

Monday 6th July 2020

Dear Parent/Carers,

Thank you for your support this term and over the course of this academic year. It has been a very challenging time for everyone and we appreciate your patience, support and understanding during the unprecedented pandemic. Schools have never experienced such change and disruption before and we know that you have found our learning platforms and correspondence both useful and supportive.

Our aim has been to keep communication honest and open and up to date with the significant amount of changes to government policy and guidance on reopening of schools. Revised guidance has been released on 2nd July 2020 by the government about full reopening of schools in September. The document and guidance shares the government’s rationale and expectation for all children to return to full time education in September 2020.

The guidance can be found at the Gov.uk website – **Guidance for full opening – schools**

The government have stated that returning to school is vital for children’s education and their well being. They have said time out of school is detrimental for children’s cognitive and academic development, particularly for disadvantaged children.

We are planning and completing necessary risk assessments and reviewing policies and procedures across school to welcome children back safely in the autumn term. All plans and risk assessments will need to be ratified by governors and Sunderland Authority prior to our school opening.

For your information:

* Children will remain in class bubbles and social distancing encouraged as much as possible.
* Entry and exit points to the school building may change.
* There will be staggered starst, lunch, play and end of the school times to minimise mixing of groups and implementing rigorous hygiene measures.
* We will ensure that the total number of hours teaching time that any pupil receives remains the same e.g. an earlier start time would mean an earlier finish time or shorter lunchtime.
* There will be no large gatherings in school bringing groups together e.g. whole school assemblies.
* We will be running a breakfast club from the start of the term for those parent/carers who have no other option. **All places will have to be pre booked and no child can turn up on the day**. The price will remain at £2.50 and run from 7.45am. All children who use this facility must be on the site prior to 8.20am before any other groups arrive.
* We will not be running any after school clubs in the first instance. From Wednesday 3rd September, we will run essential childcare support for families until 4.15pm. **All places will have to be pre booked and no child can turn up on the day.** The cost will be £2.50 each day.

If you have no other option and would like your child to access our breakfast club or after school child care, you must book and pay for a place prior to the new term. All payments can be made through Sunderland City Council website, click ‘online payments’. We also ask that you contact Mrs Reynolds by **Monday 13th July** so that we can ascertain numbers, plan provision and plan staffing. The Dfe have stated that ideally schools would keep to the bubbles used during the school day, but recognise this might not be. This allows us to run a breakfast club and afterschool provision for those families who have no other option but create consistent bubbles to do so.

Following a successful implementation to the new academic year and welcoming all pupils back to school safely, consideration will be given to any after school provision. We understand that this might be disappointing for many children. However, we have to prioritise and establish a safe return to school with time to refine and evaluate plans where necessary.

If your child is in Year 5 or 6 next year and you wish for them to walk home unaccompanied from the first day of term, you will need to complete the relevant form. This is available on our school website or please contact the school office who will issue you the relevant form.

**I will be writing to everyone next week detailing start and end times for each year group, their entry and exit points and our final plans of how we will be welcoming children back in September.**

I would like to give you a few reminders about some of our expectations and procedures in school prior to the new academic year.

**School Uniform: Children must return to school in September wearing their school uniform.** There is no need for children to wear clean clothes every day. Many of you may be buying new school uniform. Our own uniform with school logo is available to purchase from Little Gems in the Galleries. Our uniform consists of royal blue sweatshirt/cardigan, blue or white polo shirt, grey or black trousers/skirt/tunic, black shoes/trainers (no heels or open toes) or white/blue summer check dress. Similar coloured clothing can be purchased from many shops and supermarkets. Haircuts must not be extreme and must not be dyed or include shaved lines or patterns.

**Equipment**: Children can bring a school bag with them but no pencil cases, toys etc as children will be issued with their own stationery. Books and homework can be sent between home and school to support learning but please do not send any non essential items to school. If you have any of our school reading books at home, please can you send them back to school.

**School meals**: Children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 are entitled to a free school meal under the universal government scheme. Children in Key stage 2 who wish to purchase a meal for £2.30 can do so. Schools meals need to be paid on a Monday for the week at £11.50, preferably online so we don’t have to handle cash. Alternatively children can bring a packed lunch and water bottle clearly named. There is no requirement for children to bring a packed lunch in disposable containers.

**PE kits:** PE kits consist of Blackfell’s own t shirt with logo or suitable plain white t shirt and plain black elasticated shorts. Football strips are **not** allowed to be worn. Black plimsolls or trainers can be worn for P.E. lessons. Please send P.E. kits in to school on the first day of the school year and ensure that they are in school at all times as the children may have additional opportunities to take part in sporting activities as well as normal P.E. lessons. P.E. hoodies can be purchased to wear outdoors but are **not** to be worn as a school jumper. There will be no contact sport but physical activity will be strongly encouraged, particular outdoors.

**Jewellery**: As stated in our school prospectus, only watches are allowed to be worn by the children. If children are getting their ears pierced during the summer break, please can I ask that it is at the beginning of the holiday as earrings need to be removed for school to comply with our Health and Safety policy.

**Attendance:** It is the government’s expectation that all children return to school full time from the beginning of the autumn term. Please be mindful that we are unable to authorise a request for leave of absence or holiday during term timeunless for exceptional circumstances. Forms are available from the school office or from our website. We are very proud that our attendance is above national figures and next year will continue to celebrate and have numerous initiatives and incentives for outstanding attendance. Attendance is closely monitored in our school and any unauthorised absence is reported to the Local Authority’s attendance team. Absence taken in term time without prior permission from the school may result in legal sanctions for irregular attendance being taken against parent/carers by the Local Authority. If your child is unwell or will not be attending school, please contact the school office prior to the morning session. If your child is not at morning registration, you will be contacted by telephone/text inline with our safeguarding procedures.

Our **school website** will be continually updated so please keep an eye on this closely.

Yours sincerely

Julia Watkins

Headteacher