



# SEATON SLUICE MIDDLE SCHOOL

One of the Seaton Valley Federation of Schools

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**Executive Headteacher:** John Barnes

**Head of School:** Karen McSparron

18 August 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

I am writing to give you the final details of our plan for full re-opening on September 2nd.

We are looking forward to welcoming back all of our pupils in September, however, school will still have to be very different to 'normal'. Safety has had to be at the heart of all of our planning at this time and we have bought in many extra hygiene measures, including sanitisers in key areas of the school, extra hand washing routines, detailed cleaning regimes, signage etc.

The start of our school day will be staggered to allow time for handwashing as pupils enter the school. We will not be using the school changing rooms for PE and different toilet areas will be allocated to different year groups.

The government has relaxed its views on social distancing but we will be continuing to implement social distancing whenever possible. We have been told that facemasks in lessons are not allowed and that staff and pupils should remove these before entering the classrooms.

We will continue to monitor the advice from the government on these issues and react to changes as they occur.

## **September 2<sup>nd</sup>**

On September 2nd, our new Y5 pupils will attend school for a slightly shortened day. A letter with details of this has already been sent out by Mrs Long, Assistant Head (KS2).

Children should arrive at school at 9.20am, where they will be met by staff and taken into school for handwashing, before lessons begin. They will need to bring a packed lunch and a water bottle. Everything else will be provided. They are allowed to wear trainers for school on this day only, as they may be completing activities outdoors.

School will end at 3pm so arrangements need to be made for how your son/daughter will get home. School transport will be available on that day (see information later in this letter) and a member of the SLT will be at the bus-stops each morning of the first week of term to ensure all of the new starters know what to do.

Y6,7 and 8 children will not attend for a 'normal' school day on September 2nd and instead will be invited to an individual interview appointment with their form teacher and one parent/carer. The appointment will be strictly a maximum of ten minutes, but should give parents/carers and pupils the opportunity to pass on any key information or ask questions following the prolonged period away from normal school.

We now use an intuitive online appointment booking system which allows you to choose your own appointment time with your allocated member of staff. Each student has been allocated to a member of staff, therefore you will only have one appointment to make. You will receive an email confirming your appointment details.

Appointments can be made on a first come first served basis, from noon on Wednesday 19th August and will close at 9am Tuesday 1st September 2020.

You can access the booking portal via the school gateway app or by browsing to [seatonsluicemiddle.schoolcloud.co.uk](https://seatonsluicemiddle.schoolcloud.co.uk) to book your appointments. A short guide on how to add an appointment is included with this letter.

If you have not yet signed up for the school app, this would be an ideal time to do so. If you do not have access to the internet, please contact the ASTLEY school office (01912371505) and staff can make appointments on your behalf.

### **September 3rd and beyond**

From September 3rd, all pupils will be expected to attend for full days. There will be two different start times, to the school day, in terms of entering the school building. (The times may vary slightly for those arriving on school buses)

KS2 pupils should arrive at school at 8.30am and line up (socially distant) in their form class. Staff will be there to supervise their entrance into school and handwashing before they enter their classrooms.

KS3 pupils should arrive at 8.45am and line up (socially distant) in their form class. Staff will be there to supervise their entrance into school and handwashing before they enter their classrooms.

All pupils will begin lessons at 9.15am.

Break times will be slightly extended to allow for different year groups to leave the building at staggered times and to sanitise their hands as they re-enter the building.

School will end at 3.25pm but KS2 will be escorted out of the school building slightly before this to ensure there is some control of pupils leaving school.

### **Transport**

If your child requires a school bus to get to school, NCC School Transport should be in contact with you about their arrangements for times and pick-ups. The school has no control over School transport and any queries regarding this should be taken up with them directly.

They have advised us of the following:

*'The council's school transport webpage will be updated with FAQs with links to the home page and our Comms team will also assist in getting key messages out to parents. It is also the intention to send correspondence to parents outlining the measures we are putting in place in relation to the school transport service but also what we require of them and their children to ensure safe travel on board school buses and taxis. We will also be briefing transport operators on the requirements as they relate to them.'*

In terms of children using public transport to get to school, they have advised the following:

*'We are aware that issues with overcrowding on public transport are likely to occur on some corridors next month. The Government has recently announced additional funding that can be used to address issues of social distancing on public transport. We are awaiting details of the funding allocation for Northumberland but we have commenced dialogue with the bus companies to address. This remains work in progress though and we will need to understand the extent of the problems first before reacting to them.'*

Just a reminder, that if children are in year 7 or 8 they will have to wear face masks on public transport.

