



194 Listooder Road
Saintfield
Co. Down
BT24 7JA

Tel: 028 97510407
Fax: 028 97519074
www.academyprimary.com
Email: rfegan499@c2kni.net

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Dear Parent,

I would like to begin by welcoming each family with established connections back to Academy and by extending a warm welcome to our new families. After the long months of lockdown, we have had an extremely positive start to the new academic year. My favourite part of the week was walking up to our all-weather pitch and hearing children laugh, shout and have fun with their friends. Many thanks for your patience, encouragement and support regarding our school restart programme.

Enrolment

School commenced on Tuesday 24 August. We have 407 children in the main school and 52 in our Nursery. The school now has 459 pupils. The good name and reputation of our school continues to attract children from all backgrounds. Please ask any new families who move into your street or area to make contact with me personally to discuss availability for either our nursery or in the main school.

Pastoral Care

Our collective aim as a staff is to ensure that each one of our pupils will learn in a safe and happy environment.

- If you have any concerns regarding day-to-day classroom matters you should make an appointment to discuss these with your son or daughter's class teacher.
- If you have any concerns or have any worries regarding **Child Protection**, please speak to Mrs Dickson (Designated Teacher). Mrs Cockroft and Mrs Martin are the Deputy Designated Teachers in Mrs Dickson's absence.
- If you have any **serious** concerns about any aspect relating to the **curriculum**, then as a first point of reference you should contact:

Nursery
P4 and 5

Mrs Cockroft
Mrs Martin

P1-3
P6 and P7

Mrs Logan
Mrs Eadie

Attendance

All children who are unwell prior to coming to school should be kept at home.

Children's attendance will be formally recorded daily on a SIMS Electronic Register. As a result, parents should note the following for the incoming year.

- From September 2020 any absence from school in line with DE guidelines will mean children will lose out on an attendance mark. e.g. holidays, sickness, sporting activities, visits to Saintfield & Balmoral Show etc.
- All **late** days will be recorded and 5 late days will equate to one day's absence (i.e. 1 late day = 0.2%)
- **Partial absences** e.g. medical appointments that last longer than half a day (i.e. 2.5 hrs for P1-2 and P3 M, W, F and 3 hrs for P3 T, Th and P4-7) will result in a half day's absence being recorded.
- New Covid-19 rules have been set in place by the Department of Education and if you have any queries should covid-19 absences occur, please contact me.
- **Where possible, please arrange medical and dental appointments after 3pm to avoid toing and froing from school.** If this is not possible. You collect your child at an arranged time from the glass windows at Mrs Dobson's office. Mrs Dobson will ring the teacher to tell them you are waiting and your child will be brought from their class to the main door by a Classroom Assistant.

If your child is absent on a given day, please phone the school that morning to tell us the reason for their absence.

School Rules

Our school rules remain the same as last year. The new streamlined rules worked very well and were clearly understood by all pupils and staff. 1. Respect Rule 2. Kindness Rule and 3. Safety Rule. Mr Fegan and your child's teacher will already have talked to the class about these rules. Our Positive Behaviour Policy has been updated as per departmental guidance regarding recommended sanctions for children spitting or deliberately and consistently ignoring social distancing. Please refer to my previous letter. **P.T.O.**

School Meals

All payments should now be made using our electronic payment system called 'School Money'. Mrs Dobson is sending your welcome letter from 'School Money' via e-mail this week. This will offer guidance on how our new cashless system operates. Please be patient with us as we get to grips with the new system. Please ensure we have the most up to date e-mail address for you. The price of a school meal will be **£2.60**. It is our intention to have our school meals up and running by 7th September. **If we are not** ready to serve hot meals on 7th September, I will inform you via e-mail and we will operate the same format as the week beginning 1st September.

Blended Learning

If there is a spike in covid-19 and a 'bubble' or part of the school has to close, we will adopt the blended learning approach where your children will be taught remotely from home for any period of isolation. Very soon you will receive information on how to link with 'See-Saw', our new home learning monitoring app.

Temperature Checks

This week we trialled taking everyone's temperature in the mornings and it was very manageable. Hand held thermometers record temperatures from the children's forehead. Many staff and parents have requested this for reassurance. If you have any issue with it, please contact me.

