



Explore, Learn and Grow Together

Brewery Road
Wooler
Northumberland
NE71 6QF

Wednesday 8th September 2021

Dear Parents/Carers

Welcome to the start of the 2021-2022 academic year. It has been a lovely day today welcoming all of the children into school and establishing our new school routines. These have worked very well today and it is vital that we continue to manage our systems effectively so that together we can keep our children in school and learning. Below I have noted the key information on how we are working here in school, this was previously shared with all parents and carers in July and the most recent guidance to schools has not really changed how we are now operating. The guidance for schools along with our school risk assessments will be published to our school websites in due course.

The most important action for all parents and carers is to be vigilant for any COVID symptoms and to isolate and get tested if there is any possibility of an infection. It is only by doing this that we will be able to minimise infections here in school. Testing and 10 day isolation is still required for COVID and we need to be informed of children who are symptomatic or who have a positive LFD or PCR COVID test as quickly as possible. If children display symptoms here at school they will be isolated and parents/carers contacted and asked to come and collect them.

Key information

Government guidance released in late August confirmed expectations for the start of the new academic year. We have made sensible decisions and are taking a cautious approach to the relaxing of COVID secure procedures here in our schools. The prevalence of the virus in our area is quite high and the next few weeks uncertain and although we have removed some of the COVID secure procedures sensible measures will be maintained and we will be keeping some of the systems that we have instigated over the last year as they have worked really well. Below I have summarised the key information for the start of this term:

- Key measures will remain in place - hand washing, the use of sanitiser, respiratory hygiene, enhanced cleaning regimes and increased ventilation.
- Staff and Key Stage 3 pupil home testing will continue (on Wednesday evenings and Sunday evenings) throughout September. At the end of September this will be reviewed by the government and schools will be informed if this will continue, change or cease.
- We have an outbreak management plan for how we will operate if we have a COVID outbreak (this is very similar to the COVID secure procedures and arrangements that we operated last term).
- There are some major changes this term such as the removal of bubbles, mixing between groups in lunch times or assemblies will be allowed and face masks become a personal choice (these measures can be reintroduced if we get a number of cases and our outbreak plan is initiated).
- 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.

If we have cases in school we will let families know with a text or email but close contacts will no longer be sent home.

Our morning and afternoon arrangements for drop off and collection of children worked well last year and have improved safety within the school grounds. From today parents and carers of children of all ages will again be welcome to come onto our site in the mornings and afternoons but are asked to avoid gathering closely together. There is no longer a one-way system in place. The use of face coverings outside within the school grounds will be a personal choice. As before parents and carers will be restricted from coming into the building other than for pre-arranged meetings. The office remains open and our system of waiting outside and calling the office will continue to operate to minimise contact and possible infection transmission into school. We will continue to restrict vehicular access to our site as this vastly improves pedestrian safety. No parent's vehicles will be allowed onto the school grounds during the school day. Sensible, responsible behaviour is expected at all times in and around our schools.

All of these relaxations to our COVID secure procedures are subject to continual review and may be subject to change if we have an infection outbreak amongst our school community.

Wooler & Glendale specific routines and procedures

Wooler First School:

- Wooler First School will start at **9.00am** each day – the site will be open for children to start arriving from 8.45am – children will not be allowed onto the school site before this time. Children will head straight into school via their classroom doors rather than congregate on the front playground. This has worked well this year and has created a calm and purposeful start to the day. **All children are to be in their classrooms by 9.00am each morning.**
- Wooler First School will finish between **3.15pm and 3.25pm** each day – children will exit from school by their classroom exits and staff will identify parents and carers for safe handover at home time. Children on school transport will remain with their teachers and engage in 1:1 and small group activities before being guided to their transport at 3.30pm ready to be joined by the older pupils from Glendale.
Oak Class will finish at 3.15pm - Cherry & Cedar Classes at 3.20pm - Willow & Maple Classes at 3.25pm
- Little Acorns Nursery will be following the same daily operation procedures as outlined for Wooler First School above. We will be maintaining the arrangements for drop-off and collection that are currently in place to minimise congestion and contact at these times. Parents will not be allowed into the nursery and will continue to drop-off and collect children from the designated point next to the entrance ramp for the swimming pool. Session times will be confirmed as normal directly from Gillian in the nursery.

