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Executive Headteacher: Mr Richard Wright

Welcome back!

Dear Parent/ Carer

Following the government's announcement yesterday, I am delighted to be able to re-open the school to all pupils from Monday 8th March 2021.

Though additional guidance is expected to continue to filter through to schools over the coming weeks, I can provide the following outline of what to expect during the remainder of the Spring and Summer terms.

What are your key priorities for the return of pupils from 8th March 2021?

There are three priorities:

- The key priority and number one priority is the *health and safety of children and staff*.

The next two priorities share equal importance. One is linked to learning and the other to personal well-being and mental health

- *The Learning Priority* – this is the priority that pupils catch up with any lost learning and that they are quickly assessed and ethically given every opportunity to be brought back to the level they would otherwise be if lockdown had not taken place – including having additional access to intervention and catch up support if required. Teachers have a generous host of teaching assistants to support them and extra funding has been promised by the government.
- *The Priority of Managing Pupil Well-being – pastoral needs and mental health*. For some children the lockdown period has been a positive experience but we must remember that for some it has been a very challenging and difficult time. We need to ensure that curriculum time is given by each teacher to get to know the children again and provide activities such as circle time, zones of regulation, class project work to focus on the pastoral needs of the individual. Dedicated sessions need will be incorporated into the curriculum to help the children regain lost confidence and build up their resilience.

Will all classes and children return from 8th March?

Yes.

Is it safe to return?

The government advice is that it is safe to return if we adhere to government guidelines and maintain a dynamic and robust Coronavirus Risk Assessment strategy with appropriate control measures in place. Our primary focus will continue to be the health, safety and well-being of all our pupils and staff. As such ALL staff, visitors and children will be expected to adhere to school risk assessments that keep everyone safe, without exception and until further notice from the Executive Headteacher.

Is my child required to wear a mask in school?

As a general rule, no.

Will staff be required to wear a mask?

Staff will be required to continue to wear a mask in communal areas such as corridor or hall spaces or if working across bubbles.

Are parents allowed in school and do they need to wear a mask at drop off and collection times?

Parents are not allowed on the school premises and this will be the case until further notice. Parents should wear a mask if collecting or dropping off their child. We advise that only one adult/parent comes to school to collect or drop off their child so as to reduce numbers outside the school gates.

What will the school times be for drop off and collection? Are we going back to the arrangements we had before Christmas?

Yes, initially we will be going back to the exact arrangements we had before Christmas for collection and drop off. This arrangement will continue until further notice. Teachers will remind parents what these specific arrangements are for their child's class in a future newsletter to be sent out in the coming days.

Will you have an updated risk assessment for all the children return to school?

Yes, we will have a whole school risk assessment and this will be added to the school web page and will be emailed out to parents and staff in due course. It will be further reviewed after Easter and will be updated in accordance with any new government and Local Authority guidelines.

Are there any other risk assessments that might take into account Covid-19?

Yes, we have a number of risk assessments carried out at the school and each one must continue to take into account Covid-19. This includes the need for there to be a separate risk assessment for each class to cover class routines and school activities. We have a specific risk assessment for PE activities and for performance/music when extra care is needed if children have to work in an enclosed space.

Will I get a class newsletter and will teachers be keeping up with Tapestry or SeeSaw?

Yes, parents should continue to get regular newsletters from their class teachers and we will maintain communications as per lockdown with Seesaw and Tapestry as appropriate but from 8th March there will be a reduction in the amount of content placed on our learning platforms and teacher time and energy will be devoted to the delivery of lessons in school.

Does my child have to return to school?

The government expects all pupils to return, unless there are public or personal health reasons for them not to return. According to government guidelines parents may be fined, and an absence be considered unauthorised, if a child stays off school without justifiable cause or headteacher consent.

Is my child required to wear school uniform?

Yes they are. We ask that parents ensure that their child comes into school wearing the correct school uniform including black shoes. Trousers rather than jogging bottoms need to be worn and correct PE kits worn (though during cold weather times, non-uniform tracksuit bottoms and a fleece top may be worn over the top).

