



Explore, Learn and Grow Together

Brewery Road
Wooler
Northumberland
NE71 6QF

Friday 8th October 2021

Dear Parents/Carers

We have had a challenging but successful start to the 2021-2022 academic year. COVID has, and continues to challenge our daily operations here in school. As with most other schools we have been experiencing cases in school in both pupils and staff. We continue to strive to minimise the disruption to normal operations that these absences cause and the children and staff have been responding brilliantly to the challenges that we are facing. Over the final two weeks of this half term we have our parent consultation evenings across Years 1 to 4 at WFS and for Year 5 and SEND pupils at GMS. We are also in full preparations for our Harvest Festivals across both of our schools.

Next week we will be having our first face-to-face parents consultation meetings for nearly 2 years. These parent-teacher meetings for Years 1 to 4 at Wooler First School will be our first opportunity to try arrangements for these types of events at our schools. Below I have noted the arrangements that will be in place for these meetings to minimise possible transmission of the virus:

Wooler First School – Parent consultation meeting arrangements (week commencing Monday 11th October)

- All parents and carers will be expected to sanitise their hands on entry to the building.
- All parents and carers will be expected to wear a face covering while in communal areas of the school (these can be taken off once seated in classrooms with teachers).
- Natural ventilation will be maintained throughout the meetings with teachers (this means windows will be open so a good jumper or jacket is advised!).
- Children's books will not be out for parents to look through, instead these will be in classes with teachers who will share key elements with parents to minimise possible transmission via children's books.
- Parents and carers will be expected to arrive just before their appointment time and to leave the building promptly after meeting teachers.
- Meetings will take place in classrooms with parents arriving via the main entrance (and sanitising station) and leaving via the external classroom doors.
- Seating will be arranged in classrooms to maintain a 2m distance between teachers and parents/carers.

Glendale will be following swiftly after with our Year 5 settling in meetings the following week on Monday 18th October with Miss Milburn and Miss Johnston. Also on the 18th October Miss Dunn and Ms Morris will be holding parent/carer consultation meetings for children identified as having special educational needs. These meetings will take place in the school hall and will operate as follows:

Glendale Middle School – Year 5 & SEND parent consultation meeting arrangements (Monday 18th October)

- All parents and carers will be expected to sanitise their hands on entry to the building.
- All parents and carers will be expected to wear a face covering while in communal areas of the school (these can be taken off once seated in the hall with teachers).
- Natural ventilation will be maintained throughout the meetings with teachers (this means windows will be open so a good jumper or jacket is advised!).
- Children's books will not be out for parents to look through, instead these will be with the teachers who will share key elements with parents to minimise possible transmission via children's books.
- Parents and carers will be expected to arrive just before their appointment time and to leave the building promptly after meeting teachers.
- Meetings will take place in the hall with parents arriving and leaving via the main entrance.
- Seating will be arranged to maintain a 2m distance between teachers and parents/carers.

By following these arrangements we hope to be able to safely undertake face-to-face meetings without creating super-spreader events. Your understanding and cooperation are much appreciated as we do not want to see a surge in cases as we approach the half term break. If you have any COVID symptoms please do not attend, instead let the ladies in the office know by phone and we will arrange a phone consultation with teachers instead.

Harvest Festivals

Our children are all busy preparing for our first whole school events of the academic year and it is wonderful to hear and to see them all engaging so positively. The sound of our schools singing has been much missed and to hear the children enjoying being together (particularly the fun and games being had by the middle school children as they learn their Ceilidh dances) is joyful indeed.

Wooler First School Harvest will take place on Tuesday 19th October at 2.30pm in the school hall. We are planning to allow parents and carers to be able to join us for this event but we will need to know how many would like to come so that we can safely manage numbers in the hall. We will be sending home a short note soon with a reply slip to be completed and returned to school if you would like to join us. Please complete and return this slip to school by Wednesday 13th October to enable us to assess if we can accommodate all who would like to attend or if we need to limit numbers to one adult per family. We will be continuing our tradition of sharing the gifts of harvest with our local community. Donations of fresh vegetables as well as tinned foods are most welcome – these can be brought into school by the children on Monday 18th October, thank you.

