



Shanklea Primary School

Headteacher – Mrs Helen Brown
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Nairn Road, Parkside Chase, Cramlington, Northumberland NE23 1RQ

Friday 11th September 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

Important Information

While some aspects of school life have changed, it's been really important that the children have successfully settled into their classrooms to continue their education and see their friends and teachers.

Opening our gates and welcoming all children back over the past week has been absolutely fantastic:

- EYFS:** *"The EYFS Team are so proud of everyone. The transition period has been incredible and the children are coming in with happy, smiley faces every day. Tapestry is up and running. Please remember to add your weekend observations."* **Mrs Laughton**
- KS1:** *"It has been fantastic to see all the children coming into class with smiles on their faces. They have all been wonderful and taken to our new classrooms and routines so well. All of the Key Stage 1 team are really proud of them."* **Mrs Downes**
- Lower KS2:** *"It's great to be back in school and see all our children settled in and working hard. They have adapted to their new routines so well. We are really proud of them."* **Mrs Hagan**
- Upper KS2:** *It has been really pleasing to hear from parents through email, passing on information and allowing us to keep that contact with home.* **Mrs Baxter**

Risk Reduction

We would like to reassure parents and carers that we are doing everything we can to ensure that our school is as safe as possible. We have put in place many key measures including cleaning programmes, regular handwashing and social distancing measures throughout school. We continue to follow national guidance to help minimise risks for children and staff. As our school remained open throughout the lockdown period, to provide support for vulnerable pupils and children of key workers, many practices and procedures are already very well-established.

For example:

- When children and staff arrive at school, they are required to wash their hands with soap and water or hand sanitiser for at least 20 seconds. Handwashing is also encouraged throughout the day.
- The school is fully cleaned daily and areas in the school that are frequently touched, such as door handles, are cleaned more often.
- We continue to have staggered start and finish times and different lunchtime and break time arrangements for different groups of children.

Families can help reduce risks by observing social distancing and following safety protocols, including:



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- Children must not play on or with any play equipment before or after school as these must be cleaned after each use to prevent possible transmission of viruses.
- Adults should spend the minimum amount of time as possible. They should not come in before their child's allocated start time. Adults should leave the site promptly.
- Only **ONE** adult should accompany children into school.

Thank you for your continued co-operation in helping to keep everyone in our community safe.

Revised Drop-off and Collection arrangements

We continue to review our procedures and risk assessment, taking into account issues such as the size and layout of the building, the numbers and ages of pupils and of, course, the daily updates to Government guidance. Where necessary, systems are tweaked and this information is communicated as soon as possible. We appreciate this may sometimes appear confusing but it is important that systems can evolve in response to need. The safety of everyone in our community is paramount.

The following changes will be made to the drop off and pick up procedures:

EYFS:

From next week, Nursery parents may enter the EYFS site, via the steps at the front of school, queue in a social distanced way outside the Nursery door past Mrs Laughton's classroom. Parents will then collect their child and leave through the back car park.

A pathway has been roped off to ensure families and cars are kept separate. Please ensure children are kept close by you at all times to prevent accidents.

It is really important that Nursery parents follow the one-way system and if you then have to pick up another sibling, please walk around the outside of school. Our pupil numbers are increasing next week so please bear with us for any tweaks that may be needed.

Years 1 and 2

Parents/carers may enter the school yard through the Main school gate, queue in a social distanced way and exit the same way.

Years 3 and 4

Parents/carers may use the front Accessibility Ramp to enter the school yard, queue in a social distanced way and hand over their children at classroom doors.

Years 5 and 6

Pupils may use the Main Gate and independently enter their classroom doors.



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If a child displays coronavirus symptoms

If your child becomes ill while at school with suspected coronavirus symptoms we will follow the latest issue of the procedures to keep them isolated from others until they can be collected safely and taken home. This will be handled sensitively so that children are not made anxious.

Parents and carers will be advised to arrange to have their child tested and must inform the school of the result as soon as possible. If the test is positive you will be required to follow the Public Health guidance for your child to self-isolate at home for the period specified in the latest government guidance.

The school will notify the local health protection team of any positive cases and action will be taken to identify those in close contact and determine what further action is needed. This could include sending people home to self-isolate if they have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive.

To help prevent any outbreak, it is vital that you do not send your child to school if they have tested positive in the last 10 days or have suspected coronavirus symptoms, which include a high temperature, a new and continuous cough and a loss of sense of taste or smell. Please check the latest Government guidance if you are at all unsure.

