



1<sup>st</sup> September 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

Happy New School Year!

I hope you have all managed to spend some quality time with your children during the summer break and have a rest of some kind too. I do also hope that your families have remained safe and well; please don't hesitate to let us know if there is anything that is affecting your family at the moment so that we can support you and your child as we start the new term.

We are very much looking forward to welcoming our pupils back as they return tomorrow with a smile on their face and ready to learn! A special and very warm welcome to our new children and families who join Team Dowson this year. We hope you will be very happy here and look forward to working with you from the very start of your child's journey through the crucial Primary School years with us.

After two difficult and disrupted years, the government guidance outlines the changes for schools returning and some of the measures that will still be in place – you can read more in government information for parents [here](#). Essentially, the necessity to keep children in 'bubbles' / small consistent groups, the requirement to wear face coverings in and around school grounds and schools assisting with tracing and isolating close contacts are all gone.

With fewer restrictions, children will be able to have a fuller education experience, returning to mixing on the playground, taking part in a wider range of after school clubs and taking part in larger group activities such as assemblies, exhibitions, performances and trips and visits. It also means that we should be able to open our doors again to our families and allow you a richer sense of participation and partnership in your child's education.

Though this is very welcome news to us all, we will proceed with caution due to continued high local rates and will continue to liaise with, and be guided by, the local public health protection team in the best interests and safety of our whole school community. The guidance does still allow us to reintroduce measures and restrictions to help break any identified chains of transmission so it is vital we all continue to act safely and sensibly.

This virus has not gone away. Last week Tameside recorded the highest covid infection rate in Greater Manchester at 373.4 per 100,000 people, which equated to 848 new cases over the seven day period up to the 23<sup>rd</sup> August. That places us the 27th nationally and well above the national average rate of 325.8.

With this in mind, we ask that you continue to keep children away from school if they present with any symptoms of the virus and seek a PCR test immediately. We will also continue to send children home from school if they present with these symptoms in school time.

Children may still attend school even if a member of the household has tested positive as long as they are not symptomatic. All close contacts of a positive case are advised to take a PCR test. Please keep school informed of any cases within your household so that we can support continued attendance for children at the same time as keeping everyone as safe as possible. Finally, I wanted to share some information and reminders before we return so that the transition back into school is smooth and easy.





## School Day

Start and finish times will return to normal – doors open at 8:50am and school finishes at 3:15 for all pupils. With everyone once again arriving within the same – smaller – window of time, I would like to remind you to drive and park safely and courteously around the school grounds please. Walking to school or even to park and stride not only helps with the congestion around school but has health benefits to the walkers and to the whole school community with the reduction in engine emissions.

## Bags and Belongings

As always, children only need their coat and a bag for their reading book and p.e. kit as well as their lunchbox if they are not on school dinners. You will be informed in advance of any additional equipment or clothing that your child will need should any occasion require it. P.e. kit can be sent and left in a named draw string bag and the school book bag that all children are issued with is suffice for their reading book and homework book. No other belongings should be in school and large cumbersome bags and rucksacks are difficult to store in our cloakrooms. We have purchased new lockers for the children to store their things in, in order to keep school tidy and less hazardous. Please ensure your children only bring what is necessary to school.

## Toast and Snack

All children up to Year 2 are provided with a piece of fruit or veg each day via a government scheme. Children in Nursery and Reception receive a drink of milk via this scheme also. Parents may pay via the cool milk system in all other year groups if you would like your child to receive a drink of milk at breaktime each day.

In Years 3 – 6 toast for a breaktime snack is available to order and purchase through the My Child at School app or children may bring in a healthy snack from our approved list which consists of any fruit or vegetables, cheese with or without plain crackers, breadsticks or rice cakes.

I'd also like to take the opportunity here to remind you of our guidance from the well-being policy that packed lunches should provide a healthy and balanced meal which contains only **one** small sweet treat and that drinks should be sugar free juice, milk (not milkshakes) or water – no energy drinks or fizzy drinks are permitted.

Please also look out for the forthcoming letter with details of our 'no nuts policy', due to children in school with allergies that could have life-threatening consequences. It is vital that snacks and lunches sent into school are not products that contain nuts.

## After school clubs

We will once again be able to offer a wide range of after school clubs and activities – information on the first term's clubs will be with you in a separate communication tomorrow. Please read this carefully so you know how to book and secure your child's places to avoid disappointment.

I look forward to seeing you all tomorrow as we return. As always, please don't hesitate to get in touch if you have any queries or concerns regarding the contents of this letter or the start of term.

Kind regards,

Mrs Kathryn Thornburn  
Principal