



Principal's Newsletter

RETURN TO SCHOOL UPDATE



Dear Parents / Carers,

I hope that you and your extended family have had a lovely Summer break and that everyone is looking forward to the children returning back to school next week.

Please find enclosed within this newsletter all the information you need to know in relation to the re-opening of school. As you will be aware, we had been waiting for The Department of Education to revise its plans for schools and I am delighted to say that schools received this guidance during the last week.

The guidance has been well publicised through the media and social media platforms...and this always leads to a little confusion and, at times, fake news. So, please take time to read this newsletter carefully as it will clearly outline the steps we need to take in Victoria in order to ensure that we mitigate the risk of the spread of Covid 19 as we move forward.

Please also be advised that I have had conversations with colleagues from other local schools to discuss re-opening plans. Due to the nature of each individual school, some Covid-19 mitigation measures may need to be different...so don't worry if you hear of another local school doing something a little differently to us.

I, along with the entire staff team, are really looking forward to welcoming children back into school next week. During next week, there will be plenty of staff members available around the school entrance to point children, parents and carers in the right direction in terms of what doors children need to use to come into school. If in doubt...just ask.

See you all next week,

Mr C. Fulton

Principal

START AND FINISH TIMES

The Department of Education document informs schools that plans should still be put in place to ensure that social distancing at pick up and drop off times is maintained. Due to the nature of our school site, we will still need an element of staggered start and finish times, however, they will be different to last year's times.

The first week back is always a little different, so please find starting and finishing times below for **Wed 25th – Fri 27th** and then from **Tues 31st onwards**.

Wed 25th – Fri 27th

As per my previous newsletter you will be aware of a staggered start of pupils during this week.

Wed 25th – Only children with surnames beginning with letters from A – J attend school.

Start Times on Wed 25th: All children can arrive into school between 8.50am and 9.10am. **This extended time is to allow for parents and carers not to rush to school for 8.50am and to allow for social distancing.** There will be **no** supervision of pupils on the school grounds before 8.50am so I would ask that parents / carers ensure that no children arrive on site before this time.

Finish Times on Wed 25th:

P2: 11.50am P4: 11.55am P6: 12noon

P3: 11.50am P5: 11.55am P7: 12noon

Thurs 26th - Only children with surnames beginning with letters from K - Z attend school.

Start Times on Thurs 26th: All children can arrive into school between 8.50am and 9.10am. **This extended time is to allow for parents and carers not to rush to school for 8.50am and to allow for social distancing.** There will be **no** supervision of pupils on the school grounds before 8.50am so I would ask that parents / carers ensure that no children arrive on site before this time.

Finish Times on Thurs 26th:

P2: 11.50am P4: 11.55am P6: 12noon

P3: 11.50am P5: 11.55am P7: 12noon

Fri 27th – All children will come to school on this day.

Start Times on Fri 27th: All children can arrive into school between 8.50am and 9.10am. **This extended time is to allow for parents and carers not to rush to school for 8.50am and to allow for social distancing.** There will be **no** supervision of pupils on the school grounds before 8.50am so I would ask that parents / carers ensure that no children arrive on site before this time.

Finish Times on Fri 27th:

P2: 11.50am P4: 11.55am P6: 12noon

P3: 11.50am P5: 11.55am P7: 12noon

From Tuesday 31st August onwards

(Remember, school is closed on Monday 30th August for the Bank Holiday)

Start Times for all pupils Monday to Friday: All children can arrive into school between 8.50am and 9.10am. **This extended time is to allow for parents and carers not to rush to school for 8.50am and to allow for social distancing.** There will be **no** supervision of pupils on the school grounds before 8.50am so I would ask that parents / carers ensure that no children arrive on site before this time.

Finish Times (Mon to Thurs):

P2: 2pm

P3: 2.50pm Mon and Tues 2pm Wed and Thurs

P4: 2.45pm

P5: 2.45pm

P6: 3pm

P7: 3pm

Finish Times (Friday)

P2: 2pm P4: 1.55pm P6: 2pm

P3: 2pm P5: 1.55pm P7: 2pm

All P1 times will be confirmed with parents via the P1 teachers during induction meeting.

All parents / carers are asked to leave the school grounds immediately after drop off and pick up.

Class Bubbles

You may have heard a lot of information about the use of bubbles on the news and via social media. The Department of Education guidance still places a duty on schools to ensure, in the event of a pupil testing positive, that we can accurately contract trace close contacts. Without the use of bubbles, inside the school building, it would be almost impossible for us to do this. From the beginning of this school year, during the main school day, class bubbles will still be in operation throughout school.

Hand Hygiene

Children will be required to sanitise their hands upon arrival to school, and will either wash their hands or sanitise their hands at regular intervals throughout the school day. Please speak to your children about good hand hygiene at home prior to their return to school. You are welcome to send your child into school with their own small bottle of hand sanitiser if you wish.

Tissues will be available in all classrooms, however, it may be handy for your child to have their own little packet of tissues.

Uniform

Children should wear their full school uniform when they return to school and they should try to come to school in a clean uniform each day.

Equipment

On their first day, children should only bring into school the items they had been asked to provide – this list was enclosed in your child's school report. All of these items will be left in school and will not travel home with the child on a daily basis. Please do not buy large pencil cases. Please only send your child into school with a plain plastic pencil case that can be easily wiped clean.

School Bags

Children are allowed to bring school bags to school.

