



# WHYTRIG MIDDLE SCHOOL

One of the Seaton Valley Federation of Schools

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**Executive Headteacher:** John Barnes

**Head of School:** Jonathan Souter

26 June 2020

## Year 8 in-school contact – July 2020

Dear parents, carers and pupils,

I am writing to you today about the opportunity for Year 8 pupils to come into Whytrig Middle School on arranged dates in the last two weeks of term. The purpose of this visit is for children to have 'in-school' contact with their teacher and a small number of classmates, within social distancing guidelines. We are now coming to the end of the fourteenth week since we last saw children in school and we feel that some face to face contact with staff, would be lovely especially for this group of children as this summer marks the end of their time at Whytrig Middle School. I hope the information that I am about to share with you will reassure you that the health and safety of pupils, staff and families is however our prime concern.

Clearly this will be a potentially anxious time for you as a parent to send your child into school and it might be an anxious time for your child. That is also the case for staff. Our staff want to be back at school teaching all of the children but are also naturally worried for their own health and that of their families. From 2<sup>nd</sup> June, Year 6 returned to school after the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) put together very detailed and robust plans, in line with the Government and Northumberland County Council (NCC) guidelines. These plans are to ensure the safety of all pupils and staff and are updated regularly. As we come to the end of the fourth week of Year 6 being back in school, they have worked really well. We have just completed a number of contact visits with Year 5 children this week, which have been successful, so we are confident that whatever form the Year 8 visits will take, they will be well planned and safe. It should be noted that Whytrig does look very different at the current time and your child needs to be aware of this before any visit and that it will not be the same as when they left it in March.

Below outlines measures we will follow to keep your child, other children and staff safe when Year 8 visit school.

- Children will be allocated a group with a specific time with their form teacher
- Groups will contain a maximum of 10 pupils due to class sizes.
- Key times of day - entry to school, break, lunch, end of school - will be staggered for each group to make sure there are no congregation points and to minimise contact between groups of children (further details on times of school day below). It is therefore essential that your child arrives at school on time at the set time for their group.
- No child should arrive at school unless it has been confirmed in advance that they have a place in one of the groups.
- Children will remain with their allocated group at all times in their designated room or outdoors for any outdoor learning.
- Pupils will be met by staff at the school gate at the allotted time to ensure social distancing is followed (children should maintain a 2 metre gap from other pupils where possible).
- Parents are asked not to walk their children to the school gate to avoid congregation points and to minimise contact with others.

- Parents are reminded not to drop children off outside the school gates if arriving by car. Please park at a safe distance and ask your child to walk the remainder of the journey.
- Parents must not come onto school premises without an appointment.
- Children will be expected to wash their hands regularly and at key times of the day - on entry to school, during and before leaving school. Children will be supervised during these times to make sure social distancing is observed.
- All Year 8 children will be based in designated classrooms.
- Children will sit 2 metres apart from their peers to maintain social distancing.
- Children will not be able to move around the room to talk to their friends, if their friends are in their group.
- Children will be allowed to use the toilets at any time but this will need to be done one at a time to avoid congregation points. An adult will take them to the toilet area to check that social distancing is in place each time.
- Hand sanitisers will be located in all classrooms, entrances to school and office areas, where children will be expected to use them especially when entering and exiting buildings.
- Tissues will be in each room for “catch it, bin it, kill it”.
- Vulnerable children and the children of key workers from other year groups and Year 6 children will be working in separate groups which are already established in school.
- Pupils should wear non-uniform for their visit. It is advisable that clothes are removed as soon as the child returns home and washed immediately.
- No equipment or bags should be brought into school.
- Your child will have access to water from school (no water bottles in school please).
- If a child can not follow these guidelines or the instructions of school staff they may be asked to leave the provision.

#### Provisional Year 8 Group Times

Morning session: Start time - 9:40am, End time - 11:40am

Afternoon session: Start time - 1.30pm, End time - 3.30pm

When I think back to how we felt in March when we had to say goodbye to our pupils, I don't think anyone could have anticipated children would be out of our school for so long and that we would ever have to make changes like this to a school which is very close to all our hearts in order for them to be able to enter the site. We certainly did not think that Year 8 would not experience their end of Whytrig assembly that they so much deserve. Having read the above points, you may feel that the above measures seem very rigid and Draconian. It is essential, however, that these measures are strictly followed, in order to protect all pupils and staff. We will, therefore, be requiring parents to complete a **home school agreement** which reinforces these expectations and should be completed and returned prior to children entering our site on the confirmed visit dates, should you decide to send them in.

We hope your child will be able to attend one of the sessions, as we would really like to see them before the end of the academic year. I hope that the measures I have outlined, provide you with the information that you need to make an informed decision about sending your child into school. If you would prefer to keep them at home that is absolutely fine. There will be no consequences for non-attendance. In order to be able to plan for these days, we require parents/carers to complete a short survey by clicking on the link <https://forms.gle/qxmEvuw9jXGS51WL6> stating whether you would like your child to come into school or not. The closing date for responses is Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> June. If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Mr J K Souter

Head of School  
Whytrig Middle School