

3rd September 2020

Dear Parents

Below is some further information, and some requests, which we hope will both reassure and also properly prepare for, the full return of Years 1-6 on Monday September 7th.

AMALGAMATION AND THE SCHOOL WEBSITE

The School is now one single primary school. Parkwood Primary School now has a new website address; www.parkwoodprimary.org.uk
The previous web address will forward to the new one for the time being. Although the website looks slightly different, we have kept as much historical information on there, for the time being, as parents may want to refer back to letters and reminders.

HOMEPAGE – SCHOOL STAGGERED START AND FINISH TIMES AND WHAT TO EXPECT

On the homepage, you will find the School Day, 'Staggered Start and Finish Times', which have not changed since they were released in July but can be accessed easily on the homepage of the website. Below this is a link to the detailed reminders of what to expect when the children return and the important things to remember on Monday. Foundation Stage have a different approach to the start of the school year, as the school is following the recommendations of the local authority, including Early Years and Health.

ANY CHANGES TO THE ADVICE THE SCHOOL IS GIVING?

The school has added a request that at the start and end of the school day, whenever it is busy, that parents/family members, wear face masks. This is in order for everyone to feel safer. In the event of an appointment being made so that a parent comes onto the school grounds, they will need to wear a mask.

Parents may wonder if the children, especially the older children, should wear masks. There is no recommendation to do this. However, should parents wish their children to wear masks, the children must be responsible for taking them off and putting them on and for keeping them safe. The staff will not be helping children to do this or touching their masks and children cannot help each other to do this.

THE CHILDREN ARE BEING ASKED TO ONLY BRING A PACKED LUNCH BOX AND A WATER BOTTLE AND THEY WILL ALSO BE GIVEN A PLASTIC FOLDER FOR BOOKS ON DAY 1, WHY IS THIS AND WOULDN'T IT BE EASIER TO BRING A BAG?

It would be easier to bring a bag, but we are asking that children do not. The reason for this is that all children from Year 1 to 6 are being provided with a 'Smart Sack', which will mean they do not have to gather in Corridors or Cloakrooms. They will go into class, put their belonging in their own smart sack on their chair and so this will keep their belongings separate. They can then take their belongings home at the end of the day, knowing they haven't had to gather in cloakrooms and that their things have been kept to themselves. It also means we may get less strange little belongings and clutter brought in, which tend to gather in trays and create an unusual cocktail of bits!

Could we also ask that wherever possible children wear a lightweight coat or Kagoule/waterproof into school if the weather dictates it to be necessary, which can go under their chairs in the classrooms. Thanks for your help with this.

AS PARENTS HOW CAN WE HELP MAKE THE START AND END OF THE DAY EASIER FOR THE CHILDREN, OUR FAMILIES AND THE SCHOOL?

There are some key things;

- Talk to your children over the weekend about what it will be like.
- Accept the fact that it's going to be unbelievably difficult to get over 530 children in on the first day, with lots of staggered start times, and that there will be a degree of uncertainty. We will do all we can to make it work, but it's the first day and there will be teething issues, please bear with us!
- Please.. Be on time. We're going with 'smart phone' times for adults (including staff) and the margins for error are tiny. Getting all the year groups through will be difficult so please stick to the times detailed on the website.
- Be ready to drop and go. My strong advice would be to find a special place, the park, your car, a certain place on the pavement, away from the school, to say a proper and thoughtful goodbye to your children. Let them know that after that it's a walk to the gate and a drop and go. If goodbyes take time at the gate, it will mean we cannot get the children in on time and risks the prospect of a backing up of people.
- It will be upsetting and unsettling for many children and parents. Many parents are still very anxious about sending their children back to school. We will work together to make it work.
- Please do not congregate with other parents outside the school gates. We need to keep the flow of children coming in and pavements as free flowing as possible. I know this will not be helpful in terms of friends you may not have seen for a while, but we need to keep this area, for everyone's safety, moving, as much as possible.
- As someone who has adopted the 'spoonful of Kalpol and see how you go' approach myself, I urge parents not to do this now or in the months ahead. If you are in any doubt that your child has a new cough, a temperature, a loss of taste or smell, please do not send them in. They would likely be sent home quickly anyway and it would be for parents to assure themselves and update the school by arranging a Coronavirus test.

BEHAVIOUR

The current guidelines and expectations on bubbles, means that behaviour which leads to this security for children and staff being put at risk, cannot be accepted. In the event that children make the choice not to follow adult instructions, they will be expected to be collected straight away. This does not mean younger children who will find social distancing difficult, this is understandable, this is more about the older children who do not stick to their bubbles or do not follow adult instructions in terms of safety. This may lead to the school risk assessing this situation and working with parents on alternative arrangements for individuals.

IS THIS FOREVER and NOT ALL SCHOOLS ARE DOING THE SAME THING

Over the past five months it is clear that all schools are following the guidance in different ways. At Parkwood we are determined to follow the guidance carefully, cautiously and fully, providing as much safety and strategic planning as possible to

negate the danger of Covid 19. I would ask Parents to accept that the approach we are taking is to put everything in place we can, and then remove restrictions or introduce relaxations, one by one, as the situation changes. Rather than start with less and have to add things if it isn't safe. I would much rather be accused of playing it too safe than anything else. This does have knock on effects on people's lives, which I know are already stressed and challenging in many cases and we really appreciate your support.

We can't wait to see the children and we can't wait to get back to normal. The first of these things can happen and the long road back to the second, has hopefully begun. We will continue to tread carefully so we all travel the road safely.

Mr A Moir
Headteacher