



18th August 2021

High Firs Primary School

NEWSLETTER

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Visit our school website at www.high-firs.kent.sch.uk

Message from Mr Kilbride

I apologise for writing to you in the school holidays, but I wanted the opportunity to introduce myself - Mr Andrew Kilbride - the new Headteacher at High Firs Primary School - to you and to update you of a couple of operational arrangements and dates for the new school year in September.

Officially, I do not begin as Headteacher until 1st September, but as you can imagine, work is going on in the background to ensure a smooth transition. At the end of the summer term, Mr Turtle kindly gave me some of his time so that I could benefit from his extensive knowledge of High Firs and I was very fortunate to have an afternoon with the whole staff team as an ice-breaker and an opportunity to discuss views for the future at High Firs.

Below are some matters with which you will need to be familiar for a calm and organised start in September.

Latest government guidance

The new guidance for how schools should operate from September describes...

moving away from stringent restrictions on everyone's day-to-day lives, towards advising people on how to protect themselves and others, alongside targeted interventions to reduce risk. As COVID-19 becomes a virus that we learn to live with, there is now an imperative to reduce the disruption to children and young people's education - particularly given that the direct clinical risks to children are extremely low, and every adult has been offered a first vaccine and the opportunity for 2 doses by mid-September.

From August 16th, for children under 18 and adults who have been fully vaccinated, there will no longer be a requirement for close contacts of confirmed cases of Covid 19 to isolate. This means that if there is a confirmed case in school, the child or member of staff would need to remain away from school until they are no longer infectious, but others (if they have been fully vaccinated) who may have had close contact with the positive individual would continue their lives as normal.

Bubbles and Covid system of controls

Department for Education (DfE) guidance for school operations from September no longer requires schools to operate separate bubbles. For many this is a great step forwards and we will be looking to operate for much of the time in line with this guidance.

This will mean a return to:

- assemblies with the whole school together in the school hall;
- break times and lunchtimes where children can mix with who they choose from their own or different classes;
- beginning and end of school day arrangements where keeping parents from different year groups apart will no longer be necessary.

However, in acknowledgement of the social benefits, for some, of the different dynamic that exists when operating within bubbles, morning playtimes on Tuesdays and Thursdays will still take place in separate class bubbles.

We will continue with extra sanitising and washing of hands, with additional cleaning of frequently touched surfaces, with maintaining good ventilation practises and following Public Health England advice regarding measures to limit the spread of Covid 19.

If we were to suffer an outbreak of cases in school, a return to bubbles governing our school days may well be considered.

Morning drop-off and afternoon collection

Drop-off in the morning will return to pre-Covid arrangements and timings where children can be dropped at the school gate at any time between **8.45am and 8.55am** before heading straight into school. When children are dropped off urgent messages can be passed on to the adult on duty at the gate. For non-urgent messages, please write a note in your child's contact book. If your child needs to arrive at school prior to 8.45am, please see information later in on in the Newsletter about Breakfast Club. Children arriving in school after 8.55am will be marked late and will need to sign in via the school office. This arrangement will prevent everyone arriving together, it will negate the need for lining up and queuing and it will enable class teachers to be wholly focussed upon helping children settle into class each morning to begin the school day.

Collection will be at 3.15pm. Parents can come onto school grounds from 3.10pm using the same one-way system from last year - entering at the main school gate, collecting children for their class collection points and exiting via the designated pathway along the school driveway. If you are collecting from more than one class, then please collect in order of the one-way system! Classroom staff will be available each day to communicate with parents or carers as necessary.



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The School Day

On Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, the school day will usually consist of a morning session up to 10.10am assembly and 10.30am playtime. The second session will go up to lunchtime - 12.00pm-1.15pm for KS1 and 12.15pm-1.15pm for KS2. Then the third and fourth sessions will run from 1.15pm to 3.15pm.

On Tuesdays and Thursdays, the only difference is that we will have a KS1 assembly and break at 10.00am and 10.15am respectively and KS2 break and assembly at 10.30am and 10.45am. On these days, children will have a playtime within their own bubbles.

During the lunch hour, KS1 children will return to eating in the hall, then going out to play. KS2 will go out to play first, then eat in the hall from 12.30 onwards.

The shared cloakroom space adjacent to the hall will return for Years 3, 4 and 5 with all other children using the spaces in their classrooms.

PE bags

We will return to children bringing in a bag containing their PE kit for them to change into and out of for PE lessons. For younger children, practising changing their clothes efficiently is an essential part of their growth and development and for older children, for best hygiene, their PE clothes should be reserved only for PE lessons.

Breakfast Club and After School Club

Breakfast club will return to its original times of 8.00am to 8.45am and to the pre-pandemic cost of £2.50 for the session, due to the increased times. After School Club will continue to 6.00pm and the cost remains £9 per session. Further information and booking links can be found here –

<http://www.high-firs.kent.sch.uk/breakfast-club-after-school-provision/>

Meet The Teacher sessions

We are trialling morning and afternoon Meet The Teacher sessions for Year 1 to Year 6 parents this year, offering you the opportunity to attend in line with your dropping or collecting arrangements, rather than as an evening meeting. These sessions will last for approximately 15-30 minutes and will enable you to put faces to names and get a better understanding of some of the routines and curriculum areas for the year ahead in each particular class. Our Reception parents do not have a session due to the other starting school events already in place (see below).

	9.00-9.30am	2.30-3.00pm
Monday 6th September	Year 5	Year 2
Tuesday 7th September	Year 1	Year 4
Wednesday 8th September	Year 6	Year 3

New Reception arrangements

I myself have a son starting school this September and my daughter began last September, so I know the mixture of emotions you may well be feeling as you approach this momentous day in the life of your child and family.

Just to reiterate the plans for September - Home visits are taking place Friday 3rd, Monday 6th and Tuesday 7th. If you have not yet booked your slot, please do so via this link - www.high-firs.kent.sch.uk/reception-2021-home-visits

We look forward to you all coming to the Teddy Bears Picnic session for parents and children on Wednesday 8th from 2pm to 3pm. Children come for their first day in class (in uniform) on Friday 10th and stay until 12.00pm. Parents are invited into the hall following drop-off for "Tea and Tissues".

From Monday 13th to Thursday 16th children stay in school (including lunch) until 1.30pm and from Friday 17th onwards, children stay all day, including Pop in and Play for Parents at 2.15pm.

This following link will take you to a couple of other documents designed to help you and your child know a little more about what to expect from the start in Reception in September –

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1Rq4GjNbl_m07j4h_WeBbwH60SfDt9LKn?usp=sharing



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