Tuesday 1st September

Dear Parents and Carers

We hope you have all had a wonderful summer break and have managed to keep safe and well. We continue to be so impressed with everyone during this challenging time. The children are so very lucky to have such supportive parents. Thank you.

The teaching team and office staff have been busily preparing the school to fully open next week. We are incredibly excited about seeing all of our children return to school and to welcome our new starters in Rabbits class.

We continue to hold the well-being, health and safety of the entire Stedham school community at the heart of our decision making. It is essential that you understand the steps we are taking to minimise any risk while we continue to deliver an engaging, rich and diverse curriculum.

Please read the whole of this letter carefully. Your support in following the arrangements set out here is very much appreciated and will enable us to keep all members of our school community safe and well. If you have any questions, please contact the office. Thank you.

**Arrangements for the start of the new academic year**

**All of our pupils will be returning to school full-time from Monday September 7th. This letter sets out the details of our arrangements.  The new starters in reception will have an exclusive ‘stay and play’ session on Friday September 5th at 2pm.**

**Covid-19 Government Guidance**

We have been following the detailed guidance from the government to reduce the risk as we prepare to open the school fully to all pupils. The main principles involve: children continuing to work in ‘bubbles’, following strict hygiene routines including frequent hand washing and the cleaning of surfaces that have been used.

**What to wear and what to bring**

Children will continue to wear their normal school uniform including school shoes. It is important that they have a coat in school as we continue to provide opportunities for outdoor learning.

Pupils should also have their PE kit in school. Small (non-fluffy) bags will be ideal for storing PE kit and can remain in the cloakroom on the children’s pegs. Children will be regularly reminded to take PE kits home to be washed and then returned ready for the start of the following week.

Children who normally have packed lunches can continue to bring them into school in their school bag. They will not be required to bring any stationery as this will all be provided by the school. This is exclusively theirs and is not to be shared.

Children should not wear face masks or other PPE into school. If you choose to use these on your journey into school, please remove them before coming into school and take them home as we are not able to dispose of them for you.

**Revised start and finish times**

**The start of the day**: All children will now arrive at school between 8:45am and 9am. With the small number of pupils we have in school, we feel that a fifteen minute window for ‘drop off’ will avoid any mass gathering. Children should be dropped off and collected by one adult only.

The painted grids on the grass outside the front of the gate will allow parents to wait with their child, socially distancing from others.

The teachers or teaching assistants will be on the playground to welcome their children and will ensure that the gate does not become a bottle-neck.

We will monitor this new arrangement to see that it works effectively, keeping children safe at all times.

**The end of the day:** The window for pick-up for Hedgehogs and Foxes is between 3:15pm and 3:30pm. The window for pick-up for Rabbits is between 3pm and 3:15pm. All children will be led out on to the playground by their teacher. Once the parent has been spotted, the teacher will allow the child to walk out of the gate to meet their parent. We kindly ask that once you have collected your child, you leave the site promptly to free space for more parents.

Please note that parents will not be allowed access to school and must contact the office if they have messages to pass on or if they need to speak to the class teacher.

At this point in time we will not be operating our walking bus but we hope to reintroduce this in the near future.

**The initial weeks of term**

We will spend the first week focusing on welcoming all children back, sharing their learning experiences during lockdown and re-establishing expectations and new routines to help us maintain a safe environment.  We will also be supporting children to re-establish friendships and relationships with each other and the staff in school as well as supporting anyone with ongoing anxieties and concerns arising from the pandemic.

We know that, whilst some children will be really pleased to be back, others may not.  So we aim to spend time doing activities that will refocus them on their learning and also give the teachers an opportunity to start the process of assessing children's progress whilst they have been learning at home. We will then be able to establish any gaps in learning.

Our curriculum in the autumn term will be organised in a way that provides opportunities to close any gaps identified.  The teachers have spent a great deal of time earlier in the year reviewing our planning for all subjects.  We are very excited to share our new updated curriculum with the children.

**What to do if your child is unwell**

It will continue to be vital than any child who is unwell will be kept at home and that, if they show any symptoms of Covid-19, you arrange for them to have a test.  If they do not have any Covid-19 symptoms, they should remain at home that day and may return to school the following day if they seem well again.  The usual rule applies if your child is vomiting; they should stay at home for 48 hours before returning to school.  Please contact the office if you have any concerns or questions about this.

If a child becomes unwell during the day, you'll be asked to come and collect them immediately.  This is especially important if they start to show Covid-19 symptoms.  Please make sure there is always someone who can collect your child if this should happen.

**Breaktimes and lunchtimes**

We have already been operating a system that works effectively at break times and lunchtimes. Areas of the playground and outside area have been assigned for the use of a particular class at a designated time. Children will have some access to play equipment but no toys or other items should be brought in from home.

Hot lunch arrangements will return to ‘normal’.  Children in years R, 1 and 2 will be entitled to a hot meal through the Universal Free School Meals Scheme.  Children in Key Stage 2, who would like a hot meal, will need to order through Chartwells. Those who are normally entitled to free hot meals, continue to receive a meal if wanted.  Please speak to the office if you need any further information but bear in mind that meals have to be ordered some time ahead. The lunch break will last for 45 minutes.

Children in Key Stage 1 will be having lunch in the school hall whilst the remainder of the school will have their lunch in their classrooms.

**Wrap around Care (breakfast and afterschool clubs)**

We are pleased to welcome back Active8 who will be providing the wrap-around care for children at the start and end of each day.

Active8 have carefully risk assessed their provision in accordance with the government guidelines. They will be operating fully from Monday 8th September.  If you require a breakfast slot or after school provision, please speak to the office.

**The extended curriculum (residentials and day trips)**

We are not anticipating starting swimming until later in the year. Although we are unable to have residentials with overnight stays, we are able to run day visits subject to a full risk assessment.  We will be looking carefully at any trips coming up this term and will let you know if they are to go ahead as soon as we can.

**Access to school**

For the time being, parents and carers will not be able to come into the school building.  this includes the office.  If you have any questions or need to pass on any information, please either telephone or email. Our contact details are shown on the first page of this letter. Parents can contact teachers directly through Class Dojo but please bear in mind that any urgent enquiries should be directed to the office. We will provide more information about Class Dojo to our new starters when you have your ‘Stay and Play’ session on Friday 5th September.

All teachers and members of the school leadership team will be outside at the start and end of school each day if you have any urgent queries or messages.

**Further information about Stedham’s response to the coronavirus pandemic**

Our full risk assessment, which includes details of all of our arrangements for risk assessing Stedham’s full reopening will be available on the website later this week.  In addition to this, you will find a short updated video that explains how children will arrive at school and end their day.  Further documents include frequently asked questions and amended policies.  Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any concerns or questions.

We understand that children and parents will have mixed feelings about the return to school. If you are feeling anxious and need some reassurance about things, please let us know and we will do our best to help.  Please be assured that our first priority is the safety of all of our children and staff in the school.  We have followed all the guidelines set out by the government and the local authority to help the lockdown and in our process of reopening.  We will continue to review our risk assessment arrangements and will adjust them if the guidelines change.

It will be wonderful to see everyone again on Monday, but in the meantime, I wish you well for the last few days of your summer holiday.

Yours sincerely

Malcolm Meaby