18th August 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians,

We hope everyone is looking forward to getting back to school in the next couple of weeks. We are doing our best to ensure the children settle back in smoothly and we are very aware of their academic, physical, social and emotional needs.

As you may be aware there is an abundance of guidance being conveyed to schools on a regular basis. We are currently working through the guidance to find a model that will be sustainable and will have a positive impact on everyone connected to our school.

We are also very aware of the broad levels of stress and anxiety that has been placed on families over the last few months and we aim to help children and families as much as possible over the next few months.

A key part of the guidance which has been sent to schools is the following:

**Please do not send your child to school if they or anyone they are living with are displaying any of the following symptoms:**

* **A high temperature** – this means if you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature)
* **A new, continuous cough** – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24hrs (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual)
* **A loss of or change in sense of smell or taste**

If your child or anyone in your household has any of the symptoms above, you should get a test for Covid-19. The latest full letter for Parents and Carers from the Education Minister can be found here:

https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/education-restart-letter-parents-and-carers-minister-education

School Return

As per notification at the end of July, School will return full time as normal for P7 on 24th August and for everyone else on Tuesday 1st September.

What the Children Need for Starting School

In general, anything that is sent into school should either be in a wipeable hard plastic box / plastic wallet. Please do not send in school bags or cloth lunch boxes/bags and put your child’s name on all boxes, water bottles and uniform. Anything that is sent into school should be sanitised and we will also encourage the children to sanitise their items before going home.

Your child should bring in the following items, some of which you were notified of in June. These will be kept in school and are for your child’s use only: Pencils, rubber, ruler, sharpener, scissors, pritt stick, packet of Twistables. It may be beneficial also for children to have their own hand sanitiser and tissues.

We will provide plastic wallets that will be used to send home reading books. We will wipe down and sanitise, please do the same before returning to school.

Morning Drop-off and Evening Pick-up

Please take a common sense approach to drop off and pick up. If a large number of people happen to be around the school gate at these times, please keep your distance and wait a few minutes to allow crowds to disperse. If you are in any way uncomfortable about arriving when others are here please feel free to drop off a little later and pick up a little earlier than school hours. Please let us know if this is your intention so we can assist you.

Visiting School

In general, and if at all possible, please refrain from entering the school building. If you need to make contact with any member of staff, please either ring or email in advance so we take appropriate measures. Naturally all our families will have academic and pastoral concerns following such a long break from school. We are here to help, and will be doing all we can to help the children.

New P1 Children

Whilst in general we would like adults to refrain from coming to school as mentioned above, starting P1 is such a special day for the children. We would like a parent to accompany each child to the P1 class as normal on the first day. We will however have to stagger this to maintain social distancing. We are asking small groups of children to arrive in 15minute intervals starting at 8.45am with the last group arriving at 9.15am. We will be in touch over the coming days with your slot. If a slot doesn’t suit, we will do our best to accommodate.

PE Uniform

Children will not need to wear a PE uniform to school until further notice. On the days your child will be doing PE, they can wear a plain white polo shirt underneath their school jumper and also wear trainers. Please do not wear football jerseys. We will deliver PE, as it is a vital component of physical and mental well-being, but it won’t overly rigorous therefore a tracksuit will not be required.

As you were made aware last year we are getting a new school tracksuit, further details will be available in September with a view to wearing tracksuits on PE days in the coming months. We appreciate the cost implications and will do our best to facilitate flexible payments.

Dinner Money

We obviously want to handle as little money as possible in school. Please ensure all dinner money is exact and in a sealed envelope clearly labelled with your child’s name, the amount of money and dinners taken. We will not be in a position to offer change so sending in exact money will help us greatly. Cheques can be made payable to ‘Education Authority’.

Class Bubbles & Staggered Break & Lunch Times

The guidance from DE around bubbles is sketchy to say the least. We will do our best to bubble P1/2, P3/4/5 and P6/7 as they share toilets and cloakrooms. We will have staggered breaks and dinner times for the children in these bubbles. Hygiene and hand washing will be of utmost importance moving forward and we will do our best to ensure the school is a safe place.

After School Club

The After School Club is an area that contradicts the use of bubbles yet the guidance does recognise the need for such a service, therefore it will be considered a ‘different but consistent bubble’ as per the guidance. We will update through Facebook and the website about how to book your child into the club. It will be important should there be a need to track and trace.

If you have any concerns whatsoever please do not hesitate to contact rgallagher100@c2kni.net.

Many thanks,