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**Houghton Conquest
Lower School**

Growing together

Value of the Month: Respect

4th September 2020

Dear parents/carers

Return to school: COVID update

I hope this letter finds you and your family well and that you have all had an opportunity to enjoy the summer break and spend some well-deserved quality time with your loved ones. We eagerly look forward to welcoming our children and their families back to Houghton Conquest Lower School on Monday 7th September and very much look forward to hearing our school filled with laughter and smiles.

I would like to take this opportunity to re-iterate some of the key measures that we have already put in place ready to welcome your child back. It may seem a lot of information, but we want to be completely transparent about the measures in place and hope that they are all reassuring.

There is a lot of information to share, and some has been updated since it was last circulated earlier in the summer, so please do read this letter carefully. Please note that everything contained in this letter is based on current guidance, and therefore subject to change if guidance changes or our evaluation of procedures need adaptation. Our priority is to keep your child and our staff safe within the school environment.

The Government continues to acknowledge that it is not possible to expect young children to maintain social distancing and therefore a range of other protective measures must be put in place to ensure the safety of the school community.

Class and Curriculum Organisation

- The children will be learning in classes and will be minimising contact with children from other classes. The only exception to this is when children are having lunch and are outside on the school playground, they will be allowed to socialise with their wider bubble, those within their key stage. Children will be encouraged to play socially distanced play activities.
- We have made a slight amendment to the original proposed wider bubbles and these are as follows:
 - **Bubble 1:** Robins class (Foundation Stage)
 - **Bubble 2:** Sub bubbles containing – Doves and Owls (Years 1 and 2)
 - **Bubble 3:** Sub bubbles containing – Hawks and Eagles (Years 3 and 4)
 - **Bubble 4:** all Preschool children



- In Years 1 to 4, children will be seated facing forward at their tables rather than facing each other.
- The playground will be partitioned into these widened bubble zones. Each zone will also contain a calming area if children would prefer to play quietly.
- Teachers will be encouraged to take learning outside as often as possible.
- Windows and doors will be kept open as often as possible to increase ventilation.
- The government is clear that education is not optional and is committed to schools delivering a broad curriculum. However, they also acknowledge that schools need to have flexibility to address any gaps in pupil's learning.
- Our recovery curriculum will focus on pastoral support and re-establishing essentials such as reading, vocabulary, maths and literacy. As a result, some modification to the curriculum may be needed but we will return to the full curriculum offer by the Summer Term at the latest.
- **PE lessons will continue to take place; on your child's PE day, they will be required to come dressed for PE that day.** Your child may wear warm tracksuit bottoms and a jacket over their PE shorts and white polo as the weather will be getting colder. Your child's PE day is as follows.

Monday	Eagles (year 4)
Tuesday	Robins (Foundation Stage)
Wednesday	Owls (year 2)
Thursday	Doves (year 1)
Friday	Hawks (year 3)

- Staff will be able to work across 'wider bubbles', for example to support groups of children or to cover for absent colleagues, but they must maintain social distancing from the children and other adults and this will be minimised where possible.
- We will be able to invite some visitors into school, such as education psychologists, social workers and supply teachers.

The start/end of the day

- In line with government guidance, and to reduce the number of people on the school site, we will be introducing staggered start and finish times. To reaffirm the times mentioned in my previous letter please see the table below.

Bubble Group	Arrival	Departure
Bubble 1 – Robins Bubble 2 – Doves and Owls	9:10am	3pm
Bubble 3 – Hawks and Eagles	8:50am	3:15pm
Bubble 4 - Preschool	9am or 12:30pm dependent on sessions booked	12pm, 12:30pm or 3:30pm dependent on session booked
The timings displayed above have not changed from previous letter sent out.		
<i>If you have children in more than one bubble you can drop all children off at the earlier arrival time and again collect at the earlier departure time.</i>		

- We will open our playground gates at 8:45am and allow children to flow into school, therefore please do not arrive at school more than 5 minutes before your child's start time.

- For those who are not familiar with the arrival/departure system, parents are asked to form an orderly line along the left-hand side of the walk-in path to prevent gathering of groups of people.
- The path is marked with a one-way system and 2-metre markers, which we require you to adhere to.
- You will be asked to walk up the one-way system and stop at the white box at the green gate. At that point it is expected that your child will walk in through the school gates independently.
- We would appreciate that only one parent/carer drops off their child.
- No parents will come beyond the school playground gates unless you have an prearranged appointment.

Preschool

- We are delighted to be able to safely open Houghton Conquest's Pre-School once again to full capacity from Monday 7th September.
- We have looked at the equipment we use and have selected those toys which are most easily cleaned.
- We will limit the number of children playing at any activity at any time, but it must be recognised that children will be playing alongside their friends and sharing equipment and that cleaning and handwashing will be key ways that risk is minimised.
- Parents of children who attend more than one setting will be asked to share this information with the pre-school, in order that we can feel assured of alternative settings plans to keep children and staff safe, prior to agreeing to any sessions in our pre-school.

