



HIGH HESKET C of E SCHOOL (VC)

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Wednesday 1st September 2021

Dear Parents & Carers,



I hope you have all had a wonderful summer and we are so looking forward to seeing the children return to school tomorrow for the start of the Autumn term. In my final newsletter of last term, I outlined our expectations for how school would be organised now that the government restrictions have relaxed and now that schools have received updated guidance. As promised, I have resent the information from that letter below so as you can familiarise yourself with the key information and with some new updates. Due to these updates and changes to guidance, the original letter has been reworded slightly now that we know information in more detail so please ensure you read it through in full. Whilst we are looking forward to moving towards a more 'normal' operation, it is of course important for us to still proceed with an element of caution so there will still be some protective measures in place to ensure we limit the possibility of further disruption this year. We will be reviewing our operations on a regular basis and will inform you of any measures that need to be re-introduced if we feel that it is necessary for everyone's safety.

Please do get in touch if you have any further questions and I look forward to seeing you tomorrow for the first day of term.

Yours sincerely,
Mrs A Harvey

September 2021 information

The Department for Education issued new guidance for schools at the end of term and revised this over the summer in order to allow us to prepare for the next academic year. As a result, we are not expected to operate within 'bubbles' when we open tomorrow and can revert to many of our pre-covid ways of working, including being able to come together as a whole school for playtimes, assemblies, lunchtimes etc. However, schools have been informed that we do need to ensure we have a contingency plan to re-introduce restrictions should this be needed.

We are expected to continue to fulfil four main control measures:

- Ensure good hygiene for everyone
- Maintain appropriate cleaning regime
- Keep occupied spaces well ventilated
- Follow public health advice on testing, self-isolation and managing confirmed cases of Covid-19

Illness

Schools continue to be required to send home any children who exhibit any of the 3 main coronavirus symptoms (cough, high temperature or loss of taste/smell) and to advise parents to seek a PCR test. The latest guidance explicitly states that, "if anyone in your school develops COVID-19 symptoms, **however mild**, you should send them home and they should follow public health advice." As a result, we ask for your continuing understanding with this and also must stress that children should not be sent in to school if they are unwell.

Track & Trace

A key change this term will be the expectations surrounding close contacts and the self-isolation guidance should a positive case be identified. The new Department for Education guidance states that:

"Individuals are not required to self-isolate if they live in the same household as someone with COVID-19, or are a close contact of someone with COVID-19, and any of the following apply: they are fully vaccinated; they are below the age of 18 years and 6 months; they have taken part in or are currently part of an approved COVID-19 vaccine trial; they are not able to get vaccinated for medical reasons. Instead, they will be contacted by NHS Test and Trace, informed they



have been in close contact with a positive case and advised to take a PCR test. We would encourage all individuals to take a PCR test if advised to do so.”

Hand washing

Increased opportunities for handwashing / sanitising will remain as per the new guidance. We will continue to build this in to our daily routines and children are still welcome to bring their own sanitisers / hand creams from home so long as they do not contain nut oils.

Staggered timings

Please remember that we will continue to operate a staggered start and finish to the school day. The timings are:

EYFS & Years 1 – 3: 8.40 am – 3.10pm

Years 4-6: 8.50am – 3.25pm

Doors will open no earlier than 8.35 am as they did prior to this academic year.

We will continue to accommodate siblings across the year groups by allowing KS2 siblings to arrive at the earlier time in the morning and they will be supervised on the playground until their school day starts. At the end of the day, younger siblings will be held in their classrooms until the later time so as parents only have to arrive for one slot. **We do politely ask that parents drop off/collect at the designated time and that parents collecting at the earlier time leave the site promptly to allow for the next group of parents to arrive and park smoothly.**

Parking and travelling through the village

To help vehicles pass through the village efficiently, we do recommend that parents use the one-way system when driving (enter at the Penrith end and depart via the Carlisle end of the village). You are also welcome to use the bus bay to ‘stop and drop’ provided that the school bus can still access this when needed and that it is used as a drop off area only. Parents should not park in this area or leave their vehicle. When parking, please ensure that resident’s driveways are kept clear and that sufficient space is left for pushchairs and wheelchairs to pass by.

Drop off / Collection arrangements

Now that restrictions are expected to relax, we will be able to allow parents to enter through the main gate in the mornings. However, we have been impressed with the independence of the children and so we will continue to have a member of staff present at the school gate in the mornings if you feel that your child is able to enter the grounds independently and would encourage the children to do so if able. Parents who feel that they wish to escort their children closer to the entrances are welcome to do so but should then drop their child at the assigned door without entering the school. Any messages or queries can be directed to the member of staff at the gate or can be passed on via email/phone to the office and parents should continue to request appointments if they would like to discuss anything with their child’s class teacher. A member of staff will be present in the EYFS corridor to meet Nursery & Reception parents and to guide the younger children to class.

We will also continue to operate using both gates on to the school grounds and would like to encourage the use of the one-way system as it has helped to reduce congestion. However, this will no longer be enforced as it has been previously and we do ask that parents consider the congestion and accessibility when choosing an exit.

Face coverings

The use of face coverings for adults on school grounds will no longer be an expectation and will now become an optional choice. Staff may still wear face coverings in some circumstances, including when administering first aid.

Menus

As we are returning on a Thursday, Week 1 of the menus (available on the school website) will begin on Monday 6th September. Thursday 2nd September will be sausage in a bun and Friday 3rd September will be fish and chips.

Holidays in term time

Attendance in school remains compulsory and, unless in exceptional circumstances, we are unable to authorise holiday absences. We also ask parents to be mindful of any possible quarantine restrictions when making bookings as these may impact on the children’s ability to attend school.



PE kit

A reminder that children will continue to come to school dressed for PE on their specified PE days. You should receive a text message notifying you of your child's PE days later today.

Dates for your diary:

Thursday 2nd September 2021 – school reopens for Reception – Year 6 (Nursery informed of start dates separately)

Monday 20th September 2021 – Year 3 swimming lessons start (more information to follow)

Friday 22nd October 2021 – school closes for half term break

Monday 1st November 2021 – school reopens

Key highlights for September:

- **Notify the school office for any Breakfast / After School Club sessions you may require**
- **Adhere to the staggered timings for your child's class**
- **Drop your child at the main gate (if entering independently) or at the specified external door (if parent escorting)**
- **Utilise the one-way system through the gates where possible**
- **Use the one-way traffic system through the village when driving and maximise use of the 'drop and stop' area**
- **Ensure school uniform and PE kit is in line with the uniform expectations (please see school website if unsure)**