Coming into school

Wherever possible children (and staff) are encouraged to walk or cycle to school. We are continuing to develop new temporary cycling and walking routes as part of the emergency Covid recovery measures that were put in place following the easing of lockdown.

We strongly encourage people to avoid driving to school as this creates congestion, leads to poor air quality and potential road safety issues. However, if you do need to use the car please try to drive for part of the journey and drop off or park away from the school gates before walking the remaining distance.

Cars must not come along Nairn Road due to the number of children and the risk of accidents. Please note, parking restrictions apply on Nairn Road, Needham Place and Northolt Avenue. If you stop your car on these roads and do not have a parking permit you may receive a parking fine. Traffic Enforcement officers patrol the area on a regular basis.

Supporting children

Many children and young people will be feeling excited about being back in school but others may, understandably, feel a little anxious. I know that Shanklea staff are doing all they can to make every pupil feel safe and welcome and they will soon get used to the new arrangements and feel happy to be back with their classmates.

As the children have returned to class, we have been working on rebuilding the strong sense of community at Shanklea through a shared literacy project across the whole of school. Based upon the picture book "Here We Are: Notes from Planet Earth" by Oliver Jeffers, the materials have been carefully planned by the Centre for Literacy in Primary Education, to meet the emotional needs of our pupils during this time. The children have had the chance to reflect on the past few months and think about the challenges the world is facing but also to contemplate on how wonderful the world we live in can be. From collaged self- portraits in EYFS recognizing how special we all are, to



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designing our Perfect Planet in Year 3, to writing to local councilors to protect some of the improvements gained in lockdown in Year 5, the children have been fully engaged and it has created a very positive start to the year.

If your child has had a particularly difficult time, it may be helpful to have a catch-up call with their teacher about their experiences during lockdown so they understand their specific needs and behaviours. This will help the teacher support your child with any issues that may have arisen during the break from school, particularly if they've had a difficult experience, such as bereavement to coronavirus.

Attendance

The government has made it clear that attendance in school from September is mandatory and parents/carers have a legal duty to ensure their children attend unless they have been formally deregistered to be home educated. Councils do have legal powers to take action against parents who fail to ensure their child's attendance without a valid reason. We are advised that *"Attendance at school is compulsory for all year groups from the start of the autumn term and children and young people will undoubtedly benefit from being back at school with their teachers and classmates."*

We are so pleased to see so many of our children settled back into Shanklea Life. Overall, attendance last week was **93.5%** which is impressive given the prevalence of "back to school" colds at present.

All children will have days when they're not able to go to school, whether that's due to illness, holiday or a family emergency, and the occasional day off is unlikely to affect their education.

However, missing too much school can be seriously detrimental.

A child who misses school just twice per month will lose out on 18 days' education across the school year – that's nearly four weeks.

This means you could potentially be fined if your child is absent for unauthorised reasons (see What happens if your child's absence is not authorised below).

There are, however, circumstances in which pupils may/should be kept off school:

- If your child or a member of their household is self-isolating because of a positive test, or symptoms of, Covid-19.
- If your child is self-isolating because they have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for, or has symptoms of, Covid-19 (e.g. if Test and Trace shows they have been in a space at the same time as someone who later developed the illness).
- If your child has to quarantine as a result of travelling abroad (bear this in mind if you're booking a holiday in half-term).
- If your child is extremely clinically vulnerable, i.e. was shielding, and there is a local lockdown where schools are still open (You should have received a letter at the start of lockdown if they needed to shield). If



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a member of the household is extremely clinically vulnerable, however, your child should still go to school, even if there is a local lockdown.

If your child does have to stay home for one of the above reasons, their absence will be marked as authorised, and school will provide remote learning, as we did when we were in full lockdown.

School attendance matters

Missing a few days of school here and there may not seem a big deal, but research shows that it can have a significant impact on children's learning:

- Children who miss a substantial amount of school fall behind their peers, and struggle to catch up. Most of the work they miss is never made up, which can lead to big gaps in their learning.
- Poor attendance often starts at primary school, and children who fall into this pattern are likely to underachieve at secondary school.
- Pupils who miss between 10 and 20% of school (that's 19 to 38 days per year) stand only a 35% chance of achieving five or more good GCSEs, compared to 73% of those who miss fewer than 5% of school days.
- Friendships can be affected by persistent absence, too: it can be hard for a child who misses lots of school to form and maintain relationships with their classmates.
Poor attendance also reflects badly on your child's school. Ofsted expect all schools to have good attendance rates, and they are marked down in inspections if their absence figures are too high.

