



Dear Parents,

I trust that all our families have had a good summer break so far. I'm sure we can all agree that the changes to our lives that have been brought by Covid-19 have been deep and wide ranging. At Nettlefield, my Senior Leadership Team and I have been working hard to stay abreast of current guidance that came out on an almost daily basis from the Public Health Agency (PHA) and Department of Education NI (DENI).

We are now in a position to share our plan for reopening in Term 1. **We have waited until the start of August to share our plans due to the changeable nature of Covid-19 responses at Stormont. This could mean that all school pupils would return to school together as one group, but such plans have still not been announced by the Executive.**

What will not change will be our on the ground responses to Covid-19 in order to protect the health and safety of our Nettlefield family. You will find some of the main points below but as August progresses we will be releasing key safety messages to prepare with your children to assist for a smooth return to school.

However, the Pre-School guidance differs from the Primary School guidance.

Nursery Start

In the DE guidance document, "Pre-School Education Guidance Supplement," it has been "acknowledged that children, particularly very young children, cannot reasonably be expected to remain apart from each other during the day, and this is not conducive to play-based learning and development."

"Funded pre-school education settings should instead organise children into small groups or 'protective bubbles' with consistent membership."

"Settings do not need to implement social distancing between the children within a group, but should make every effort to minimise physical interaction between different groups, and distancing should be maintained between groups. Adults, including those within groups, should implement social distancing."

"As pre-school education settings are not expected to implement social distancing within groups, in most cases, after a short period of induction, **it should be possible for settings to deliver pre-school education for pupils five days per week.**"

Having taken all information into consideration, we have organized the children into two classes. Each class will form their own protective bubble along with the staff from that class. Each class will not mix or share a space or resources until they have been deep cleaned and/or quarantined.

Welcome sessions

We have arranged “Stay and Play” sessions for you and your child, so you can get to know the nursery and staff and for us to learn more about your child and their experiences. We will also have information forms to fill in. The dates are as follows:

Day	Time	Group
Thurs 27 th Aug	9 -10.30am	Group A
Fri 28 th Aug	9 -10.30am	Group B
Mon 31 st Aug	9 -10.30am	Group C
Tues 1 st Sept	9 -10.30am	Group D

First Day

Our “first” day will be Thursday 3rd September when two groups of children stay for 1 hour each. After 5 days we will combine these two groups. The next group of children will start later that day and will be combined with the main group after 5 days. Then the final 6 children start and will be combined with the main group after 5 days.

Each new group starting will have the “classroom” to themselves for a few days before being introduced to the other groups of children. As each child grows in confidence their time is increased gradually until all children are attending until **11.30/11.45am**. ***Please check the timetable to find your child’s starting group and times.***

The “settling in” time does mean a few weeks of inconvenience for parents, but if you are patient and settle your child properly then you should not have problems later on. Your patience and support at this stage is very important to your child and greatly appreciated by the staff.

Times to Drop Off and Pick Up

A staggered start is essential to ensure everyone arrives safely with appropriate distancing for adults dropping off children. This will be in place at the start of Term 1.

Nursery	Drop Off
N1 Mrs Cardy’s class	8.45am
N2 Mrs Mackey’s class	9.00am

Please follow your child’s timetable.

Parents are requested to adhere strictly to these times to ensure the safety of all in the Nettlefield family.

Changes to School

- There will be clearly marked one way systems in place for entering and leaving the school site. Parents **can enter** the school site via Lawnmount or Cherryville Street but **should exit** via Radnor Street.

- Parents will be able to contact the school office by telephone or usual email address. **School will only be open to parents for collection of pupils who are ill.** If you require an appointment with school please contact the school office and we will accommodate through a range of other options.
- Many nurseries are encouraging parents to leave their child at the front door. However, we are asking **one parent to bring their child into nursery and encourage them to enter the playroom independently** or with a staff member.
- We request **adults sanitise their hands** before entering nursery. Children will wash their hands as soon as they enter the playroom and at various points throughout the day.
- Pupils will be required to stay in their protective bubbles throughout the school day.
- Snack and **paid** canteen meals **will not** be immediately available for purchase in Term 1.
- ***Nursery children will not require a snack until their time has increased.*** Staff will let you know when a snack is required. When it is time to bring a snack, it must be prepared safely at home. Please remember that ***Nettlefield is a Nut free school*** (including hazelnut chocolate spreads) and encourage your child to eat healthily.
- Free School Meals will be available from the second week in October.
- **No school bags or toys** are to be brought from home. Please leave **prams or buggies outside**. A spare change of clothes can be brought in and left on your child's peg.
- Due to the risk of infection spread, **long hair is to be tied back and no jewellery (including earrings) should be worn.** This is absolutely non-negotiable to prevent the spread of Covid-19. Jewellery will be sent safely home to families and asked not to be returned to school.
- At present children under the age of 13 are **not required** to wear a mask. The Education Minister has also gone on record to say that there will be adequate safety measures taken in schools to prevent the need for face coverings.

Nursery children should not attend school:

- if vomiting during the night / morning
- have diarrhoea in the night / morning
- when taking antibiotics
- have a temperature
- with a headache
- with stomach pains
- with severe cold symptoms, runny nose, persistent cough

- with eye infections

If a child is sent to school unwell, all the children and staff are at risk from infection. A child who is not fit cannot benefit from the education provided.

As previously stated we will continue to share key safety messages for pupils throughout August and will continue to update and amend advice as soon as anything changes.

Kind Regards,
Mr McLean