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1st September 2020

Re: Information for parents and cares on school opening 07.09.20

Dear Parents and Carers

I hope that you and your family have had a lovely summer. We are very much looking forward to seeing you and having the children back next week and I hope that they are looking forward to seeing their friends and teachers. This letter contains important information that you will need as your child/children return. It is based on the letter I sent to you in July with any necessary revisions or additional detail. My apologies for the amount of information you will be receiving over the next week, however I'm sure you understand that this cannot be helped as all of our normal routines and practices have to be adapted to ensure safe opening. I have added any additions in blue so that if you are already familiar with the original letter you can easily see what has been added.

As you know the government expects all children to return to school from September 2020 now that the prevalence of coronavirus has reduced and *for the vast majority of children, the benefits of being back in school far outweigh the very low risk from coronavirus.*

At Northfield Manor, staff will return on Tuesday 1st September for training and all children (except our new Reception cohort) are expected to be in school on **Monday 7th September.**

The government guidance (see link below) published 02.07.20 and updated 28.08.20 outlines the overriding benefits of all children returning to school in terms of their social and emotional well-being as well as their cognitive and academic development. The guidance specifies *a hierarchy of control to reduce the risk to the lowest reasonably practicable level.* Northfield Manor's updated risk assessment has been written in line with this guidance and the individual context of the school. When this risk assessment has been 'signed off' by Victoria Academies Trust, [I will share it with you via the school website on 03.09.20.](#)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools#main-changes-since-this-guidance-was-last-updated>

What will school be like from September 2020?

Schools must do everything possible to minimise contacts and mixing while delivering a broad and balanced curriculum. Therefore:

The Curriculum and Teaching

- All subjects will be taught by the class teacher as usual.
- Peripatetic teachers (such as our music teachers) are now able to return. Some subjects (such as PE or Music) may require adaptations in order to be taught safely.
- To avoid mass gatherings whole school assemblies cannot occur face to face.
- Desks will be front facing as directed by the guidance. Reception and Year 1 will still have access to 'provision' rather than formal desk-based teaching.
- Educational visits will not take place initially, but this will be reviewed at half-term.

A 'recovery curriculum' will initially be taught (alongside other subjects) in the form of a topic called *History in the Making*. This includes a strong focus on PSHE and pupil well-being. [Should](#)

you have any concerns regarding your child’s mental well-being on their return to school then please contact us straight away. In addition, you may find the following website useful <https://mindedforfamilies.org.uk/young-people>

- The school SEND department will provide interventions and support as usual. External professionals such as our Speech Therapist and Educational Psychologist will resume visits.
- Pupils will be reminded of the importance of handwashing and good respiratory hygiene. They will also be taught how we minimise risks in other ways, e.g. by not sharing equipment, additional cleaning etc. Pupils are used to discussing how to reduce risk and keep themselves safe when preparing for trips or when taking part in PE or scientific experiments - discussing positive and pro-active approaches help pupils to feel more confident, engaged in doing the right thing and contributes to overall safety.

Transition

In September, transition activities will continue while your child gets to know their new teacher and settles back into school. If you think your child is unusually anxious about returning to school, please contact us [before 7th September so we can help.](#)

Pupil Groupings or ‘Bubbles’

Pupils will be in ‘bubbles’ - however, these groups or bubbles can now be much larger - the size of normal classes, year groups or phases. Where possible we will only mix up to a year group inside the building and up to a phase group if outside. Playtimes will be staggered and playground areas will be zoned.

Pupil drop-off and collection

These will need to be staggered to avoid mixing of groups and crowding around the school. No teaching time will be lost due to these changes. Parents will not be allowed on site during these times as it is not possible to ensure safe social distancing. You can see that at drop-off there is a 10-minute window of time to help prevent crowding and to ensure children who may feel anxious do not feel rushed. In Key Stage 1 teachers and teaching assistants will meet their children at the Key Stage 1 playground gate. I will send you more detailed information about how you will drop off and collect in September as I know this may be of concern to Key Stage 1 parents and children moving from Key Stage 1 to 2.

	Drop-off Time	Location	Collection Time	Location
Year 1	8.45am-8.55am	KS1 playground	3.20pm	KS1 playground
Year 2	8.30-8.40am	KS1 playground	3.10pm	KS1 playground
Year 3	8.45am-8.55am	KS2 playground (Through the Main Reception entrance for the first week).	3.20pm	Breakfast club entrance
Year 4	8.30-8.40am	KS2 playground	3.10pm	Breakfast club entrance/exit
Year 5	8.45am-8.55am	KS2 playground	3.20pm	KS2 entrance/exit
Year 6	8.30-8.40am	KS2 playground	3.10pm	KS2entrance/exit

[Year 1 and Year 2 drop-off](#) – parents will escort their child to the KS1 gate and handover their child to the awaiting staff member. You child will then join their teacher and classmates on the playground. You will be asked to maintain social distancing from staff and other parents and to follow the one-way system. There will be a separate queue for each class, and you will see the signs indicating where to queue and where to go once your child has been handed over to staff.

Only one parent/adult should escort the child to school. Should you have messages to pass onto staff, please do this beforehand via class Dojo messaging or via the school office and not at the time of handover as this will hold up the queue and make it difficult to maintain staggered timings for other parents.

Year 1 and 2 collection – You will queue in the same place to collect your child at the end of the day. Your child will be called will join you from the playground as you arrive at the front of the queue.

