

3rd September 2021

Dear Parents/careers

Welcome to a new academic year, I hope you and your family have had an enjoyable summer holiday. Whether you are just joining us or have been with our school family for a number of years, I am delighted to welcome each and every one of you to the new academic year.

The staffing team are all excitedly preparing for the children's return on Monday 6th September and I would like to take the opportunity to confirm arrangements for the start of the term, as we slowly return to many routines of school life we enjoyed before the pandemic. We appreciate that there may be a number of children who have not experienced a normal school day and some who may have forgotten what this looked like. However, it would perhaps be an oversight to assume there will not be challenges related to Coronavirus along the way; nonetheless, with your continuing support, we can all work to ensure that all children fulfil their potential and thrive at Houghton Conquest Lower School.

Arrival and Departure

There will no longer be staggered arrival and departure times for different year groups in school – all children will arrive at the normal school start time; however, we will be providing a window to drop your child off, to prevent congestion. All timings and procedures for pre-school remain the same.

All children must be dropped off in school no earlier than 8.50am and no later than 9.00am. Please continue to follow the one-way systems in place (*eg walk up on the left and back down on the right*). Your child will be expected to walk through the green gates independently, where they will be greeted by members of the senior leadership team.

Children will be required to be collected during a window of 3.10pm-3.15pm from the school playground, again to help prevent congestion. In the playground you will find a clearly signposted collection area for each class - parents/carers will be expected to wait in this designated area for your child's teacher to dismiss your child.

If you have children in different classes, we would ask that you collect the youngest sibling first. This helps to prevent large queues and aids in a smooth dismissal. The designated areas for each class are shown on the map below. These arrangements are subject to change and they will be reviewed regularly.

It is essential that the school is informed if parents make alternative arrangements for anyone other than themselves to collect their children. Children will not be released to any other adult unless the school has received prior notification – forms are available in the school office or you can email office@hcschool.org.uk.

If you have a regular arrangement for someone other than a parent to collect your child we have a “whole academic year collection” form (*blue*) that you can complete and return. These are available from the school office and will be available on Monday for anyone who needs one.

Attendance

Children have missed a lot of school days already over the past two academic years – we believe it is paramount for all children to be in school every day. Every school day counts towards your child’s future – if your child is going to be absent from school, it is essential that you let us know the reason for the absence by calling the office on 01234 740202 by 9.30am each morning they are absent.

Uniform

Children will be expected to be in full school uniform. It is always wonderful to see how smart all children look in their full school uniform – we appreciate your support ensuring that children do not have extreme haircuts and that hairbands, hairclips etc. are discreet in design and colour.

Children will no longer be required to wear their PE kit to come to school on PE days but should instead ensure this kit is always in school ready. Please can you ensure that your child’s PE kit is within a named bag that can be placed on their peg in preparation for their PE lesson. If your child wears earrings please ensure your child has micropore tape in their bag so they can cover them if they are not going to remove them for PE.

Home from Home (breakfast and after school clubs)

Our home from home offer will run when we return next week. All bookings are made via WisePay which can be accessed from our website. If you are new to our school your logon details will be sent home next week.

COVID Safety Measures

In line with the government guidance, we are no longer required to operate a bubble system and children of all age groups will be able to freely mix in school, during play, lunch and assembly time. With this said, our school playground will no longer be partitioned; however, morning playtime will be split into two different timeslots to support overcrowding. Lunch time will naturally be staggered due to the various timeslots for different classes to go to the hall for their lunch, before their time on the playground with other year groups.

We will continue to follow the latest guidance provided to us by the Department for Education. Our control measures from now on will be as follows:

- Ensuring good hand hygiene for everyone (children will be asked to regularly sanitise/wash hands)
- Maintain appropriate cleaning regimes
- Keep occupied spaces well ventilated (masks are no longer required on site)
- Follow public health advice.

Children and adults must NOT attend school if they are showing any of the three main Coronavirus symptoms:

- Temperature
- Loss of sense of taste or smell
- New, continuous cough

It is hoped that parents and carers will agree that a pupil with symptoms should not attend school, given the potential risk to others. However, if a parent/carer insists that a pupil come to school, the decision to refuse the pupil can be made, in the Headteacher's reasonable judgement. It is essential to protect other children and staff from possible infections – this decision would be carefully considered in light of the circumstances and current public health advice.

Individuals are not required to self-isolate if they live in the same household as someone with Coronavirus, or are a close contact of someone with Coronavirus, and any of the following apply:

- They are fully vaccinated
- They are below the age of 18 years and 6 months
- They have taken part in or are currently part of a COVID-19 vaccine trial
- They are not able to get vaccinated for medical reasons.

Classes will no longer close as a result of a positive case either. Instead, they will be contacted by the NHS Test and Trace, informed they have been a close contact with a positive case and advised to take a PCR test. We would encourage all individuals to take a PCR test if advised to do so.

Getting in touch

If you have queries or questions, please do not hesitate to get in touch using office@hcschool.org.uk or calling the school office and we will be happy to help.

Class teachers do still have their email addresses up and running from last year if you need to get in touch with them; however please remember that they will be teaching throughout the day and aim to respond back to you within 48 hours.

- hcpreschool@hcschool.org.uk
- robins@hcschool.org.uk
- doves@hcschool.org.uk
- owls@hcschool.org.uk
- hawks@hcschool.org.uk
- eagles@hcschool.org.uk

Thank you for your continued support and commitment to Houghton Conquest Lower School. We look forward to a phenomenal year of enjoying learning and being together as a family again!

Yours sincerely



Miss Heaslip
Headteacher