King Street Primary & Pre - School

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18th September 2020

Dear Parents/Carers

This week we have sent out a couple of letters to families which do require a response. On Tuesday we sent out the NHS flu vaccination consent form. It appears they do listen to feedback from us and this year the form requires very little written detail and should not take long to complete. Where you have more than one child, you must complete a form for each child.

Home learning

We also sent home a questionnaire about home learning. We have been asked by the Government to plan for future scenarios, including a full lockdown situation, where online home learning would once again become normal. Children in Nursery and reception would continue to use Tapestry. Children in Years 1-6 would use Eschools in this situation and this would be supplemented by additional websites such as BBC Bitesize as directed by the class teacher. The questionnaire will help us identify where families had difficulties using the sites and whether families have sufficient suitable devices for home learning. (The Government do not include smartphones as a suitable device). We encourage all families to complete the questionnaire to give an overall picture across the whole school. It should only take 2 minutes to complete and we thank you in advance.

You may have noticed that teachers are trying to use Eschools as a learning tool in school and for homework (such as spellings) as we believe if we can get children confident using the system now then home learning will be much easier for them, if this happens. Please encourage your child to log onto their account. To access the system they use their first name**.**last name and then password king. They can then change their password once onto their home page.

Where children are self-isolating due to Covid symptoms, please ask them to log onto Eschools and teachers will be supplying work they can complete at home.

Parking

I have had a number of parents and residents mention the ongoing parking in the back lane. This causes a real difficulty for families trying to socially distance as this is our only entry and exit point. Please do not use the back lane for parking and help keep our children safe. Thank you.

Current regional lockdown guidance

As you will all probably be aware, we had a rather sudden change to local guidance come into force last night. I understand the questions this may raise regarding childcare and the use of Grandparents and family friends. I have contacted our local MP for clarification and support on this matter as it has the potential to cause real problems for families. Once we have clarification on what central Government advise we will inform you but we expect this may take some time!

We also continue to have ongoing issues with families being unable to get tests, I have once again expressed my concern over this issue as some families are being forced into self-isolation due to the lack of testing available. There is no solution to this at present and we have been advised that more tests will become available in due course. Based on the news reports from across the region this week it appears we are not the only school who are finding this extremely frustrating and we can only hope that the process becomes more efficient.

Reception 2021 places

Whilst September 2021 may seem a long time away, the LA have issued the closing date for applications for Reception places. If you have a child born between 1st September 2016 and 31st August 2017 you must complete the form online. The closing date is 15th January 2021 and we ask that anyone requiring a place do so within this allocated time. We have been full in out Reception class for a number of years and it is unlikely places will be allocated after the closing date. Applications can be made at <http://www.durham.gov.uk/school> admissions. Please note that we have been advised we cannot send or complete form on parents behalf.

School events

Normally, around this time, we are sending out key diary dates for the year. As you can appreciate this will not be possible for the foreseeable future due to the restrictions in place. We are now looking towards parents evening for later in the term and we expect that this will be a telephone conversation with the class teacher which will be organised later this half term. It does however mean that you will not get the chance to browse your child’s work but we are looking at how we can offer this opportunity at some point.

School day timings

As promised, we have reconsidered the timings of the school day to minimise the wait families have when dropping off siblings. Our main concern remains that any change to our timings may result in reduced social distancing. If this happens **we will** return to our original timings and they will then remain in place for the duration of the Covid situation.

**There will be no changes to the timings for children in Nursery, Reception, Year 1, 2 and 3.** However, our new timings now allow for some flexibility for children in Y4, 5 and 6 by offering a ‘window’ when children can arrive. The new timings are as follows:

Children in **Year 4** can arrive anytime from 8:50-9am

Children in **Year 5** can arrive anytime from 8:55-9:05am

Children in **Year 6** can arrive anytime from 9:00-9:15am.

Staff will have the entrance doors open from these times and children are asked to go straight into class and begin the process of washing hands and starting their work. We have been opening doors earlier this week and allowing children to enter and it appears to work well but we do ask for your cooperation, not to gather outside of the school gates and maintain social distance from others.

Finally, I would like to once again say thank you to all families for the understanding you have shown in the last few weeks. We do not like to have to send children home for what we would normally assume was a common cold but guidelines do now say that if a child has a high temperate, a continuous cough or loss of taste and smell we must not allow them in school and we must suggest a test. This is as frustrating for us as it is for families and we really appreciate your kind words of support. This term is certainly going to be ‘testing’!

I have attached further information from the NHS that we received this week which may help clarify what to do in the event your child presents with an illness over the next couple of months.

As always, please do not hesitate to get in touch if you have an queries or concerns. You can contact your child’s teacher directly through their Eschools account or you can contact the school office directly.

Yours sincerely

J Bromley

Headteacher