Drop off and collection for other year groups should be obvious from the chart above. Older children will walk from the pavement onto school premises unaccompanied as usual. They will go straight to the KS2 playground where they will be greeted by their teacher and escorted to their new classrooms

Please follow social distancing rules, floor markings and one-way systems. This is particularly important at the end of the day when more parents may arrive at the same time. Senior staff will be present to ensure everyone is clear where to go.

The government requests that parents travel by foot or by bicycle wherever possible in order to minimise pressure on public transport. Should you arrive by car, do not park on the pavement by the key stage 1 playground as space is needed for parents to be socially distant at drop off and collection times.

Wrap-around Care (Parent paid Breakfast and After-school Club)

If you have requested wrap-around care, you will receive information regarding your place and how this can work safely by 04.09.20. This will start from w/b 14th September. The organization and staffing of these groups will be more complex as year groups and phases normally mix. I will contact you to let you know how this can work safely. Places may need to be limited. If you have not yet let us know if you would like a place for your child, please do so as soon as possible through the school office.

Other Clubs

Clubs will not take place initially. This will be reviewed at half-term.

School Lunches

We will offer school lunches including a hot option. In order to run the kitchen safely, there may need to be a reduced menu offer. Children can bring their own packed lunch if they prefer. I will send you more information regarding this in the w/b 31st August.

Breaktime Snacks and Drinks

Snacks and drinks (other than water) will not be available initially except for children receiving free school milk. Please send your child with a healthy breaktime snack. If your child is entitled to free school milk, you will receive an email regarding this from w/b 31st August.

School Uniform and Lost Property

Children will be required to wear full school uniform as normal and have a PE kit in school every day. Should you need to collect any lost property from this year (or wish to donate uniform to Rubery Swap Shop) you will be emailed in w/b 31st August regarding dates and times to collect/donate. [Government guidance states that there is no need to wash uniforms any more than usual.](#)

Stationery and Equipment

Children will be provided with their own stationery by school. They should not bring their own stationery or other items such as toys or games. Any shared equipment will be managed by the teacher and cleaned between uses. [Children will be able to bring work and reading books home as usual. Any reading books will be quarantined for 48 hours before being reused.](#) Children should minimise what they bring to school, however they should bring their coat, school bag, lunch bag, and PE kit as usual.

School Books

Your child's school books from this year will be sent home with your child in the first week.

Communication between Parents and School

We will continue to communicate through the school office email (administration and the Senior Leadership Team) and with the teacher through Class Dojo. When meetings are needed these can be arranged in the first instance via telephone or video conferencing. Face to face meetings can be arranged with notice should these options not be appropriate.

In summary, while there will still be some restrictions in place, Northfield Manor will be much more like the school the children and teachers are used to. We are all very keen to see the children learn and socialize in a more normal school environment and I believe the vast majority of children will settle very well and be happy to be back.

I hope this information enables you to make your initial arrangements for September. I will confirm this information and add more detail by the end of the week. I will also give you more information about statutory or other changes to the school year. If there is anything else that you think you will need to know before then please contact me via the school office.

Suspected or confirmed cases in the school community

I have sent you a separate letter detailing what will happen if we have suspected or confirmed case(s) of Covid-19 in school and when individuals or groups of pupils could need to isolate. Should your child (or any member of your household) have coronavirus symptoms they must not come to school.

Attendance

Normal expectations regarding attendance have now resumed for this academic year. All children are expected to attend school, including the small number of children who had previously been shielding. Should your child be unable to attend school due to following Public Health England advice (as detailed in the letter re. suspected or confirmed cases) then this would not count as absence on your child's attendance record.

Face Coverings

Guidance has now changed for secondary pupils but for primary pupils the guidance remains the same – pupils should not wear face coverings as they cannot be managed safely. Pupils in primary schools do not meet each other in corridors or communal areas at 'changeover' so have fewer potential contacts than secondary pupils. Teachers will not usually wear face coverings as this does not support effective teaching. On occasions, some staff may wear a face covering when working in an office environment (e.g. working on lesson preparation with other staff) and it is not possible to social distance.

Parents using other childcare providers (not Northfield Manor Academy)

Should you use childcare providers or other extra-curricular activities that are not provided by the school, you should seek assurance that protective measures are in place. The DFE provides the following advice about what parents/carers should look for.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-for-parents-and-carers-of-children-attending-out-of-school-settings-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak/guidance-for-parents-and-carers-of-children-attending-out-of-school-settings-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak>

Statutory Assessment 20-21

The government plans to resume statutory assessments this year. This includes the following:

- Year 1 phonics screening check
- Year 4 multiplication check
- KS1 (Year 2) tests and teacher assessments
- KS2 (Year 6) tests and teacher assessments

For this year only, Year 2 will take a statutory phonics check in late autumn term. Those who meet the expected standards will not need to take the check again in the summer term. The new statutory Reception baseline testing has been postponed until Autumn 2021. The children have missed a significant amount of time from their education and resuming assessments this year leaves a short time for children to meet the standards expected in a

normal year. There will be a strong school-wide focus on supporting the gaps in children's learning that have occurred as a result of the pandemic, however, no additional pressure should be put on children to 'pass exams' as a result of this situation.

I am looking forward to the school opening and the seeing the children learning and socializing again. I am optimistic that the planning and controls in place in school, combined with the support and good sense of our school community, will enable us to make this new situation work as well as possible. Should you have any concerns or questions though, do not hesitate to get in touch and thank you for your continued support.

Yours faithfully
Mrs Pennington

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