Classes for September:

Oak Class – Miss Symons (3.15pm finish)

Cherry Class – Miss Bullen (3.20pm finish)

Cedar Class – Mrs Alexander (3.20pm finish)

Willow Class – Miss Matthews (3.25pm finish)

Maple Class – Mr Tait (3.25pm finish)

Glendale Middle School:

- Glendale Middle School will start at **8.55am** each day and all children will again congregate on the rear yard before school. The site will be open for children to start arriving from 8.45am – children will not be allowed onto the school site before this time. Children will assemble at their designated points where they will be greeted by their form teacher before heading into school. For the first couple of days in September Year 5 will be met by their form tutors by the gates next to the bike shelters.
- Glendale Middle School will finish at **3.35pm** each day for all pupils – children will exit from school onto the rear yard and make their way out of school by the pedestrian access point or head to their school transport assembly point outside the hall. Duty staff will check bus and taxi lists and guide children to their transport providers.

Form tutors for September:

Year 5M – Miss Millburn

Year 5J – Miss Johnston

Year 6M – Ms Morris

Year 6D – Miss Dunn

Year 7P – Mr Bainbridge

Year 8T – Mr Tong

These systems worked very well today and all of the children now know exactly where they need to be as they arrive at school and as they depart at the end of the day.

Routines and procedures across both of our schools:

- Parents and carers must comply with the drop off and collection arrangements in place at school as outlined above. **Parents are expected to arrive at the correct time, to leave the site quickly and not congregate around the entrance and exits to the site.** Contact with school should be made via phone or email to the school office unless it is necessary to enter the building.
- Parental vehicles will not be permitted to come into the school car park to drop off or collect children. Children and parents must walk or cycle to school where possible. If cars must be used parents must park well away from the school and observe sensible social distancing to walk to the school. All parents are expected to be sensible in where they park showing respect for our neighbours. It would be ideal if families could agree where older children will be met outside of school at home time – for example in the car park next to the bowling club or the car park by the garden centre.
- All children must wash their hands before leaving home to come to school each morning. Enhanced personal hygiene routines will continue for all children with effective hand washing, use of sanitiser and good respiratory hygiene expected at all times.
- Children should wear their school uniform. We have taken a relaxed approach to uniform expectations throughout the pandemic but will be again expecting all children to conform to our uniform policy for school uniform and P.E. kit from September. **If you have allowed your child to have their ears pierced at the start of the summer holiday they are to be taken out for school – this includes any form of piercings. Any hair colouring must be of natural colour (no pink/blue etc. and no shapes or extreme cuts). I am aware that there has been some disruption to supply chains for clothing and if uniform orders have been delayed please use appropriate clothing for school and P.E. until it arrives – thank you.**
- Teachers and form tutors will email parents with their child's timetable. This will identify days for P.E./swimming and for Forest School at WFS. On these days we will be asking children at Wooler First School to come to school in their P.E./Forest Kit to minimise the need for changing during the school day. Glendale pupils will be in uniform each day and will again change for P.E. here in school.
- Children must not bring toys from home – at Wooler First School water bottles will be kept in school and washed daily. At Glendale Middle children will continue to be expected to take responsibility for their water bottles bringing them into school and taking them home again each day. Water will be available to children throughout the day.
- Our rules for coronavirus must be followed and children who are ill must not attend school. All absences must be reported to school via telephone before 8.45am each day.
- Any symptoms that arise during the school day will lead to a child being isolated and a parent collecting them from site as soon as possible.
- All staff and parents are expected to be ready and willing to engage in the national test and trace process and to follow self-isolation rules if someone tests positive for coronavirus. School staff, children and parents will be expected to follow instructions from the local Director of Public Health in the case of confirmed cases or a local outbreak of the virus.

School Transport – the County Council transport providers are up and running and we have confirmed our bus lists with them this afternoon. Staff meet children arriving on school transport and ensure that they are safely on the correct transport home again. Face coverings are to be worn on all school transport vehicles. **Any changes to normal transport arrangements must be communicated clearly to the ladies in the school office – thank you.**

My colleagues here in school are all very keen to get our extra-curriculum clubs and activities up and running but I have had to restrain their enthusiasm for the first week or so as we make sure our systems are working effectively and everyone knows and are following them. We will then start to get these clubs and activities going again. Our first significant school event will be our Harvest Festivals – we will make decisions on these as we move through the weeks ahead and see how things are progressing with regards to COVID. We are all looking forward to a full and successful year ahead across our schools and hope to be able to again welcome parents, carers and friends back into school to share in the children's' learning as soon as possible.

M.Deane-Hall
Executive Headteacher