



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 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.

When School Will Resume

At present, school is scheduled to resume on the week beginning 24th August 2020. It is important to make clear that as no changes have been made to Social Distancing, school will resume on a Blended Learning approach. This means that the school week will be split into 40% school based attendance / 60% Remote Learning at home. This is known as a 'split bubble' approach with children separated into two groups and is fully in line with DENI guidance.

It is very important to inform families that the minister, Peter Weir has gone on record on BBC Evening Extra (28th July 2020) to explain that he is quite likely to approach the Executive for a change in social distancing guidance for pupils in school. If this does in fact happen we will immediately inform our parents of any changes and how this will affect a start date for school.

Class lists have been prepared and checked by class teachers in school to create two bubbles. A Monday / Tuesday group (A) and a Thursday / Friday group (B). This information has been sent to you via text message alongside the link to this letter. We have worked hard to keep brothers and sisters on the same day to help parents with work and childcare arrangements.

First Day

Pupils who are currently within P6 (P7 in 2020/21) will start school on

Monday 24th August at 9.00am – 12.00pm (Monday – Wednesday)

Both classes will be accommodated in full for Monday – Wednesday at a social distance of 1 metre. After this a bubble strategy will be used.

Bubbles will operate as follows:

Thursday 27th August 2020 (Bubble B)

Monday 31st August 2020 (Bubble A)

*If we require a Blended Learning Approach we will not close on Bank Holiday Monday for our pupils.

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 for both types of restart (Blended Learning or otherwise) at the start of Term 1.

There will also be clearly marked doors for pupils to enter and exit from. These will be marked on the school building and around the school site.

2020/21		
Year Group	Drop Off	Pick Up
P2	8.30am	1.30pm
P3 & P4	8.45am	1.45pm
P5 – P7	9.00am	2.00pm

Teachers will be involved in Remote Learning Feedback and preparing resources for use the next day after each bubble exits the school building.

Siblings may arrive or exit at the time of the youngest child in the family if this is essential. If this is not necessary it would be helpful for pupils to stay in school for their full school day.

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. Staff will be on site to direct you appropriately.

- 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.
- 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.
- Pupils are to bring their own snack for breaktime and packed lunch to school. This 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. We also ask that families instruct children to eat a ***small item*** for break and leave the rest for lunch.
- Free School Meals as Packed Lunches will be available from 1st September 2020.
- At present, **no physical money will be taken by school** although we are considering the use of a cashless system that can be used by mobile phone or PayPoint at local shops.
- **No school bags are to be brought from home.** Items as shared on the list in school reports should be brought in a plastic/paper bag which will not be returned home. It is important to keep stationery supplies at home for homework etc.
- All pupils should wear full school uniform **including ties** (available from the school office). PE Kits will not be required in the early stages of Term 1.
- Due to the risk of infection spread and to ensure the best hygiene, **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 went on record to say that there will be adequate safety measures taken in schools to prevent the need for face coverings.
- Please contact help@nettlefield.co.uk if you plan to be out of Northern Ireland for any reason between August and the start of school. Should you be away for the start of term, it is also vital that we are aware.

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 families can appreciate, we will not be opening our Breakfast Club or running any After School Activities as pupils from various bubbles cannot be mixed.

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. School can be contacted on the usual help@nettlefield.co.uk address.

Kind Regards

Mr McLean