



Shanklea Primary School

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

Friday 4th September 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

Important Information

I hope all our Shanklea families have enjoyed a wonderful summer holiday. We are looking forward to the new school year even though many aspects of school will be different from usual. This letter is intended to update you on all the latest information so we can work together to keep Shanklea a happy and safe place in which all our children can achieve their full potential.

Throughout the summer we have been regularly receiving changes to the guidance for primary schools and continue to receive daily updates. We will continue to monitor and adapt our procedures in line with this guidance to adopt the best ways to support the needs of our students. We will, of course, keep you informed.

Our key principles are:

- a requirement that people who are ill should stay at home
- robust hand and respiratory hygiene
- enhanced cleaning arrangements
- active engagement with NHS Test and Trace
- formal consideration of how to reduce contacts and maximise distancing between those in school and to minimise any potential contamination so far as is reasonably practicable
- grouping children and young people together
- avoiding contact between groups as far as practicable
- arranging classrooms with forward facing desks
- staff maintaining distance from students and other staff as much as possible

Risk reduction

Please be reassured that we have worked hard to minimise the risk to staff and students from coronavirus. Social distancing, enhanced cleaning routines, staff training and detailed risk assessments are just some of the measures that have been put in place. We have new and updated policies and have created a return to work plan, with detailed risk assessments, to ensure processes, procedures and systems were all ready and in place from day one.



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Enhanced cleaning routines were established over the summer, and site staff have ensured that every space in our school has undergone a thorough clean in readiness for the return of pupils and staff.

Classrooms have been cleared and furniture rearranged to create rooms with forward facing or side facing tables and chairs. Staff will use disinfectant sprays to clean within their classrooms between different groups.

Risks for every staff member who might be particularly vulnerable (e.g. have underlying health issues, be pregnant, or who are part of our BAME community) have been individually assessed and appropriate measures taken.

Shanklea pupils have their own stationery sets which they keep at their own tables. Regular hand washing and cleaning routines have been established throughout our school.

In order to provide a broad curriculum and continue to deliver lessons that students enjoy and achieve in, the curriculum content in subject areas such as PE, Music and Design Technology have been modified to minimise sharing of equipment and, where this is not possible, ensure rigorous cleaning of equipment between use.

While we cannot eliminate every risk, we have worked hard to minimise it as much as possible. With this in mind, it was very important that every child returned to school from the first day of the new term in September ready to learn and we thank you for all your support in the re-establishment of school routines.

School uniform

School uniform plays a valuable role in contributing to the ethos of our school, setting an appropriate tone and encouraging a sense of belonging. We, therefore, strongly encourage pupils to follow Shanklea's usual uniform policies.

Lunches

Our Catering team is continuing to provide high quality lunches which should be pre-ordered on the School Grid before 9am each day. In these first weeks of term we prefer packed lunches to be brought into school in a clearly labelled disposable bag if this is possible. Alternatively, lunches may be brought in a lunch bag or box provided they are clearly labelled and thoroughly washed daily.

Face masks

You will be aware of the continuing debate about the use of facemasks in schools. At Shanklea we have taken the decision that facemasks are not needed in school due to the risk reduction measures we have in place. Masks also have a negative impact around hearing and social communication. We continue to monitor and follow the relevant guidance.



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Out of Hours Provision

The Breakfast Club and Out of School Club have resumed and places can be booked and paid for on the School Gateway as usual.

Reducing anxiety, building confidence and learning

We are always here to support families who believe their child to be vulnerable in any way. We appreciate that for some learners getting back to normal will continue to be a challenge and, for some, lockdown will have had a significant impact on their learning and engagement in school education. During the coming months there will be a strong focus on emotional wellbeing. Staff have undergone additional training to ensure they are fully prepared to support students who might be feeling anxious or worried on their return to school. Lessons such as PSHE and SEAL (Social, Emotional Aspects of Learning) will have additional content aimed specifically at building confidence, positive peer interactions, managing change and anxiety and rebuilding learning skills and resilience.

