

St. Mark's Church of England Primary School



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Autumn Term: Newsletter 2

Dear Parents

The Autumn term is now well underway and we have had time to try to establish our new routines and ways of working. Although it is wonderful to be able to run a full school day for every child, things are in no way operating as normal. We are still in the middle of a global pandemic and everyone is still having to make adjustments. Cases of Covid-19 are rising nationally and there is obviously concern at government level about the situation getting worse in coming weeks.

To make sure that every member of staff, child and parent is kept as safe as possible, we all need to know and follow the guidelines consistently and take the situation seriously.

To that end we ask **all parents** to:

- arrive for drop-off and pick-up **as near to the allocated time /s as possible**
- use the **one-way system** to leave the school site **as soon as** they have left or collected their child / children
- observe **2m social distancing** outside school
- **please not socialise in groups** outside school
- **keep their children with them** while waiting for start times or siblings
- **do not allow children to run around at the front of school**

We are currently reviewing our timings and systems, and will alert you of any changes.

Children settled

Each class has discussed the current arrangements and it is clear from their comments, and our observations, that the children have settled remarkably well. When asked about their worries and concerns, many talked about the crowding at the front of school. Others mentioned the social side of break times being affected by the zonal system and the fact year group bubbles cannot mix during the school day. Some children are very worried about the virus spreading and the impact on their family's health. Others mentioned concerns over another lockdown in the future. While it is encouraging that the children have felt safe and secure enough to talk openly about their feelings, we need to take seriously what they say.

Curriculum and the 'Catch-up' programme

With all children having missed significant time in school in the last academic year, there is much work to do to find out where the gaps are in learning. Based on this information, we will then need to plan teaching in a way to support the 'catch-up' process. The government will be providing catch-up funding to all schools. This will enable us to employ extra staff throughout the year, from October onwards, to run extra sessions. We will be putting together our plans for this in the coming weeks.

For obvious reasons the curriculum will look slightly different in the early part of this school year as we focus on finding the gaps in learning and catching up. We have been asked by the government to try to keep the curriculum as broad and ambitious as possible in the first two terms, with the expectation that there will be a return to teaching the full curriculum by the summer of 2021.

We would normally give you detailed cross-curricular topic plans at this stage in the term. Please understand that these will be slightly delayed as we work out how much of the wider curriculum it will be possible to include.

Expectations for Reading, Writing and Maths

We will provide each family with the expectations for learning in reading, writing and maths for their child's current year group *and those of the previous year*. It would be helpful if you could take close note of these expectations so that you can identify for yourselves where some of your child's gaps might be.

These will be emailed out to families early next week.

'Hidden Haven' Working Party

The Hidden Haven (our school garden area) needs some urgent attention ! We are organising a working party to get it under control on **Sunday 20th September**, from **12.00 to 4.00 p.m.**

We would be grateful to any parents able to join us for all or part of that time. Unfortunately, as power tools will be being used, we will not be able to allow children to be involved.

Please register your interest in forming part of the working party with staff in the school office.

CCC School Transport Survey (see attached letter and questionnaire)

Cumbria County Council has asked for all parents to take part in a county-wide school transport survey. This will help with their planning over the coming weeks.

Please would all parents either follow this link <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/ParentSurveyv1> and complete the survey online, or fill in the attached questionnaire and return it to the school office, by Friday 18th September.

Nasal Flu Vaccinations: Wednesday 14th October

The Public Health 0–19 team will be providing nasal flu vaccinations to all children (where parental consent has been given) in school on **Wednesday 14th October**. Information and consent forms will be sent out early next week. Please return the forms to the box outside the school office by **Monday 5th October**.

Thank you for your patience, understanding and continued support at this unusual time.

Yours sincerely

Peter Barfoot
Headteacher