Lunch Boxes

Children can bring lunch boxes into school this year. Can I please ask parents / carers to ensure that lunch boxes are cleaned daily before sending them back into school the next day.

Coats

As always, parents are asked to send their child(ren) into school with a coat. Coats will be placed in our school cloakrooms throughout the school day.

P.E Kits

Full PE kits should be sent into school with all children on the first day of term. When we feel it is appropriate to start wearing PE Kits for PE we will do so ASAP, however, at the beginning of term, children will most likely only change into training shoes to complete their PE and as much PE as possible will take place outside.

School Planners / Homework Diary

Staff have taken on board the extremely positive feedback received from parents in relation to our planners. School planners will be able to travel from school and home via your child's school bag. Teachers will not be handling pupil planners on a daily basis and will only do so in exceptional circumstances. As with last year, planners are £3.50 per child. Please send in £3.50, in a sealed envelope, with your child's name on it, on your child's first day of school to cover the cost of the planner. In order to reduce the touching of money as much as possible, no change will be given, so please send in correct money. Due to a slight delivery delay...to do with the Irish Sea Border...pupil planners will not be with us on the first day of term. 😊

Water Bottles

Water bottles may travel to and from school. They will remain in your child's classroom throughout the day. Please be advised that, due to hygiene issues, water bottles cannot be refilled during the school day.

School Lunches

School lunches will begin on Tuesday 31st August. Lunches will cost £2.60 per day and payment must be sent into school on the first day of the week for the full week.

Payment must be made in an envelope, marked with your child's name and the days they are attending for lunch. Please be advised that no change can be given. If an overpayment is made it will be added to the school fund.

Snack

We operate an optional snack system in school. The school canteen will provide your child with a healthy snack on a daily basis (eg toast / pancake and a small piece of fruit). Our snack service will begin on the week beginning Monday 6th September and costs £3 per week. Payment must be made on a Monday. Money must come into

school in an envelope, labelled with your child's name. Staff will not accept cash / cheques unless they come into school in an envelope. Please be advised that no change can be given. If an overpayment is made it will be added to the school fund.

Parents / Carers entering the school building

Our school buildings are closed to all visitors except our children, staff and essential visiting workers. Parents will be actively discouraged from entering the school buildings as a means of preventing spread of the virus. Instead we encourage communication by: telephone 02893351781, or email victoriaprimary@hotmail.co.uk

School Car Park

The school will operate a one-way system for dropping off and collecting children. Parents and children should enter via the pedestrian gate on Coronation Road and follow the one way signs by exiting the school via the car park gate on Coronation Road – exactly the same as last year. This will happen at the beginning and end of the school day. At all other times, when foot traffic is low, parents and carers may enter and exit via the pedestrian gate, allowing for social distancing if another visitor passes. THE SCHOOL CAR PARK WILL NOT BE ACCESSIBLE FOR ANY PARENT / VISITOR AT THE BEGINNING OR END OF THE SCHOOL DAY. This is due to the car park gate being used as the pedestrian exit. Please do not attempt to gain entry to the school car park. It is strictly for staff only.

Unwell Children

It is vitally important that parents keep their children home from school when they are experiencing any symptom of the Coronavirus i.e. a new continuous cough, high temperature or loss of taste and smell. Children who are ill at all, should not be sent to school and they will be isolated and sent home immediately if they are found to be ill or become ill during the school day to give our staff and parents confidence that our school is a safe and healthy place to learn and work, especially during current restrictions. We may appear fussier about this than normal, especially for working parents, but we ask for your patience and understanding in advance.

What if....

Procedure if a child displays symptoms of Covid-19 in school:

- School will contact parent/carer.

- An adult will supervise the child who will be isolated from others and taken to a well ventilated area.
- Any staff member staying with the child will continue to look after them safely until their parent comes to collect them.
- If you are asked to collect your child due to symptoms of COVID 19 developing you will collect them from the main entrance.
- The child will go for a test ASAP or isolate at home for 10 days. Tests can be booked online at: <https://covid-19.hscni.net/testing/>
- The children within that group will continue to attend school as their bubble until the outcome of the individual's test result.
- Where the child tests negative, they can return to their class and end their self-isolation 48 hours after their symptoms have gone.
- Where the child tests positive, the rest of their class will be sent home, after guidance from PHA. In a change to guidance, children identified as a close contact do not need to isolate for 10 days if they receive a negative test result. So, if your child is identified as a close contact, you have the option to isolate until a negative test result comes back, **or** self-isolate for 10 days.

Breakfast Club

Breakfast Club will begin on Wednesday 25th August. Breakfast Club operates from 8am and costs £2 per day. We ask that all children are at breakfast club no later than 8.30am. No food is served after this time. Payment for breakfast club should be sent into breakfast club with your child, in an envelope, clearly marked with your child's name. No change can be given. Social Distancing restrictions will still be in place during breakfast club.

We would ask that parents / carers send children to breakfast club with some colouring pens/pencils and a colouring book / reading book etc. to use in breakfast club as our toys will still not be able to be used. The items you send into breakfast club for your child to use will remain in breakfast club.

Afterschool Homework / Activity Club

Our Homework Club will be available in September for any children finishing school before 3pm. This will begin from Tuesday 31st August.

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.

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 will begin on Tuesday 31st August. 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.

Children Walking Home From School

We allow children in P5, P6 and P7 to walk home from school unaccompanied. If you would like your child to walk home, without an adult, please ensure you write a letter of consent to your child's class teacher on the first day of term. We will not allow children to walk home without a letter of consent.