On PE days can my child come into school wearing their PE Kit so that they do not need to get changed?

Yes, all children should come dressed appropriately for PE on Wednesdays. Further details will be outlined in class newsletters.

Are there staggered times for drop off and collection?

Not at Kirkby but Yes at Settle Primary. These are the same as before Christmas and will be communicated to parents prior to starting, but arrangements may change depending on how the situation and government advice evolves over the coming weeks.

At Kirkby Malham Primary who is responsible for keeping children safe and observing hygiene regulations on the bus?

The bus company has its own risk assessment. In addition, we manage the order in which pupils board the vehicle to reduce movement inside. Children are encouraged to spread out to try and maintain some social distancing.

All these changes and procedures indicate that there could be a lot of waiting around before I can drop off my child in the morning or collect them at the end of the day. I am a busy person. Do I have to spread out as well and social distance? Will all this make me late for work or my appointments?

Our first priority is the safety and well-being of pupils, staff and parents and we will do all we can to minimise the time spent for drop off and collection. We will endeavour to ensure all children at both schools are in by 9am and on that basis there should not be too much difference to what would happen normally. Our routines before Christmas worked successfully and feedback from parents and staff was broadly positive. We hope that parents will be patient and empathise with us. We are all doing our best with the situation we have been given. Yes, parents will need to maintain a social distance when coming to the school to meet their children and they will need to wear a mask.

Are children allowed to bring in school bags and water bottles?

Yes.

What about items for show and tell and other matters relating to my child's class?

The class teacher will clarify specific class routines and expectations in their newsletter and communications with parents.

Will all the children be free to mix together between year groups?

As a starting point, children will be kept within their class bubble groups. For practicality purposes there may be some sharing of resources (such as the toilet facilities /outdoor equipment) within key stages.

Wraparound care groups for breakfast and after school club will form a sub group that will allow some mixing of children from different classes, but where possible we will try to keep groups separate via social distancing. Government guidance is that there are public health benefits in a primary school setting if we follow these measures.

Will Wraparound Care continue?

Yes, we will attempt to re-start all wraparound care provision subject to the differing staffing contexts at both schools, though the longer-term continuation of these services will be subject to parent take up and viability. They cannot run at a loss. The school will need to carefully monitor and review the use of the clubs

to ensure they are viable and that activities can run safely. Further details as to services will be issued in the coming days.

Will after school clubs continue?

We hope to resume as normal a service as we can, as long as what takes place complies with government guidance and our health and safety risk assessments.

Details as to when an after-school club will start will be issued as the term unfolds. In many instances it will depend upon the nature and context of the club itself and the completion and approval of an appropriate risk assessment signed off by the headteacher. The main focus of the school will be to have the school day operating as normal as possible for the children – everything else is a bonus and can only be re-introduced if it is safe to do so and it does not compromise the cleaning regime necessary to keep the school safe.

Will there be a holiday club over the Easter or Summer?

Yes, holiday club places will be made available over the Easter and Summer, based at the Settle site for pupils who attend both schools. Places will be on a first come, first served basis and details for how to reserve a place will be sent out in the coming days.

Will peripatetic music lessons continue?

This depends on the instrument that is being used – for example, government guidelines differ according to the instrument being practised and other premises considerations. The school will liaise with music teachers and peripatetic lessons will be re-introduced as and when we have clearance and are satisfied that it is safe to do so. Parents will be informed when a lesson is due to re-start.

Will dinners be provided by the school?

Yes. It is our intention to continue to provide a normal school dinner service as usual with social distancing between bubble groups.

Will PE take place?

Yes, PE will take place – with reduced group cohorts and modified lessons that reduce contact between pupils, taking into account the premises and location being used. Contact sports will not take place for the foreseeable future.

Will my child go swimming?

Yes when this opportunity arises we will consider working again with the local Settle Swimming Pool and in accordance with their risk assessment and health and safety protocols, we hope to continue swimming when the pool is up and running.

