

# Whiteshill Primary School

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**'We are curious, we are unique, we are together, we are Whiteshill!'**

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2<sup>nd</sup> March 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

As you will know by now, the children will all be returning together to school next week, starting from Monday 8<sup>th</sup> March. I know that many of you have really been working multi-tasking miracles to make sure your children have been able to access the learning throughout this lockdown. We really appreciate all your support and I know that the children will have really benefitted from all of your efforts. So on Monday, please do take the time for yourselves to breathe and take stock on everything you and the children have achieved over the last 8 weeks.

We of course have the children's mental wellbeing very much at the forefront of our minds this week. We know that they will have a whole range of thoughts and feelings about returning next week and no matter how resilient they are; we know that they will all need support through this period. We as a staff have accessed appropriate training and information throughout this last year to help us do this effectively and Mrs McKay, our wellbeing lead, is helping the teachers to plan activities and opportunities in the first week for the children to be together socially and be aware of how to improve and look after their own mental wellbeing at an age-appropriate level. If you are particularly concerned about your child's mental wellbeing, please do get in contact with myself or the class teacher, it is so important that we are aware when a child is finding things difficult and they don't always show this in school. This may be next week or in the coming days, weeks or months – just ask and talk to us if there is anything at all that is concerning you. In this week's zooms, we will be talking to the children about the return to school so it would be a good idea for them to attend this if they are able so that they can hear a little more about what to expect next week and talk about how they are feeling and also for the older children in Maple and Oak to have chance to ask any questions they might have themselves.

We will of course as well remind the children about the need for hygiene procedures in school e.g. increased handwashing, social distancing within school and the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach to germs. We know that in the autumn term they took this very much in their stride and I'm sure they will soon get in to these good habits again without feeling overwhelmed.

Once the children are settled, we will be assessing their learning and putting a plan in place for the rest of the year to address any gaps they have and ensure that they keep making progress. The children will of course have some gaps and may take longer than they would have done to learn key skills after the year that they have had. However, we are confident that over time we will be able to get them back on track to where they should be. They are all unique children on their own journey through life and we will give the time, space and support they need to continue making good progress throughout their school life with us at Whiteshill.

## Returning to School

I have attached to this email some important information which **you will need to read through in full** before the children return next week:

- Reminders of key information e.g. start and end times, uniform
- Our help sheet on what to do if your child or someone in their household develops coronavirus symptoms (this is the same as the one sent out with the newsletter last week).
- Information on what the school is doing to minimise risk and keep the children as safe as possible in school.

I also wanted to share with you some web links which you might find helpful below:

- The full Government coronavirus advice and guidelines can be found [here](#).
- Our updated school policies with appendices which are in line with guidance on COVID-19 as well as the Gloucestershire Local Authority Risk Assessment which I have completed, and which staff will be following in school to minimise risk, can be found on the school website [here](#).

## Attendance

From Monday 8<sup>th</sup> March, all children will be expected to return to school to minimise as far as possible the longer-term impact of the pandemic on children's education, wellbeing and wider development. **School attendance will therefore be mandatory again from this date.** This means from that point, the usual rules on school attendance will apply, including:

- Parents' duty to secure that their child attends regularly at school where the child is a registered pupil and they are of compulsory school age;
- Schools' responsibilities to record attendance and follow up on absence.
- The availability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices in line with local authorities' codes of conduct.

Therefore, our usual attendance policy will apply and all children will be expected to attend every day. The request for leave of absence form will once again need to be used when your child is going to be absent for half a day or more and this can be requested via email on [admin@whiteshill.gloucs.sch.uk](mailto:admin@whiteshill.gloucs.sch.uk). Our updated draft attendance policy, including COVID-10 appendix, can be found on the school website [here](#) and information from the Gloucestershire Local Education Authority about attendance for parents can be found [here](#).

**If your child has been identified as 'clinically extremely vulnerable' by the government, they will still need to shield in line with government guidance and therefore will not be able to attend school from Monday 8th March. If this applies to your child, it is vitally important that you inform the school immediately.**

Obviously, if your child is self-isolating due to COVID-19 and is not able to attend school because they are following clinical or public health advice related to coronavirus (COVID-19), the absence will not be penalised.

If you have any questions at all about anything contained in this email, please do get in contact at any time.

We look forward to seeing you all next week.

Kind Regards



Heather Francis  
Headteacher