



# Principal's Newsletter

## June 2021 – END OF TERM NEWSLETTER



Dear Parents / Carers,

*'Wow...what a year this has been! It is safe to say that we are all really looking forward to getting back into some sort of 'normality' come our new school year.'* Can you believe that I actually copied that sentence from my

end of year newsletter from June 2020!!! Little did we know that a full year on Covid would still be having a big impact on the lives of our children

in school. However, my sentiment is still the same...I do hope that the new school year will allow a relaxation of the restrictions and we will be able to see our school return to the way we like it.

Many parents have been asking me about the possibility of lifting some of the Covid Risk Mitigation measures we currently have in place in time for children returning to school next school year. Eg The return of lunch boxes etc. I would LOVE nothing more than to see a lifting of these measures and, hopefully, I can see light at the end of the tunnel. I'm incredibly proud of the entire school community for following these restrictions all year – to date, we haven't yet had to close a full class bubble as a result of a Covid positive case, which is simply FANTASTIC. This shows that all the risk mitigations we put in place, even though at times may have proven tricky, have worked very well for us.

So, for now, we are planning for a return to normal in September. This means that children will be allowed to refill water bottles at our water fountain, lunch boxes will be allowed and hopefully, children will be able to integrate with other children outside of their class bubbles. **THAT IS OUR PLAN.**

However, the Government and The Education Authority will update schools in the middle of the Summer about our return to school. If we need to keep any specific measures in place, I will write to you during the Summer to let you know.

May I take this opportunity to thank you, the parents and carers, for continuing to support school over the past year. Having the ability to count on your support has made the past year as successful as it possibly could be. I must also take the opportunity to thank my amazing team of staff who, as always, have worked incredibly hard both in class with your children and behind the scenes.

As we move on to Summer 2021, please take time to rest and recuperate. ☺

Everyone in our school community deserves it.



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This newsletter contains all the information you require for children starting back to us at the end of August – please keep it somewhere safe over the Summer holiday period. If you do happen to misplace it, an electronic copy can be found on the school website in the 'Principal's Newsletter' section.

## **BREAKFAST CLUB 2021 – 22**

Our breakfast club will continue to run on a daily basis during the next academic year. Children from the morning nursery through to Primary 7 children can attend. There is no need to book a place as we can accommodate a large number of pupils.

A reminder that Breakfast Club will start at 8:00am. We ask all children attending to be in breakfast club no later than 8:30am.

The cost of breakfast club will be £2 per session. Please continue to provide payment each day your child attends. Payment **MUST** be sent in an envelope marked with your child's name.

At the beginning of a new school year parents / carers are required to complete a one off consent form allowing your child to attend breakfast club. Please complete this with the breakfast club staff on the first day your child attends next academic year.

## **School Dinners**

Children are able to avail of school dinners on a daily basis. Our 5 star canteen provides delicious meals for all our children. The cost of school dinners is set by the Education Authority. At present they cost £2.60 per day.

Payment should be sent into school on a Monday morning for the total amount for the coming week. Payment should be sent in an envelope with your child's name on it. Please be advised that exact payment should be sent as we are unable to give change.

## **Money Envelopes**

We know it can be difficult trying to find spare envelopes around the house when sending money into school. To make life a little easier, you can purchase a booklet of money envelopes from the school office for £3. These envelopes, a little like Church collection envelopes, can be used for dinner money, milk money, payment for trips etc. Simply call into the school office if you would like to purchase these.



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### After School Homework / Activity Club

Our Homework Club will be available in September for any children finishing school before 3pm.

Homework club will cost £4.50 per hour and will run from 2pm – 3pm.

Booking envelopes are available from the school office.

Bookings must be made by 12noon on a Friday for the following week. I cannot stress the importance of this as it allows us to appropriately plan staffing and space requirements for the following week.

Payment is required at the time of booking and must be provided in the booking envelope. Please be advised that exact payment is needed as no change can be provided.

Any emergency bookings received after 12noon on a Friday will only be available if there are spaces in Homework Club and will be charged at £6 per hour.

### After School Club – Kids' Cave

Our after school club, Kids' Cave will continue to operate next academic year for all our pupils in Primary 1 – Primary 7. This club is open daily, from 3pm – 5:00pm at a cost of £4:50 per hour. Booking envelopes are available from the school office or from the Kids' Cave room and should be returned on a Friday by 12noon, along with payment, for the next week. I cannot stress the importance of this as it allows us to appropriately plan staffing and space requirements for the following week.

Payment is required at the time of booking and must be provided in the booking envelope. Please be advised that exact payment is needed as no change can be provided.

Any emergency bookings received after 12noon on a Friday will only be available if there are spaces in Kids' Cave and will be charged at £6 per hour.

### Equipment Required For September

All children will have received a list of equipment and resources they will need when they start back to school. This has been sent home in your child's Annual School Report. I would be very grateful if children could bring all their equipment with them on their first day back to school. **Please be advised that all parents will be required to purchase a school planner for their children in September. These will be priced at £3.50 per planner and will be sent home at the start of the new academic year. These can be paid for in September.**



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## Important Information

### Starting Back To School – August 2021

- Nursery and Primary 1 pupils have already had their starting information. This was given to all parents and carers in an induction pack earlier this term.
- School will start back, in a staggered way, from Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> August for children in P2 – P7. Please see points below for your information:
  - ✓ **Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> August** – Children with **surnames** beginning with letters A – J will come to school for half a day – leaving at 12noon. The rest of the children will not come to school.
  - ✓ **Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> August** – Children with **surnames** beginning with K – Z will come to school for half a day – leaving school at 12noon. The rest of the children will not come to school.
  - ✓ **Friday 27<sup>th</sup> August** – **ALL** children will come to school for half a day – leaving at 12noon.
  - ✓ For any families with siblings with different surnames, you are welcome to pick which day you would like to send them to school (they can attend on the same day to make it easier to manage)
  - ✓ As with last year, the ability of bringing in smaller groups of children for the first day allowed the class teacher the opportunity to get to know each child better.
- All children will then return to school, for full days, on Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> August 2021. School is closed on Monday 30<sup>th</sup> August for the Bank Holiday.

