

2<sup>nd</sup> March 2021

Dear Parents/Carers

## Update Letter regarding COVID and Staffing

I hope this letter finds you and your family well and that you have all had an opportunity to enjoy the beautiful sunshine the weekend. We eagerly look forward to welcoming our children and their families back to Houghton Conquest Lower School on **Monday 8th March** 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 are taking to welcome your child back. In essence we will be reverting to our Autumn term COVID planning measures with a few amendments.

It may seem a lot of information, but we want to be completely transparent and refresh you about the measures in place and hope that they are all reassuring. You will also find information, amongst other things, about school lunches, Forest School and PE.

### 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 then be allowed to socialise with their wider bubble; those within their key stage. Children will be encouraged to play socially distanced play activities.
- To reiterate the bubbles are as follows:

Bubble 1	Robins class (Foundation Stage)
Bubble 2	Sub bubbles containing – Doves (Y1) and Owls (Y2)
Bubble 3	Sub bubbles containing – Hawks (Y3) and Eagles (Y4)
Bubble 4	all Preschool children

- Again, 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.
- Windows and doors will be kept open as often as possible to increase ventilation.
- 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 wherever possible.

- We will be able to invite some visitors into school, such as education psychologists, social workers, and supply teachers, with the headteacher's permission.
- The government is clear that education is not optional and is committed to schools delivering a broad curriculum. At Houghton we strongly recognise the need for recovery before academic learning can be achieved.

### PE

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 is changeable. Your child's PE day is as follows:

<b>Monday</b>	Eagles
<b>Tuesday</b>	Robins and Hawks
<b>Wednesday</b>	Owls
<b>Thursday</b>	
<b>Friday</b>	Doves

### Forest School

Children in Doves and Owls were meant to be taking part in Forest School in January will now be starting their Forest School experience next week. Remember to come dressed in your Forest School clothes each week on the correct day. Information on what to wear can be found on our website: <http://hcschool.org.uk/forest-school/>

<b>Tuesday</b>	Owls
<b>Thursday</b>	Doves

### The start/end of the day

In line with government guidance and to reduce the number of people on the school site at any one time, we will be introducing staggered start and finish times that differ from the Autumn term so that they do not impact on the children's curriculum time in school – see below.

<b>Bubble Group</b>	<b>Arrival</b>	<b>Departure</b>
<b>Bubble 1</b> – Robins <b>Bubble 2</b> – Doves & Owls	9am	3:05pm
<b>Bubble 3</b> – Hawks & Eagles	8:45am	3:15pm

#### Please note the following important change:-

In order to avoid disruption to curriculum time for our KS2 children (Hawks and Eagles), if you have children in more than one bubble (*which includes bubble 3*) please ensure you drop them off at the **earlier arrival time** and collect at the **later departure time**.

- Please only arrive at the time allocated for your child and please avoid arriving early.
- We politely ask for parents to be wearing face coverings where possible when on the school site.
- 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.
- Please ensure that only one parent/carer drops off/collects their child.

- No parents will come beyond the school playground gates unless you have an prearranged appointment

### **Lunchtimes**

We are pleased that we will be offering a hot meal to all children who request one.

Children currently in school: if your child is currently attending school and you have already returned your menu choices form you do NOT need to complete another form.

Children returning on the 8<sup>th</sup> March: If you would like your child to have a school meal on return to school please ensure that you return the completed booking form by Thursday, 4<sup>th</sup> March to office@hcschool.org.uk. If you have any difficulties with the form please just send an email with your child's choices.

If you are in years 3 or 4 and not entitled to Free School Meals, please ensure payment is brought into school on the 8<sup>th</sup> March. If you do not return your booking form you will need to ensure that you send your child to school with a packed lunch each day.

### **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. Please also ensure they have a coat with them every day.
- Children will be provided with their own set of equipment and stationery, so please do not bring any 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.
- Children will be required to wash their hands on entering their classroom. Children will be required to wash their hands 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. Staff will be wearing covers upon arrival and departure, and in communal spaces throughout the school if/when social distancing cannot be adhered to. 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.
- Please following the guidance published on our school website.

### **Access to the school**

- Parents are asked to avoid coming to the school office. 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 please continue to email them directly via their class email account where necessary; they will aim to respond within 48 hours.

### **Before and After school Club (Home from Home)**

More information will be published later in the week with regards to this service being available. Please bear with us, we are working hard to make sure we can staff this facility appropriately and all COVID safety measures are enforced before opening this facility.

### **Attendance**

The Government has been very clear that attendance will once again **be compulsory**, and therefore it is mandatory your child returns to school. Please contact us if you think you will need support getting your child back into school.

To reassure parents and carers of children who have not been in school since December, our risk assessment and school organisation planning for the current phase of school during this Covid-19 period has been very successful.

### **School laptops/Chromebooks**

If you were loaned a school laptop/chromebook during the school closure can you please get in contact with the school office by Friday, 5<sup>th</sup> March, to arrange for it to be returned to school.

### **Staffing update**

We are delighted to tell you that Miss Crowhurst will be expecting her second child towards the middle of July.

We are actively in the process of recruiting a teacher to cover for Miss Crowhurst's maternity absence. To ensure continuity is followed through in her short absence Miss Crowhurst will be an integral part of the recruitment process. Miss Crowhurst will ensure the children have a seamless transition when she goes on her maternity leave and will continue to have a presence around school during her planned keeping in touch days.

Please be assured that we will update you in regard to the recruitment process as and when we can. If you have any questions in the meantime, however small, please do not hesitate to ask myself or Miss Crowhurst. We wish Miss Crowhurst and her partner all the very best.

We are also writing to let you know that Miss Granelli has been successful in obtaining employment elsewhere and will be leaving us this Friday, 5<sup>th</sup> March. We thank her for all the excellent work she has done over the years supporting many of our children and I am sure you will join me in wishing her all the very best in her new role. We have been successful in appointing Miss Granelli's replacement and details will follow very soon.

### **Message from Central Bedfordshire Council**

#### **“Parental survey – home learning**

The COVID-19 pandemic and periods of lockdown have been challenging for us all and we want to find out how the resulting home learning has impacted children.

Our Children's Services team has produced a survey for parents that will help us understand more about how children in Central Bedfordshire have coped during the latest lockdown.

The survey will run until 11 March 2021 and we would really value input from as many people as possible: <https://centralbedfordshire.researchfeedback.net/s.asp?k=161280053394>"

Thank you again for your support and especially over the recent few months, I look forward to welcoming you all back on Monday the 8<sup>th</sup> March.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J Heaslip', written in a cursive style.

Miss J Heaslip  
**Headteacher**