 St Matthew’s Primary School 

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Principal: Mrs AM Kealey BA Hons (ED) PQH NI

**SCHOOL RESTART SEPT 2020**

04/08/2020

Dear Parents/Guardians,  
  
I promised I would write to you all to update you on school plans for restart.  
  
You will be aware that the Department of Education published their official ‘Restart Plan’ at the end of June. Within Education this has caused a great deal of confusion and as yet we have not received any further information or clarity on pupils returning to school.  
  
We do know however that the executive are to be meeting at the end of this week and we are hoping to receive further clarification. You will have seen from the media and statements made by the Minister in the Northern Ireland Assembly that he will be bringing, to the NI Executive, a paper for full time return of pupils with mitigating factors. As yet we do not know when he will table this paper and we do not know what these mitigating factors are.  
  
As a school therefore we have planned ahead and have created 2 options which I already had outlined to you at the beginning of July. Option A is a Blended Learning approach; Option B is a full scale return to school adopting the ‘protective bubbles’ approach. We are planning to adopt the ‘protective bubbles’ strategy.

By using this strategy, we will be able to welcome all our pupils back for the new term. We will therefore meet the needs of all our pupils through a curriculum that is based on ‘recovery’ with an emphasis on health and mental well-being.  
  
What I am able to share with you is the following:

* P7 children will return to school on Monday 24th August from 9am-1pm. They will attend that week from Mon 24th –Thurs 27th August. Please note there will be no dinners available from the school canteen that week.
* P1s will also get the opportunity to meet their new teacher and become familiar with their classroom and school surroundings. They will also attend for a morning session week beginning 24th August. Dates and times will be emailed separately to P1 parents. There will also be a staggered intake for all P1s beginning Tuesday 1st September, these dates will be issued separately too.
* All children will return to school wearing their full uniform.

***Our new school day will be radically different***

* Children will arrive in school between 8:45 and 9am. **Children must not arrive in school before 8:45am.**
* There will be a staggered pick up time – times for individual classes will follow
* There will be a staggered break and lunch time
* There will initially be no breakfast club, fruit club or after school clubs from P1-7 (including ‘Stay and Play’ club)
* P3 children will also go home at 2:30 pm until further notice
* Children will only be allowed to play with children from their own class bubble
* School bags will not come to school initially. This is to minimise transfer of CV 19 between home and school.
* If your child is having a packed lunch this needs to be sent to school in a disposable (if possible eco-friendly bag) or a wipeable lunchbox.
* Children will be required to bring the following resources to school- packet of tissues, Pritt stick glue (P4-7) colouring pencils, colouring pens, pencils, rubbers etc. They should not bring pencil cases, we will have pencil cases for each child in school which will be clearly labelled and kept in school for each child (children are not permitted to share resources). All resources will be kept in school so as to minimise transfer of CV 19 transmission between home and school.
* All money for school dinners should be sent **in an envelope** on a Monday morning. Please be advised we are unable to accept any cash into school not in an envelope (for hygiene reasons). Money envelopes can be purchased from the school office for £4.

***Visitors to School***

We want our class bubbles to remain protected and for that reason we will be adhering to strict guidelines on visitor and parental access to our school. Therefore, parents will not be permitted to come into the school building. We hope that these measures will not be in place for long and we will be able to resume to a more informal approach very soon. However please do not hesitate to contact us if you need to speak to us, or have any worries or concerns. We will always be here to provide you with our warm and helpful response.

***Collection of Pupils***

As you are all aware of and would totally agree that the main road at the bottom of our school lane is extremely dangerous. I therefore ask that parents collect children from their class teacher at the bottom of the lane and cross over the road safely with our school crossing patrol lady ‘Mrs. Feeny’. If a child is not met by an adult at the end of the school lane they will be walked back up to the main school building again until an adult collects them. I hope you understand that this is in the best interests and safety of all our children.

*Further information will be issued when all children are back at school about the curriculum and homework. Holiday lists will also be issued for the school year 2020/2021.*

These decisions will be continually reviewed by both the Board of

Governors, staff and myself. Our ‘Return Plan’ is based on what we deem

to be the ‘best’, safest and most suitable way forward for our staff,

children and all families. The implementation of the new routines and

procedures will be challenging and we expect some initial disruption which

would be normal. We believe that effective communication, respect and trust for

each other and clear safety measures will all be essential in a successful return

to school for everyone!

Best wishes, take care

Mrs. Ann-Marie Kealey

Principal