Will the school go on trips and take part in local competitive sports events?

Our school federation will not be authorising off site school visits until further notice. The government's road map is a pathway back to 'normality' but we will not be operating as normal for many more weeks/months to come. When we return on 8th March it is important to stress that we are NOT returning as normal and steps advocated by the government for re-opening the country depend on the data rather than the dates (which present a broad outline of a best-case scenario). This makes the planning of visits very difficult to do as there is no guarantee that a facility will be able to open as planned and that free access to even basic requirements such as use of toilets can be guaranteed. As an additional safety precaution measure we will

not be partaking in competitive sports fixtures during the first term. We hope that this situation will be relaxed at some point in the New Year.

Does that mean that residential trips will not be taking place?

Residential trips will sadly not be taking place as originally planned this year.

Does that mean the children won't be going on *any* visits at all this academic year?

No, it means that we can't plan and book them in advance and that we need to wait to see how the government's re-opening of the country unfolds and how successful it is. It may be that there are some opportunities to go off site late June/ July but these will be limited in scope and within the local area.

Will there be parent gatherings, public events or church services taking place?

At the time of writing we are making a firm decision not to host any public events with parents for the foreseeable future. This will affect any planned Church Service until further notice. We are hoping though that this situation can be relaxed later in the summer term. Fingers crossed!

Will there be assembly gatherings in school and are visitors allowed to come into school?

We will be limiting wider group and whole school gatherings but this does not mean that we cannot host collective worship or assembly themed sessions within classes as before Christmas. Visitors may also come into school if it is to directly support teaching and learning, as long as the required safety checks are in place and they have been authorised to do so by the headteacher.

Who is allowed to come into school then? Are there any restrictions to parents or visitors?

Access to school is primarily restricted to staff and pupils and those who serve a direct function for the school – such as to aid teaching and learning or support services/designated contractors. Parents are unfortunately denied access to school and their presence on or near the site is to drop off or collect the children. Gatherings outside the school premises are to be avoided – times will be staggered as appropriate to safely facilitate drop off and collection times. Any changes to these circumstances will be communicated directly to parents by the school.

How will play and dinner times be managed?

Areas of the school will be divided to allow bubble groups to play together and have dinner together. There will be an ongoing review of the arrangements to ensure that they are as normal as possible, considering the circumstances, and comply with health and safety guidelines and the practical and ethical considerations for caring for young children.

What if my child is anxious and cannot cope in the adapted school environment?

Please address any issues directly to your child's class teacher and copy in the headteacher as well if your child is struggling. The care and well-being of all our pupils are of paramount importance and we will endeavour to give special consideration and support to those families who are finding things difficult.

What happens if a child misbehaves or doesn't follow the school rules for keeping themselves and others safe?

Under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 the school management has a clear mandate to keep the school safe for all children and staff. During these unprecedented times it is especially important that agreed rules for keeping everyone safe are followed and that further disruption to the education of children caused

by misbehaviour is not tolerated. We cannot allow any behaviour that puts staff and children at risk, or compromises the effective running of the school. Disciplinary measures, including the use of exclusion, will be used if the situation determines that it is appropriate.

What if my child has special requirements and struggles to reintegrate back into the school environment post lockdown?

The headteacher will meet with parents and staff to develop a reintegration plan specific to the needs of the child, so that they can be successfully phased back into full time education over time. The school will request further support from the LA for children requiring further special needs adaptations/ additional funding to help facilitate their return.

I'm worried about coughs and sneezes and pupils and staff getting ill with common colds and flu during this cold weather. What happens then?

A cough or sneeze by itself does not mean a pupil or staff member should necessarily stay off school. Anyone coming into school who might be concerned they have symptoms for COVID-19 must seek a test. Any confirmed cases must then be reported directly to the school for further action. Staff and pupils may come into school with mild cold symptoms – but if there is doubt then a test must be sought. The test results are now coming back very quickly and it is only *confirmed cases* that require individuals to refrain from coming to school for public health reasons (see guidance on website relating to you or your family member having Covid symptoms). If there is doubt about an individual's health then the school will insist on a test being done before the individual can come back into school.

