Also with this message is the full government guidance issued to school which contains the details of how school should be working as they open fully again in September – it is quite lengthy but does give lots of information on how we will be operating in the coming weeks. I will also be uploading our revised risk assessment document onto the school websites over the next few days so that parents and carers can also access this information easily (it will be in the COVID-19 section).

All staff will be updating their training in our new systems and completing final preparations here in school on Tuesday and Wednesday next week to ensure that we are COVID-19 secure as we welcome children back on Thursday morning. We will of course learn a lot about how our planned systems work as we get going next week and we will be reviewing our systems each day to ensure that everyone is feeling safe, happy and ready to learn.

Keep safe and thank you all in advance for your support and cooperation as we get our schools open and operating again.

M.Deane-Hall
Executive Headteacher

Message to all families from Northumberland County Council regarding travel as schools open for the start of the new academic year

When schools return next week there are concerns that the extra demands on both the highway network and public transport across the country could cause significant issues, in terms of congestion and lack of capacity.

To mitigate this the DfT are encouraging parents and pupils to walk, cycle or scoot to school where possible or to park and stride.

They are also encouraging the public to think about how they can reduce their need to travel at these times; avoiding travelling at peak times, making journeys on foot or to cycle, or continuing to work from home where possible. This will hopefully reduce the demand on the network and free up space for the return to school.

To support this the DfT with the Department for Education have developed messaging for schools and local authorities to use. The messages set out how pupils should travel to school and how to travel safely on public transport and can be accessed here; <https://extranet.dft.gov.uk/safer-transport-campaign/schools/>

In Northumberland we are working with our public transport providers to identify those bus services that may struggle to accommodate scholars due to social distancing restrictions, and where possible we will be providing larger or additional vehicles to ensure that scholars and passengers can undertake their journeys to and from educational establishments in a safe and legally compliant manner.

We are also working to encourage more walking and cycling through behaviour change programmes across the county and to support this work we would like schools to share these messages on their social media and parent mail platforms, where appropriate to encourage safe travel next week, encouraging walking, cycling and scooting where possible, which will hopefully reduce the number of cars and help with social distancing at your schools.