### School Timings

Please see the below table for normal school finishing times for all year groups.

	<u>Monday</u>	<u>Tuesday</u>	<u>Wednesday</u>	<u>Thursday</u>	<u>Friday</u>
<u>Primary 1</u>	2:00pm	2:00pm	2:00pm	2:00pm	2:00pm
<u>Primary 2</u>	2:00pm	2:00pm	2:00pm	2:00pm	2:00pm
<u>Primary 3</u>	2:50pm	2:50pm	2:00pm	2:00pm	2:00pm
<u>Primary 4</u>	3:00pm	3:00pm	3:00pm	3:00pm	2:00pm
<u>Primary 5</u>	3:00pm	3:00pm	3:00pm	3:00pm	2:05pm
<u>Primary 6</u>	3:00pm	3:00pm	3:00pm	3:00pm	2:05pm
<u>Primary 7</u>	3:00pm	3:00pm	3:00pm	3:00pm	2:05pm

### School Uniform

- In preparation for returning to school, please ensure that your child has the correct full school uniform. Just a reminder that training shoes are not allowed to be worn outside of PE lessons. Black school shoes should be worn at all other times.



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## **Staffing Information 2021 / 22**

Please find outlined below some staffing changes for 2021 / 22

As with every year, we have the very sad job of saying goodbye to some members of staff as they move on to pastures news. Our entire school community would like to say thanks to the following members of staff and wish them all the best of luck in the future:

- Mrs Lesley Ann Niblock (Classroom Assistant in Nursery)
- Mr Curtis Allen (Teacher)
- Mrs Emma McCullough (Teacher)
- Miss Naomi Campbell (Teacher)
- Miss Lauren Baird (Teacher)
- Miss Rachel Hayes (Classroom Assistant)
- Miss Megan Williams (Classroom Assistant)
- Mrs Lynn Clarke (Classroom Assistant)
- Mrs Michelle McCormack (Cleaner)
- Mrs Sophie Johnston (Classroom Assistant – Mrs Johnston will be coming back to join us and is leaving temporarily to start her maternity leave)
- Mr Philip Clarke (Teacher – Mr Clarke is taking a 1 year career break)
- Mrs Michelle Stewart (Classroom Assistant)

So...as a new chapter begins for all the staff above, we have the opportunity to welcome some new staff to the VPS Family. The following members of staff will be joining us:

- Miss Victoria Smyth (Nurture / SEN Teacher and Primary 1 Job Share)
- Miss Courtney Morrow (Class Teacher)
- Mrs Hannah Galbraith (Class Teacher returning from maternity leave)
- Mrs Rebecca Miskelly (Class Teacher returning from maternity leave)
- Miss Amy Cosgrove (Classroom Assistant)



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<b>Term Dates</b>	
<b>August</b>	Wed 25 <sup>th</sup> – P2 – P7 return (half day and half classes) Thurs 26 <sup>th</sup> – P2 – P7 return (half day and half classes) Fri 27 <sup>th</sup> – P2 – P7 return (half day and full classes) Mon 30 <sup>th</sup> – <b>School Closed (Public Holiday)</b>
<b>September</b>	Wed 1 <sup>st</sup> – P1 and Nursery children begin school. Specific dates and times will be communicated to individual parents. Fri 24 <sup>th</sup> – <b>School Development Day (School Closed)</b>
<b>October</b>	Mon 25 <sup>th</sup> – <b>School Development Day (School Closed)</b> Tues 26 <sup>th</sup> – Fri 29 <sup>th</sup> – Half Term ( <b>School Closed</b> )
<b>December</b>	Tues 21 <sup>st</sup> – School closes at 12pm for Christmas Holidays Wed 22 <sup>nd</sup> – <b>School Development Day (School Closed)</b>
<b>January</b>	Wed 5 <sup>th</sup> – School reopens for all pupils in P2 – P7. Nursery and P1 closed for Open Day. Thurs 6 <sup>th</sup> – School reopens for pupils in Nursery and P1.
<b>February</b>	Mon 14 <sup>th</sup> & Tues 15 <sup>th</sup> – <b>School Development Day (School Closed)</b> Wed 16 <sup>th</sup> – Fri 18 <sup>th</sup> – Half Term ( <b>School Closed</b> )
<b>April</b>	Fri 8 <sup>th</sup> – School closes at 12pm for Easter Holidays Mon 11 <sup>th</sup> – <b>School Development Day (School Closed)</b> Tues 12 <sup>th</sup> – Fri 22 <sup>nd</sup> – Easter Holidays ( <b>School Closed</b> )
<b>May</b>	Mon 2 <sup>nd</sup> – <b>School Closed (Bank Holiday)</b> Mon 30 <sup>th</sup> & Tues 31 <sup>st</sup> – <b>School Development Day (School Closed)</b>
<b>June</b>	Wed 1 <sup>st</sup> – Fri 3 <sup>rd</sup> – ( <b>School Closed – mixture of holiday dates and bank holidays</b> ) Thurs 30 <sup>th</sup> – School closes at 12pm for Summer Holidays.