Will there be Covid testing of pupils and/or staff at school?

Staff have the opportunity to partake in lateral flow testing, twice a week. Primary pupils will NOT be tested.

What if my teacher is ill? Who takes the class?

As previously communicated to parents, it is harder to find suitable replacement teachers during these unprecedented times and the flexibility normally on hand for covering staff absence is further compromised if we are keeping staff broadly in 'bubble groups'. We are, however, fortunate to have a number of HLTA staff and very capable ATA/GTA staff who can step in to support when a teacher is absent. However, if significant numbers of staff are absent and we cannot find suitable cover for your child's class then in a worst-case scenario we would have to temporarily shut the class down. Meanwhile, if the reason for illness is Covid-19 related then the class group would need to go into lockdown as a precaution to limit the spread of infection to the wider school.

What if my child is ill? Just how bad do they need to be to be off school and how do I know if they need to get a test for Covid-19?

During the coming term we are expecting a lot of children to still come into school with coughs, colds and sneezes. The answer to this question depends on (a) the severity of the symptoms and (b) the *type* of symptoms.

For example, if your child has a minor cold then they can come into school. If, however, they have a heavy cold, high fever, persistent cough then they should not be in because we want to reduce the spread of any infection during these times so as to keep everyone's immunity as high as possible and if a number of symptoms are on display then it is quite possible that some of these are shared by the coronavirus.

What are the symptoms for Coronavirus?

There are a number of symptoms for coronavirus and information on all of them can be found on the NHS website. However, our school is highlighting six very common symptoms to parents:

- If your child has a temperature above 37.8 degrees
- Your child has a fever or chills
- Your child has a sore throat
- Your child has a continuous cough
- Your child has muscle aches and a sense of fatigue
- Your child has a new loss of smell or taste

The current school position is that if your child has one of these symptoms then we may make a judgement to send them home based on our assessment of the child. It is important that if your child does have one of these symptoms that you let the school know. If your child has one or more symptoms then we strongly recommend that they do not come into school and that they are tested.

What if the teacher and parent can't decide whether a child is well enough to be in school? What happens then?

The matter must be referred to senior manager who will have the final say. Ultimately this is Mr Wright, or in his absence there will be Miss Thompson/ Miss Wright (at Settle) or Mrs Allen (at Kirkby Malham) who will decide.

If my child has a fever shall I give them Calpol?

If they have a fever then it is best they stay off school and you may then of course give them Calpol if this is appropriate for your child. What we want to avoid is having children being given Calpol before coming to school to lower their temperature and then them deteriorating during the day and having to be sent home. Especially as fever is a key indicator of the virus. In this regard the symptom of having a fever or chills will indicate that the child would be best staying at home.

This is pretty inconvenient to me, I have work to attend and appointments to make. I need my child in school. Do we still need to be so strict with regulations?

The health of all the pupils and staff continues to be paramount and it is in honouring this obligation that we must closely follow the guidelines and the school Risk Assessment. It is on these terms that we are allowed to re-open. There will be minor inconvenience but such are the times we are living in. We will do our best to manage the situation without unnecessary disruption or inconvenience but if your child is unwell and deemed not to be fit for school then we expect parents to support the school and keep them at home until they have recovered. If they are showing symptoms of Coronavirus then they should be tested.

So, are the staff going to be given vaccine jabs? Makes sense doesn't it?

Unfortunately, teachers are not part of the national programme for vaccines and will not be given preferential treatment. As such it is vitally important that all our Covid-19 control measures are maintained and all school risk assessments are followed.

How will my child catch up on all the school learning that has been missed?

Teachers will initiate a 'recovery curriculum' designed to recover lost learning, to look at gaps in understanding and to assess where the children are, compared to where they would otherwise be expected to be. We will allocate additional support to those children who we feel have the most to catch up on (more details below).

