

Friday 11th September 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

*The first full week is complete…have a lovely weekend everyone…*

**LOCAL AND NATIONAL PICTURE**

It’s fair to say that things aren’t particularly smooth sailing locally or nationally at the moment. When local restrictions were tightened over the summer and then nearly loosened, the gap in infection rates between Trafford and Bolton was relatively small. Since then, Bolton has continued to rise significantly whereas Trafford hasn’t, and from being in the top five or so regarding coronavirus infections nationally, we are now around 50th. Unfortunately, this is partly to do with other boroughs nationally catching up and rates rising significantly across England over the last week or two. There are a number of schools across the borough who have needed to send home class or year group bubbles already and I think we’d be naïve to think that something similar won’t happen at UPS. Needless to say, we will keep you posted on any developments regarding this…we’ll just need to remain vigilant.

**COVID-19 SYMPTOMS…A GUIDE FOR PARENTS**

We sent home a quick guide for you yesterday, advising of the steps to take if you or your child show symptoms. It is fair to say that this is very difficult to judge; as we’ve said before, with cold and flu season around the corner, distinguishing which is which is impossible. A number of you have asked us whether you should send your children in under certain circumstances and unfortunately, the best we can do is advise you give NHS111 a call for their guidance. We’ll reiterate though – if your child has a cold but they are well enough to be in school, they should be in school.

**SCHOOL UPDATE**

It has been wonderful being back so far. Your children have been magnificent…showing such happiness, resilience, respect and responsibility in the situation they find themselves in. Transition from Year 2-5 has gone brilliantly and we are looking forward to welcoming our new Reception children on Monday as our current Reception and Year 1 pupils move up to their new teachers. Exciting times!

**THANK YOU**

We’d like to thank you for your support in the way we’ve approached our return to school this year. We feel the decision to do transition to the new classes now rather than in the summer was the right one for our children’s wellbeing, despite the changes that we’ve needed to make with staggered timings, etc. We really appreciate your patience under the circumstances and we hope that things can now settle down a touch. However, of course, a feeling of uncertainty does remain regarding the transmission of coronavirus and, as we mentioned before, our patience is probably going to be tested further this term.

***Thanks also to all the staff here at UPS who have been so brilliantly positive upon their return and for helping to create such a warm and welcoming atmosphere.***

**HEALTH AND SAFETY MEASURES**

Our Covid-19 risk assessment continues to be reviewed on an almost daily basis and there are changes being made as we consider the best way to balance our children’s safety with their happiness and an environment conducive to positive learning. The key messages that have been given right from the start remain the most effective measures in decreasing the likelihood of transmission, those being regular handwashing, any sneezes or coughs are aimed right into the inside of the elbow, and bubbles being kept largely separate. Our children have been brilliant and really have shown our values of respect and responsibility in following these guidelines.

We mentioned that although social distancing is very apparent in the mornings, the afternoons are somewhat more difficult as people gather to collect the children. The grammar school have told their students to walk home a different way and this provides relief on the pavement outside school. We’ll continue to monitor this and appreciate your support in social distancing in the meantime, especially at the gates.

**DROPPING OFF IN THE MORNINGS**

Can we please remind you of the importance of dropping off your children at the right times in the morning: if you’re children start at 8.40am, before 8.30 is too early and after 8.40 is late. If 8.55am is the time, before 8.45 is too early and after 8.55 is too late. The phased start times are there to aid social distancing rather than a loosening of expectations for punctuality. Thanks for your understanding.

**WORKING TOGETHER**

We mentioned the importance of collaboration between school and parents in our welcome letter and we’ll remind you that in the coming weeks, expectations for home learning will become clear and will be firmly based upon reading, spelling and times tables (have you got that Times Tables Rockstars app, yet?). We’ll be in touch soon and will need your support with this more than ever!

**READING BOOKS AND RESOURCES AMNESTY**…we’re still a little short on reading books!

*Please can you return school reading books and any other resources that we sent home prior to lockdown at your earliest convenience. Many thanks.*

**AND FINALLY…**

It is all too easy to be negative and allow a dark cloud to follow us all at the moment. But it is more important than ever that we remind ourselves to be positive and to realise that how we portray our emotions to our children impacts so profoundly upon their lives, both now and in the future. Thanks for the poem Jim…

***Children Learn What They Live*** *If a child lives with criticism, they learn to condemn.

If a child lives with hostility, they learn to fight.

If a child lives with ridicule, they learn to be shy.

If a child lives with shame, they learn to feel guilty.*

*If a child lives with tolerance, they learn to be patient.

If a child lives with encouragement, they learn to be confident.

If a child lives with praise, they learn to appreciate.

If a child lives with fairness, they learn justice.

If a child lives with security, they learn to have faith.*

*If a child lives with approval, they learn to like themselves.

If a child lives with acceptance and friendship, they learn to find love in the world.*

As always, if you have any questions whatsoever, please do just ask.

Best wishes,

*Mr Parker and Mr Doherty*