Lunchtime

- We have opted to continue with the 'pack-up' lunch, as this means children can either eat in their classrooms or with their wider bubble in the school hall, cleaned in between each bubble. We will review the implementation of packed lunches on a half termly basis, and we wish to reintroduce hot dinners as quickly and as safely as we can accommodate it.
- All children who are entitled to 'Free School Meal' and those children entitled a 'Universal Infant Free School Meal' (this is all children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2) can have a packed lunch provided by the school upon request each day.
- All other children, and anyone not wanting to take up the offer of a free school packed lunch, will need to bring in a packed lunch from home which contains a healthy, balanced diet (don't forget, no nuts).

What will children need to bring/wear?

- Our normal school uniform policy will apply when the children return. We do expect children to be adhering to our school uniform policy which is outlined on our school website.
- Children will be provided with their own set of equipment and stationery, so please do not bring this into school.
- Children will be able to bring a book bag or small bag to carry essentials such as their homework, reading book and water bottle.
- All children should bring in a named, full bottle of water. They will have the opportunity to refill their bottle as required during the day.
- If your child needs to have 'spare' clothes in school please put them in a named plastic bag which can be kept on their peg.

Cleaning and Hygiene

- A comprehensive cleaning routine will continue, at the beginning, middle and end of the day, in addition to a continuous cleaning programme of commonly touched surfaces.
- Children will be required to wash their hands on entering their classroom. Children will be required to wash their hands very regularly with soap and water and will be monitored in doing so.
- The 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach will be reinforced with the children, and supplies of tissues and dedicated bins are provided in each classroom.
- Resources that are shared within the class will be regularly cleaned, and any resources shared between 'wider bubbles' will be disinfected or quarantined between uses.
- In line with the current guidance, staff and children will not routinely wear face coverings. However, they may wear PPE in very specific circumstances, such as if a child is displaying COVID symptoms, or administering first aid if required.

If your child is unwell

- If your child is displaying any of the symptoms of Coronavirus, please do not send them to school. Currently, the published symptoms are a high temperature, a persistent cough and / or a loss of taste or smell. You must let us know immediately if your child displays any of these symptoms so that we can take appropriate action.
- When a child develops symptoms compatible with coronavirus, they should be sent home and advised to self-isolate for 10 days and await confirmation of the test result. Their fellow household members should self-isolate for 14 days. All children who are attending an education or childcare setting will have access to a test if they display symptoms of coronavirus and are encouraged to get tested in this scenario.
- Where the child tests negative, they can return to their setting and the fellow household members can end their self-isolation.
- Where the child tests positive, the child must self-isolate for at least 10 days from the onset of their symptoms and then return to school only if they do not have symptoms other than cough or loss of sense of smell/taste.
- The school will work closely with Public Health and the local health protection team to provide definitive advice about the actions that need to be taken next. Based on this, we may need to send home those children who have been in close contact with the person who has tested positive, advising them to self-isolate for 14 days since they were last in close contact with that person when they were infectious.
- In line with the guidance, we will not be routinely taking temperatures as the children arrive at school. However, if a child becomes unwell during the school day, we will check their temperature.
- Any child developing symptoms whilst at school will immediately be isolated from the rest of the children, placed outside the main office, and will need to be collected immediately.

Please help us keep your children safe by ensuring that you follow social distancing guidelines whilst outside of school. We are taking great care to minimise contact in school, and this will be undermined if children are widely mixing when not in school.

Quarantine

- The Government has placed a requirement to self-isolate for 14 days on anyone returning from certain countries. At present, this list includes Spain, France, Belgium,

Holland, Croatia, Austria, Czech Republic, Jamaica, Switzerland and Malta (amongst others), but other countries are continually being added.

- This is a legal requirement, so please do not send your child to school until the full 14 days quarantine has been completed if you have travelled to an affected country.

Access to the school

- Parents are asked to avoid coming to the school office if possible. Contact with the school can be made via class or office email, or by telephone.
- Any access into the school will be strictly by appointment only, to make sure that there is a suitably sized, ventilated space for any meeting to take place.
- For the foreseeable future, parents will not be able to come into school to use the toilets.
- We do understand that communicating with your child's class teacher is important and therefore we have set up class email addresses for you to contact your child's class teacher directly, who will respond within 48 hours.
 - robins@hcschool.org.uk
 - doves@hcschool.org.uk
 - owls@hcschool.org.uk
 - hawks@hcschool.org.uk
 - eagles@hcschool.org.uk
 - hcpreschool@hcschool.org.uk

School Office: office@hcschool.org.uk

Attendance

- The Government has been very clear that attendance will once again be compulsory from September.
- Please contact us if you think you will need support getting your child back into school.
- Schools are being encouraged to use penalty notices to 'encourage' full attendance, but we would rather work with you to address any attendance issues first.

To reassure parents and carers of children who have not been in school since March, our risk assessment and school organisation planning for the current phase of school during this Covid-19 period has been very successful. We have been delighted at how well the children have adapted to the rules, expectations and changes in school environments and look forward to seeing them all again on Monday.

Thank you again for your support and especially over the recent few months, I look forward to welcoming you all back on Monday; fingers crossed, to an uninterrupted year of learning and fun!

Yours sincerely



Miss J Heaslip
Acting Headteacher