Has the school received any catch-up funding and how is this catch-up funding going to be used?

At the time of writing we are still awaiting confirmation of receipt for additional government funding for catch-up groups, which means the planning of any extra and above provision is difficult. While we await confirmation, we will utilise the staff we have available to meet need. Recovery and catch up will be our key priority in the spring and summer terms. Additional intervention groups will depend on the funding provided and the staff available.

When does school expect to get back to normality?

At the start of the academic year, the government originally hoped that a 'normal curriculum provision' would be resumed by the summer term. As there needed to be a further lockdown (January-March 2021) this will now not be possible. We hope to have as many aspects of provision back to near normality as soon as possible but timing as to when everything will be normalised is out of our hands and at best will not be fully back to normal until at least next September. Even then, according to SAGE scientists, the wearing of masks, hygiene and some social distancing measures may need to continue (especially when we go back into Winter).

Other local schools are doing things differently to you. Who is doing it right?

All schools are coming up with their own unique solutions to managing these difficult times. In that respect there is no right or wrong way of doing things and it is misleading to compare schools as each has their own staffing, pupil requirements, resource issues and premises criteria to consider. All are doing their best based on the circumstances they face and often there are hidden factors that dictate why one school is taking one course of action and another school is doing something different. If you have a concern or suggestion then raise it with the headteacher or class teacher for their consideration. Everyone is doing the best they can!

Will there be any provision to support mental health and well-being?

Yes, there will continue to be mental health and well-being support built into the school day, with lessons planned and activities delivered with this in mind. We hope to further access support from the LA if a child or family are particularly struggling and to keep up with group and individual Positive Psychology sessions with Mr Illingworth. We urge parents to inform the class teacher if they are aware of any particular concerns affecting their child, so that we can do our best to support.

I have issues regarding my child's education and progress. If I am not allowed into school then how do I address these problems?

Raise them initially with your child's class teacher via email (a phone meeting can then be organised if required) or through the use of Tapestry and SeeSaw. If your concerns are not being met then contact the headteacher directly.

What will the school *experience* be like for children when they return to school on 8th March?

We will try to make things as normal and reassuring for the child as possible. One of our first priorities will be getting the children back into the routines of the class - many pupils will have missed the structure and normality of school, so this is the best way to support their wellbeing.

We will begin early lessons by celebrating what pupils achieved while they were learning at home being careful to validate this learning and any work produced, so pupils don't feel this work is devalued.

Our teachers will seek to reassure pupils who didn't engage with home learning or didn't complete work that this is okay and that there's still plenty of time to catch up. It looks like we are back in school for the long

term, so we can tackle all the learning issues in a safe and reassuring environment and make up for all that lost time.

Lots of opportunities will be planned in for the children to practise what they're learning and to show staff what they understand: just because it has been previously presented to families via remote learning doesn't guarantee a child has learnt the necessary skills.

How will teachers ASSESS the needs of all the children and decide what Curriculum elements to deliver from 8th March 2021?