Glendale Harvest Festival Ceilidh will take place on Friday 22nd October at 2pm. Sadly we have not been able to adapt this event to comply with COVID secure guidance as this is a very active and interactive celebration. We are still trying to work out if we can have some parents and carers join us but this is unlikely. We will again capture the celebration here in school and share this via our school website with all families. All Glendale children will need to come to school in trainers on the 22nd and bring with them a checked shirt to change into after lunchtime.

Glendale will be supporting our local food banks again this year and donations can start to come into school Monday 18th October with them all being here in school by Wednesday morning (20th October) so that they can all be quarantined for 72 hours before going to the food banks at the end of the week. The food bank are requesting savoury food cupboard staples - tinned meat, fish, soups, fruits and vegetables (also in tins), cereals, pasta sauces, biscuits etc. tea, coffee, hot chocolate and squash are also welcome, as is shower gel, shampoo, toothpaste and soap. They cannot accept fresh fruits, veg or homemade jams.

Bikeability for Year 5 & Year 6 – reminder.

Year 5 - Monday 11th to Thursday 14th October.

Year 6 - Monday 18th to Thursday 21st October.

It is great to be able to have this important safety training back here in school again. The children have all been reminded of what they need to do to prepare (get out on their bikes so that they can ride with confidence, including with one hand to enable hand signalling and to check their bikes are safe and roadworthy). Bikes can be brought to school over the weekend before the training sessions as long as they are locked securely in the school bike sheds at the front of the building. Bikes can be left in school all week and collected once the training is concluded. Children are also welcome to come to school on their bikes each day too. All children must have a suitable helmet to participate in the training sessions (and remember their bike lock keys!). The children can come to school in tracksuit bottoms/trainers with school tops and jumpers for their Bikeability sessions.

Trips, visits & clubs

Staff here at school have, amidst all the challenges of the start of term, also managed to get school clubs started and educational trips and visits arranged. This is great and the children are really enjoying the return of our extra-curricular activities. With these extra activities comes the need for extra kit on particular days so please ensure that everything is well organised to minimise the need to bring things into the school office during the day. We also need visit and trip letters/consent forms back promptly – thank you.

COVID Bits-and-bobs

All of the measures outlined in my previous letter are in force each day here in school. As you will have seen in the local and national news schools are experiencing significant attendance issues linked to COVID but also from the usual illnesses that circulate through the population (colds/flu/tummy bugs). We have been advised by Public Health colleagues that we can expect higher levels of these illnesses as the country opens up again following the lockdowns and restrictions of the last 18 months where they were suppressed. We are seeing this here in school particularly with coughs and colds at the moment and as these symptoms are similar to those for COVID it is very hard to determine which we are dealing with. 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 further 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.

Berwick Partnership Consultation

The pre-consultation questionnaire remains open until Friday 22nd October and I would encourage everyone to submit their thoughts on this as the consultation process continues. This is very important for us here in Wooler as we look to the future and determine what is the best solution for educational provision in our community. I have added the link to the pre-consultation questionnaire below and would strongly encourage you all to share your opinions with the Local Authority as they move forward with this process. The information gathered from the questionnaire will be used to inform the next stage in the process of consultation which will follow later in the term as more concrete options for how the schools are organised are developed.

<https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/News/2021/Sep/Residents-asked-their-views-on-education-system-fo.aspx>

Annual Sponsored Walk

We are in the planning phase for our annual Glendale sponsored walk. We hope to be able to undertake this whole school event at the start of next half term. The provision date for this is Friday 5th November. We should be again be able to invite parents and friends to join us for the day – further information to follow along with sponsor forms to help raise funds for The Friends of Glendale to spend on activities, learning resources and extra-curricular activities for the children. Wooler First will be undertaking their annual sponsored walk in the summer term next year...but please look out for some fundraising activity from the First School PTA as we start the second half of the term in November.

M.Deane-Hall
Executive Headteacher