



Ponteland Community Primary School
Callerton Lane, Ponteland, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE20 9EY
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Headteacher: Dr CA Pryer DL EdD MEd NPQH DipEd
Deputy Headteacher: Mrs EJ Cafferty BEd NPQH

14 August 2020

Dear Parents of new and returning pupils,

As you're aware, the government has announced that schools should fully reopen from the start of the upcoming autumn term. This is on the basis of the prevalence of coronavirus decreasing; the new NHS test and trace system in place; more clarity about required measures creating safe environments in schools; time out of school being detrimental to a child's development; and the low risk to children of becoming severely ill from coronavirus. Subsequently, we wanted to get in touch to explain what you can expect, and can do, to support your child.

This means we are ready to open to all of our pupils and looking forward to welcoming everyone back on Thursday 3rd September.

As a pre-starter, children keen to check their entrance, classroom or ask any last minute questions are welcome to meet their form or co-bubble teacher for 45 minutes at 10am, at the front of school in the last week of holidays.

Year 8 with Mr Johnson, Monday 24 August;

Years 1 and 2 with Miss Brown, Tuesday 25 August;

Year 5 with Mrs Herdman and Mr Bottley, Tuesday 25 August;

Year 3 with Miss Lawson, Wednesday 26 August;

Year 6 with Mr Lavery, Wednesday 26 August;

Year 4 with Mrs Blackburn, Thursday 27 August.

Parents please drop your child with their teacher, I shall be there to ask any of your questions.

Attendance

Attendance will be mandatory in September, as the government expects all pupils to attend school. The usual rules will apply, meaning we'll be recording attendance and following up on any absences. If your child stayed at home due to the current shielding guidance, the government paused this guidance on 1 August following a continued decline in coronavirus transmission rates. This means that children are able to come back to school in September. However, if you've received clinical or public health advice that your child should still remain at home, please let us know and continue to follow that guidance. We'll be offering remote education to these pupils.

Safety measures

When your child comes into school, we'll have the following protective measures in place. Our risk assessment is under consultation and will be circulated once we are sure we are all safe.

Currently, we understand the bus car park and visitor car park is still available for parents as a drop off. One parent can bring their child to line up at their year group entrance and be met by their teacher. The PCMS/PHS staff car park will not be available until the High School moves to its new school for 2nd November. School transport is available.

Entrances: the Early Years entrance is the bespoke entrance at the end of their corridor; Years 1 and 2 will enter/exit from the side of the school near the Studio [please see the map] line up for 9am and leave at 3.15pm. Years 3 and 4 also use the Studio entrance but line up at 8.45 and leave at 3.30pm. Years 5 and 6 use the Year 5/6 entrance, line up at 8.45 and leave at 3.30pm. Year 8 line up at the Year 8 entrance for 8.45am and leave at 3.30pm. Children will not meet on the school playground.

Children will bring in their summer scrap book and a simple pencil case leaving it in school; and have, at home, a second pencil case. Only 'essential' items e.g. named water bottles, named jacket, change of shoes/trainers or packed lunch are required. Homework will be mainly reading, spelling, tables or set as an online intervention.

We shall have FIVE Cohort Bubbles: Early Years and Years 1 and 2 will be in a cohort bubble; as will Years 3 and 4 together; Year 5 children; Year 6 children; and Year 8 children. Most classrooms have sinks; all classrooms have a hygiene tray with soap, sanitizer, towels, gloves, spray disinfectant, cloths and tissues. Children will follow our hygiene routine washing their hands 5/6 times a day. Classrooms are set with children sitting side by side but not in groups, side on, or face to face. Teachers will generally be at 2m distance at the front of the class, and can circulate.

The first two days of school – Thursday 3 and Friday 4 September – children will be with their form teacher getting their timetables; reinstating hygiene rules; discussing codes of conduct for all aspects of school life, learning expectations and the school diary which contains the homeschool agreement for you to sign.



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Children are expected to wear the formal winter uniform with collar and tie from 3 September. Photographs will be taken on both days. Children will wear the winter uniform on non PE days. However, on PE days children will wear PE uniform and bring a change of trainers/clothes in the event of inclement weather.

School meals are through School Grid: choices on line; ordering from home and direct debit payments a month in arrears. At lunchtime, in the Dining Hall, children will sit at tables side by side, one side only, facing me. I'll introduce the Dining Hall Code of Conduct and keep the tables clean between sittings. Early Years and KS1 have lunch 11.45-12.15; Year 3 and 4 will eat at 12.15; and then a weekly rota exists for Years 5, 6 and 8 from 12.30 to 1pm.

We'll follow government guidance and school protocol if a pupil or staff member develops symptoms at school and sent home where self-isolation guidance is followed, and national test and trace contact is made. If there's a confirmed case, we activate a full deep clean for the affected area; close the bubble for self-isolation and monitor. Deep cleaning took place at the beginning and end of the holidays.

We are not planning any school trips for the first two terms, at least, and expect to fully utilize and enjoy our sports facilities, forest school, meadow, and school site until we can be sure of our safety.

Curriculum

Anticipating that there would be some changes, we have flexed the teaching timetable ensuring the full curriculum is taught, with priority given to Maths and English. We need to 'mind the gap' following blended learning in lockdown, celebrate the children's resilience; carry out formative and summative assessments in as gentle a fashion as possible within our classes of 15 to 25 children; and activate a variety of interventions.

As staff, we meet for two teacher training days on Tuesday 1st and Wednesday 2nd September confirming our SEND, child protection, after school activities, school calendar, parents' evenings, assessments, interventions, and first aid.

Communication through the school diary, phone calls and Parents' Evenings in October, February and July is vital. The children will be set for Maths and English catching up on reading, phonics, letter strings and number bonds. We shall use live marking techniques in the classroom minimizing handling of exercise books and homework; with general and bespoke feedback. We aim to return to our ambitious curriculum by the summer. If we resume blended, remote education, either due to local lockdowns or due to individuals or groups of pupils needing to self-isolate, we will use Oak National Academy, BBC Bitesize and School 360.

Ponteland High School will use the sports hall, full time, for pupils taking A level exams in October and GCSE in November. Both schools will share it in September. We will publish the extra-curricular activities every Friday for the following week. We are running breakfast club and after school activities following hygiene routines and social distancing rules. The before school clubs with guest leaders e.g. badminton and cricket, will begin in December.

You may notice we have started the refurbishing project of the sports hall classrooms with our partner, PUFC, and Football Foundation funding for clubs and community use.

Pastoral support

We're aware that the lockdown has been a difficult time for many pupils, staff and families. Please let us know if you think your child might need extra support when returning to school, such as feeling anxious about coming back or experiencing bereavement. We hope the pre-starter visits in week 6 will help.

Our current plans to support your child's wellbeing include a form teacher working in a bespoke style with their smaller class of 15-25 children; Thrive practice and mindfulness; PSHE lessons; and extra-curricular activities. For those vulnerable pupils who have difficulty re-engaging in school we'll work with the Education Welfare Officer. Mrs Blackburn will direct staff on providing support for SEND pupils.

If you have any questions or concerns, please email admin@ponteland.academy or call 01661824853. We're extremely grateful for all your support and patience in preparation for the new school year as a new primary school. We'll continue to keep in touch with any updates following new or updated government advice.

With kindest regards,
Caroline Pryer
Headteacher