- Teachers will evaluate the curriculum content that has been missed or taught remotely, sensitively and systematically.
- Teachers will NOT present pupils with written tests as soon as they come but are encouraged to carry out low-stakes quizzing and low-threat knowledge checks during each lesson to find out what pupils can remember and where they have gaps. This low-stakes approach will help pupils feel secure in what they already know and confident about what else they need to learn.
- During staff meetings, teachers will need to feed the findings of these knowledge checks back to subject leaders and senior leaders – informally, or through gap analysis sheets rather than rely purely on the data.
- With the support of subject leaders, teachers will need to look back on what they would have covered in school while pupils were learning from home - with the best will in the world, pupils won't have had the same experience learning at home that they would in school and this will be taken into account. We must expect all pupils to have some gaps in their knowledge.
- Teachers will adapt short-term planning in light of what they're finding out about where pupils are (e.g. if there's one concept the majority of pupils in a year group are struggling with, teachers will devote more time to reteaching this). Teachers will need to decide in the early weeks, what to reteach and what to let go – our Deputy Headteacher Miss Thompson will oversee this process with subject leaders at Settle Primary and our Assistant Head, Mrs Allen will oversee this process with staff at Kirkby Malham Primary School.
- Teachers need to be thoughtful with their lesson planning, and accurately assess where pupils are – and attempt to avoid burn-out which will be a major concern considering the intensity we can expect with pupils who may be struggling to re-adapt to school life.
- Staff will continue to use knowledge organisers for some subjects so staff and pupils can see what they need to know. The most important thing is that staff can see at a glance what needs to be retaught, and pupils can see what they need to know. These will be a helpful tool for staff to use for low-stakes quizzing and knowledge checks, and helpful for older pupils to see what has been covered and check their own understanding.
- For some pupils, consolidation lessons won't be enough to fill these gaps – in these instances (eg SEN and disadvantaged pupils) we will need to target direct intervention. It will be important that the teacher set aside a few weeks at the beginning for consolidation lessons but those children who are particularly struggling will require direct and specific intervention. Our aim is to get our pupils up to speed quickly without rushing through content. This process of identifying who needs longer term personalised intervention may take as long as two to six weeks. The government has announced additional funding for the purpose of supporting those children who need support that is extra and above the norm. This funding will be used for additional targeted provision once children have been identified.

Will children have benefited in any way from going through the lockdown process or is it just doom and gloom?

The situation we find ourselves on returning to school is a complex one and it is important we all remember that some children have actually gained tremendous skills during the lockdown period itself: growing

independence, increased resilience, the learning of new skills, access to varied online opportunities, adapting to new technologies etc. The incredible work of staff, parents and children during this difficult period will have a number of long-term positive benefits too which will make the recovery process easier to navigate and the long term picture more positive than one might at first think.

Are there any key principles that teachers and parents need to keep in mind during this period of recovery?

- Yes. We must remember that for most subjects, pupils aren't only taught something once – concepts reappear across Key Stages and are built on over time, e.g. if year 1 missed gathering and recording data in science, they will do this again in year 2; if year 2 missed this they will have done it in year 1 etc.
- We also need to think in terms of key concepts that run through the curriculum, rather than specific topics or units: as long as a curriculum is sequenced properly, there will be main threads running through it, e.g. a unit on ancient Greece and a unit on the Magna Carta are linked by the concept of 'democracy' etc. Teachers will focus on the most important, threshold concepts: pupils need to understand enough of these concepts in order to access the next stage of their learning. Not knowing all the small details won't hold them back.
- Pupils are entitled to a broad, balanced curriculum: teaching all subjects will help them get back on track (e.g. vocabulary they learned in history will impact overall learning), so we will be careful not to sacrifice foundation subjects to prioritise core ones.
- Finally, parents and staff need to radiate confidence and optimism about the way forward when explaining what lies ahead for the children (even if you don't feel this way yourself): pupils need to feel and believe that this is all achievable, and be reassured that the necessary support and empathy WILL be put in place to help them.

I have some questions that are not covered on this list. Where do I get more information?

If you have any specific concerns then please check to see that they have not already been addressed above. If they haven't been addressed then feel free to contact your child's teacher and/or the headteacher for further clarification.

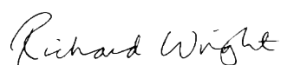
And finally...

I hope that the information provided above is helpful. In the coming days, teachers will outline specific arrangements relating to your child's class and further updates (including a modified risk assessment) will be issued in due course.

I look forward to having everyone back from 8th March and thank parents, staff and children for all their hard work, effort and resilience during the last 12 months (especially during this recent lockdown, which has been tough for everyone). Onwards and upwards, let's make the remaining Spring and Summer terms as positive and rewarding as we can for the children. It is great to be able to open to all our children and we hope the Prime Minister is right and that this is 'irreversible'.

My thanks to you all for your ongoing support and patience during these unprecedented times.

With best wishes



Richard Wright
Executive Headteacher