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REOPENING OF SCHOOL TO ALL CHILDREN MONDAY 8TH MARCH 2021 **INFORMATION FOR PARENTS/ CARERS**

Dear Parents/Carers,

I hope that you and your families are well. Following the Prime Minister's announcement earlier this week I am writing to let you know our plans for reopening school to all children on Monday 8th March. I also want to thank all parents, carers and other members of our community who have helped us in so many ways whilst school has been closed to the majority of children; by supporting their child's remote learning (we know how difficult this can be!), by following the guidance to keep everyone safe, by sending school staff lovely messages and "thank you" gifts and many other ways. This means a great deal to all staff and we really appreciate your on-going support and kindness.

Since January only children of critical workers and children identified as being more vulnerable have attended school. Although the number of children has been limited this has meant around 20% of children have attended school with the rest learning remotely. We have safely and successfully managed our school community and everyone has stayed safe and well. In fact we have had no reported cases of Covid-19 in school since October 2020.

Over the past year we have put in place the best protective measures to keep our children, our staff and our community safe. We are now in the process of reviewing and developing these measures using the [latest Government guidance for schools](#) which was updated on 22nd February, to inform our risk assessments so that all children can return. The Department for Education has also updated its [information for parents and carers](#) which can also be found online.

The essential protective measures which we will continue to follow include:

- a requirement that people who are ill stay at home
- minimising contact with individuals who are required to self-isolate by ensuring they do not attend school
- robust hand and respiratory hygiene for everyone in school
- enhanced cleaning arrangements
- active engagement with NHS Test and Trace if required
- reduced contacts and maintaining distancing between those in school wherever possible
- keeping occupied spaces well ventilated

The updated guidance is clear that groups should be kept apart and movement around school kept to a minimum. At Mersey Vale we will continue to group children together in phase or year group bubbles and avoid contact with other bubbles as much as possible. Staff will maintain distance from pupils and other staff as much as they can.



Since September, one of the key additional protective measures we have put in place is to stagger start and end times for classes and this will continue when we reopen to all children. The grid below is a reminder of the start and end times for each bubble and the entrance gate which should be used.

Time	Gate A	Gate B
8:45am – 2:45pm	Y6	Y2
8:50am – 2:50pm	Y5	Y3
8:55am – 2:55pm	Y4	Y1
9.00am – 3.00pm	-	Reception
8.40am – 11.40am		Morning Nursery
12.20pm – 3.20pm		Afternoon Nursery

We ask that parents/ carers are prompt when arriving and leaving and we encourage all adults to distance from each other and wear a face covering.

It remains our intention to revert to our "normal" school hours for all classes as soon as it is safe to do so.

The School Day

We want school to be as normal as possible, given the requirements and guidance we will be following. Here are some key points about the school day and reminders of what was in place during the autumn term;

- Children should wear full school uniform including appropriate plain, black school shoes. If the weather is poor please ensure they bring a coat or waterproof jacket as there will be outdoor learning and play. They should also have their PE kit in school.
- Children will be part of a bubble. At Mersey Vale we have 7 bubbles; EYFS (Nursery & Reception), Year 1, Year 2, Year 3, Year 4, Year 5, Year 6.
- Regular handwashing and sanitising routines will continue to be put in place for everyone.
- Teachers will be planning for a range of indoor and outdoor learning to deliver an ambitious, broad and balanced curriculum.
- Children will be provided with many opportunities to talk about any worries they have and to ask questions during regular PSHE check-ins and other activities. All children from Year 1 to Year 6 will benefit from the experience of a weekly Forest School session with other children from their class bubble.
- Wherever possible children from Year 1 to Year 6 will have their own workspace and classrooms will be arranged with forward facing desks.
- As bubbles should be kept apart, we will avoid large gatherings such as assemblies or other events with more than one group.
- We have carefully organised timetables for each class to ensure staggered start/ end times as well as staggered playtimes and lunchtimes.
- For individual and very frequently used equipment, such as pencils and pens, staff and children will have their own items that are not shared.
- It is still recommended that pupils limit the amount of equipment they bring into school each day, to essentials such as lunch boxes, water bottles, hats, coats, books and stationery. Bags are allowed. Children are encouraged to bring their own pencil case which will remain in school containing; pencils, pens, ruler, rubber, pencil sharpener and colouring pencils (not felt tips or gel pens). If you are not able to provide this please let the class teacher know as soon as possible via ClassDojo. Please also provide a labelled water bottle for your child. This will need to go home every day to be washed and refilled.
- Classroom based resources, such as books and games, can be used and shared within a bubble; these will be cleaned regularly, along with all frequently touched surfaces. Resources that are shared

between classes or bubbles, such as sports, art, computing, music and science equipment will be cleaned between bubbles, or rotated to allow them to be left unused and out of reach for a period of 48 hours (72 hours for plastics) between use by different bubbles.

- Children and staff can take books and other shared resources home, although unnecessary sharing should be avoided
- Lunch will be eaten in the classroom bubble or, if the weather is good, will be enjoyed outdoors. This will be supervised by the class Midday Assistant. If you wish to order a lunch or are entitled to Free School Meals, then please do so in the normal way.
- Our Breakfast Club and After School Club will operate from Monday 8th March. If you would like to book a place for your child in either club please email your requirements to afterschoolclub@merseyvale.stockport.sch.uk

Attendance Expectations

School attendance will be mandatory for all children from 8th March. This means from that point, the usual rules on school attendance will apply, including:

- parents' duty to secure that their child attends regularly at school
- schools' responsibilities to record attendance and follow up absence
- the availability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices in line with local authorities' codes of conduct

Parent/ carer Consultations

Our spring term parent/ carer consultations were planned to take place next week but will now take place in the final week of term during the week beginning 22nd March. This will be an opportunity to discuss how children have settled back into school, how they engaged with remote education and to identify their strengths as well as any gaps in their learning.

I'm sure that we all agree that returning to school is vital for children's education, their academic development and for their wellbeing and we are very much looking forward to all children being back in school.

I look forward to welcoming you and your families back on 8th March. If you have any questions or require any further information in the meantime, please feel free to contact the school office.

Yours faithfully,



Mrs. J. Mullane

Headteacher