## **Bubbles**

In school, pupils will be in year group 'bubbles', but taught mainly in one classroom. The teachers will move to where the children are to teach their lessons. Children will only move classes to an English or Maths set but this room will be within the year group bubble. Classes will set up in tables of two, facing the front, with tables more spaced out than they usually would be.

Good personal hygiene habits are essential and the classrooms will be provided with tissues and anti-bacterial wipes to encourage this.

At this stage, most practical subjects such as music, art, science and technology will not take place in their usual rooms, as we try to restrict movement around school. PE will all be taught outdoors. If the weather is inclement, then the lesson will be classroom based.

As things progress, classes might move around to other classrooms, if this is viable and beneficial to their learning.

## **Break/Lunchtimes**

Each year group will be assigned a specific outdoor area for break and lunchtimes. They will inevitably mix with pupils from other bubbles but this will be outdoors and closely monitored by duty staff, to make sure children remain as socially distant as possible.

Pupils will eat their lunch in their classroom at lunchtime, so as to avoid too many people in the dinner hall at any one time. They can bring in their own packed lunch or be taken to the hall to pick up a school lunch to take back to their classroom. There will initially be a limited menu for school lunch.

The rest of lunchtime will be spent outside in their designated area.

## **The Curriculum and Timetable**

We intend our curriculum and timetable to run as normal from September. All National Curriculum lessons will be taught by subject specialist teachers, as they would normally be, but there will be some changes to the way in which the pupils work eg no group tasks or collaborative work and less movement in the classroom. Subject specific rooms eg Music or DT will not initially be in use.

We will also be trying to ascertain where pupils are at in terms of their learning. We know that pupils have faced differing situations and challenges through the lockdown period and as a result have made different rates of progress. Each Subject Lead has made plans for assessing pupils once we return to school, to identify gaps in pupils' skills/ knowledge. Interventions will be put in place for those pupils who need it.

## **Attendance**

Attendance at school is no longer optional from September and the government has made it very clear that all pupils are expected to attend school apart from those who are extremely clinically vulnerable and have been given a further shielding letter from a doctor.

## **Uniform**

From September, we will expect all aspects of our uniform policy to be followed again. This includes wearing the appropriate footwear and complying with other rules around jewellery, hair and makeup. We would really appreciate your assistance in helping us to re-establish the standards that we expect in terms of uniform. We will not be allowing pupils to use the PE changing rooms in September and on days where pupils have a PE lesson, we are asking them to attend in their school PE kit (this must include jogging bottoms - but not leggings)

## **Equipment/Phones**

We are asking that, in the first few weeks of the new term, no equipment is bought into school, other than a water bottle and a packed lunch if they need one. Pupils will be provided with everything that they need for lessons.

We discourage children from bringing phones into school and phones must not be used anywhere on the school grounds. If your child does need to bring a phone into school, it will be collected by their form teacher and returned at the end of school.

## **Behaviour**

We don't expect to have any issues around pupil behaviour, however, it is more important than ever, for the safety of all, that pupils adhere to the school rules. As part of this letter, we are sending out a home-school agreement to complete, to share with you our expectations around behaviour at this time and to ask for your support.

## **Extra Curricular Clubs/Activities**

We will not be holding any extra-curricular clubs initially in the new term, but as the weeks unfold, this may be something we can offer. We will send out more information regarding this if and when it is relevant.

## **Back to school**

We recognise that we have many children who have not been in a formal classroom setting since March, and by the time September arrives, this will be almost 6 months out of formal education. We also have Year 5 children who are new to our school and haven't had their normal transition experience. They will be anxious in the first week or two until they settle in. With this in mind, we will be spending time in our initial weeks focusing on pupils' mental health and wellbeing by doing a variety of activities.

We would also like to signpost *Kooth* to you. This is a free service which has online counselling, chat forums, topical information etc for young people (11+), who may be experiencing any emotional worries or difficulties. In addition, it would be helpful for us to know about any pupils who have experienced the loss of a family member during this crisis period, particularly as a result of COVID19.

My hope for September is to get Seaton Sluice Middle School back to normal as quickly as we can, without compromising safety. We will be fully committed to helping all pupils catch up and reach their potential in the coming year.

Regards,

Karen McSparron

Head of School