Parking

Please continue to use the chapel car park when possible. This is the safest option for collecting children, reducing traffic in our turning circle. Please refer to my previous letter. **Be extra cautious at the moment as Phoenix Gas are completing roadworks on Old Grand Jury Road and on the Listooder Road!** We ask that parents park respectfully in the local area, giving due consideration to residents' driveways.

Medical / Contact Numbers / Allergies

I would ask all parents to make sure that the school has up to date medical / dietary information. **Please inform the school if your details have changed in any way, especially telephone numbers, e-mail addresses, home addresses or children's medical needs.** If nothing has changed, we will work with the information you provided last year. Appropriate inhalers / Epi pens should be given to the class teacher and parents should make sure that expiry dates have not been exceeded.

As we have a number of children who have allergies to nuts, kiwi fruit and sesame seeds it would be greatly appreciated if you would prevent your child from bringing these products to school. Please remember that school is a nut free zone. Whilst it is impractical to enforce a ban on all these substances we would ask that due consideration is given to food selections and that children are taught to be vigilant to avoid unnecessary food substances being transported around school. We discourage children from sharing food with others. We ask that, where possible, packed lunches are made giving due consideration to our lunchtime supervisors and that food can be opened by the children themselves where they do not rely on an adult touching food and/or packaging.

Breakfast Club

Breakfast Club is temporarily postponed until we feel comfortable that risks can be minimised further.

Mobile Phones

In the past children in Upper Key Stage 2 have been allowed to bring mobile phones to school if they need them. If your child falls into this category please send their phone in a sandwich bag and they will be given to the teacher in the morning then stored in a shared box. ***We are asking that children in Upper Key Stage 2 only carry mobile phones to school if they absolutely have to.***

Younger Children Returning Home

Children in P1-3 must be accompanied by an adult to and from school. P4 children may walk home accompanied by an older sibling. Children in P5-7 are able to walk home on their own if permitted to do so.

School Bus

Our new school bus driver is called Peter Hawkins. **Please contact Peter on 07517965236** if your child will be using our school bus service and he will inform you of pick up and drop off times and locations. Please call him between 2pm and 4pm on Friday 28th August. Children are to sit with siblings where possible. It is advised that children wear masks on the bus. When breakfast club was operational the bus used to do two runs. It is hoped, as a temporary measure, the bus will do **one run** and all children travelling by bus will arrive at 0850'ish'. A staff member will ensure the bus children are safely taken to classrooms when the bus arrives. In the afternoons the bus will leave promptly at 1400 and 1500 regardless of staggered times. **Please inform your child's class teacher** via e-mail (see school website) if your child will be getting the bus in the afternoon. Your child will be taken to the bus every afternoon unless we are told otherwise.

P.E.

Your child's class teacher will be in contact very soon regarding which days your child will have P.E. On these days they can wear their P.E. uniform to school. This can start the week beginning 7th September.

Children Staying Late

When children avail of Paddington Day Care or stay it is the sole responsibility of parents to let day care providers and Peter the bus driver know of any change in arrangements.

Communication

Face to face meetings with teachers should be kept to a minimum at present. If you need to speak to your child's class teacher, please log a call with Mrs Dobson and the teacher will endeavour to phone you at their earliest opportunity. Alternatively, contact them via e-mail. Please see our website for teacher e-mail addresses. Go to *Parents* then *School Restart*.

Children being collected at 1400/1500 /Grass areas at front of school

Parents should always collect their child / children from the playground (P1-2) / front of the school (P3-7) and not from school corridors or outside classrooms. I would ask parents to ensure that there are no younger children playing on the grass in front of the P3/P4 classrooms between 1400-1500 or at pick up times. This is for their own safety.

Displaying symptoms

Please see the attached quick guide of protocol if a child or staff member displays symptoms or tests positive for Covid-19. As a school we will obviously take good care of each and every child in our care and will reassure them at each stage if they develop symptoms onsite. As previously stated, we are not medical experts but as we come in to the colder months a lot of common sense will be exercised as well as caution. Please do not send your child to school if they are displaying the following symptoms:

- a high temperature OR
- a new, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual); OR
- a loss of or change in sense of smell or taste.

Children should also not attend school if they are returning from a country which requires a quarantine period.

Here's to a successful year at Academy Primary. We hope that your child will be happy and develop in every way at our school.

Yours sincerely,

Richard Fegan