Teachers have been adapting their long term plans so that they are able to revisit prior learning and cover any gaps in Literacy and Numeracy that may exist after the past few months. This will be a careful process and no student should feel overwhelmed or under any adverse pressure.

The Government has provided some additional finance to schools to boost support for learners at crucial stages in their education from September. Professional learning resources will include extra coaching support, personalised learning programmes and additional time and resources for test year pupils. A range of quality first teaching approaches will be relevant, including blended learning - for example digital resources, online programs, interventions and standardised tests.

Reading

At Shanklea we recognize the importance of reading to children's academic progress and their future prospects in life. Therefore it is our first priority as school reopens to ensure children are reading regularly and retain a pleasure in reading. Every effort is being made to make reading the focus of our curriculum. To support this, your child's teacher is undertaking one to one and whole class assessments which will help us identify every child's reading needs. To analyse all the information effectively will take us some time, so please bear with us whilst we do this.

We are also busy putting rigorous COVID-19 secure systems in place to allow us to send reading books home as soon as we are able to provide your child with a perfectly pitched book. We expect this to be in the week starting Monday 21st September, 2020.



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In the meanwhile please continue to encourage your child to read to you and with you as often as you can. If you would like access to more books, ebooks are available on [www.oxfordowl](http://www.oxfordowl.com) using one of the following logins – *shankleathree* or *shankleafour* or *shankleafive* or *shankleasix* and the password *readforfun*.

Visits to school

Due to the current social distancing measures, traditional parents' evenings (that is where parents come into school to meet their child's teachers and discuss progress, with or without the child present), assemblies and performances will not take place for the time being. Shanklea staff will still ensure they are available to discuss any concerns parents may have, and engage with parents via other means, such as by email, on the telephone or through school apps, where appropriate. Where a discussion with a parent cannot take place via these routes and face to face contact is considered necessary then appropriate risk prevention measures will need to be put in place.

Possible COVID-19 Infections

The latest Government guidance is that a positive test on site does not require closure of that site. They state that the process of testing and contact tracing is part of the 'new normal' and where schools and settings follow these guidelines carefully, there is no cause for alarm.

If there are multiple cases of COVID-19 in a school then experts from across the NHS and local government will work together to prevent ongoing transmission within the school. This will involve identifying who has been exposed and any child or staff member who is at increased risk. They will then provide tailored infection control advice. Advice based on the assessment of each individual situation will be provided to support the school in preventing further spread. We are assured that the process would be handled sensitively and in confidence.

Further information and questions and answers about Test, Trace, Protect can be found on the English Government website.

I understand that some of you may have additional questions or anxieties about the re-opening of school. I would like to assure you that we will do everything we can to maintain a safe school and will put our efforts into providing a happy environment for everyone.

Protect and Prevent

Please help us prevent the virus from entering our school by following the Protect and Prevent measures:

- Do not send your child to school if they are unwell
- If your child is suspected of having the virus whilst at school, you will need to come and collect them from school immediately



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- Teach your child to stay safe and alert when they are not in school by observing social distancing and good hygiene measures

If you have not already done so please ensure you have read and discussed the 'Home School Agreement' and the 'Shanklea Primary Daily School Routines: Student Expectations' documents with your child. This will help your child to clearly understand the normal routines and behaviour expectations to help them feel confident and safe at school.

Welcome Back

It has been wonderful to welcome back our Shanklea students for the start of the autumn term. For many of our pupils, it was the first time that they have stepped into a classroom since the coronavirus lockdown started in March, when the school building was closed except to look after vulnerable children and those of key workers.

Thank you for your continued support and patience. What a great job parents and carers are doing in supporting their children back to school. I couldn't be prouder of the children, families, our staff and all the Shanklea community who have all risen to the challenge. In a very short space of time we have found a way of working and supporting each other that is very different from what went before, but it works. Despite some extra challenges and sorting out new procedures in these early days we are all doing amazingly well.

If you have particular questions or concerns please let us know. Through regular communication and working together we can keep our children safe, happy and confident at school and "the best they can be."

Thank you.

Kind regards,

Mrs H Brown
Head Teacher