What counts as good attendance

The Government doesn't set specific attendance targets, but schools are expected to set their own. An attendance rate of 96% is generally considered good; this allows for children to miss 9.5 days across the school year.

Persistent absence (PA) is defined as an attendance rate of 90% or below.

What absences can be authorised.

The Department for Education (DfE) states that you can only allow your child to miss school if they are ill, or if you have advance permission from the Head Teacher.

The following types of absence may be marked as authorised:

- Leave of absence authorised by the head teacher (such as time off due to bereavement). These should only be approved in exceptional circumstances.
- Illness: you must notify your child's school on the morning of their first day of absence.



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- Medical or dental appointments, although you should try to arrange these outside school hours if possible.
- Religious observance.
- Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence when the family is travelling for occupational purposes.
- Offsite educational activities: this could include music, dance or drama exams, or participation in a sporting event. Approval is at the school's discretion.

Absences not authorised

- Certain types of absence will be marked as unauthorised. Unless there are exceptional circumstances, agreed by the Head Teacher, time off for holidays is always unauthorised.
- Absences where the parents haven't given the school a reason are also recorded as unauthorised.
- If your child is late to school and the registers have closed, they will be marked as an unauthorised absence, even if they turn up later in the day.

As a parent, it's your responsibility to make sure your child is at school, unless you're home educating or they have a long-term health problem.

If your child doesn't go to school and you haven't phoned in your notification, you'll be contacted by the school to find out why they're absent.

Persistent Absence

If your child is persistently absent, you will be contacted by the council's Education Welfare Officer.

They will discuss your child's attendance with you, and help you come up with a plan to make sure they get to school. The emphasis should be on providing support to help you improve your child's attendance.

You may be asked to sign a parenting contract: a voluntary written agreement stating that you will work with the council and/or school to improve your child's attendance.

Ultimately, if your child continues to miss school, legal action can be taken. Consequences include a parenting order compelling you to do what the court says to improve your child's attendance; a fine of £60, rising to £120 if you don't pay within 21 days; and prosecution, which could lead to a community service order, a fine of up to £2,500, or a custodial sentence of up to three months.

Absence due to Illness

If your child is too ill to come to school, you must phone them in sick on the morning of the first day of absence. You may be asked to provide medical evidence such as a doctor's note, an appointment card or a copy of their prescription.



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Some children miss long or recurrent periods of absence due health issues. In this case, the local council is responsible for them getting a suitable education. This could include home tutoring or a hospital school or teaching service.

The NHS gives the following advice on how long children should stay off school if they're unwell.

Vomiting or diarrhoea	48 hours after the symptoms have stopped
Chickenpox	When all the spots have crusted over – usually five days after they first appeared
Impetigo	48 hours after starting prescription medication, or when the patches have crusted over if they aren't taking medication
Scarlet fever	24 hours after starting antibiotics, or two weeks after the symptoms start, if they aren't taking medication
Hand, foot and mouth disease	As long as your child is feeling unwell – there's no need to wait until the blisters heal
Measles	At least four days after the rash develops
Scabies	24 hours after the first treatment
Shingles	When the last blister has scabbed – usually 10 to 14 days after they first appear
Flu	Typically five days

There's no need for your child to stay off school with the following conditions, unless they're feeling unwell:

- Slapped cheek
- Headlice
- Coughs and colds
- Threadworms
- Ringworm
- Verrucas (although your child should cover them with a plaster for PE and swimming)

Flu immunisations

A provisional date for flu immunisations for all Shanklea pupils has been set for **25th November 2020**. Consent forms were issued last academic year and sent to the Immunisations Team. Our Office Team will be contacting new starters and those who have not completed their form shortly.



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No child will be given the immunisation, which is done via a nasal spray, without written parental consent and completion of the NHS Form.

School will comply with the Local Authority Flu immunisations Risk Assessment.

Year 6 Applications for Secondary School

The NCC portal for online applications to secondary school for Year 7 in September 2021 (current Year 6) pupils opens on **Saturday 12th September** and will close on **Saturday 31st October 2020**. It is very important that parents submit their applications by this date to help ensure their child gets a place at their chosen school.

More information can be found on the NCC website at the link below.

<https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/Education/Schools/School-admissions-places-appeals-1/>

The portal for Reception September 2021 admissions will open in November.

Thank you again for all your support.

Kind regards,

Mrs H Brown
Head Teacher