

Headteacher:
Mr Tim Deery B.Ed (Hons)

Deputy Headteacher:
Miss Vicky Windross BA.Ed (Hons)



Upper Drove, Andover
Hampshire SP10 3NA
Telephone: 01264 352060
adminoffice@portway-jun.hants.sch.uk

Admin Manager:
Mrs Marie Staff

Thursday 31st December 2020

Dear Parents/carers,

Return to School Arrangements – January 2021

We thought it would be a good idea to update everyone about the return to school next week. Quite a lot has changed since the end of term, including our area being moved into Tier 4 (Stay at Home). Last night there were several announcements from the government and so we thought it would be helpful to outline our position as it currently stands (although it may be subject to yet more change!)

As you may have seen all secondary schools have been told to stagger the start of term and the vast majority of the pupils will be taught remotely at start of term. You may have also heard that some primary schools in tier 4 will have to move to remote learning at the start of term, but this is not the case for primary schools in our area. We must stress that we heard the news at the same time as everyone and, as we write this, we have been given no additional information.

So we can confirm that our school will return as expected on Monday (4th January) and we all need to do everything we can to minimise the risks during this challenging time. Essentially the same arrangements will be in place as we had last term but, with the much higher infection rates, the new (more transmissible) variant and tier 4 restrictions, it is important we continue to work together to keep everyone safe. Please remind yourself of the arrangements we have in place at the end of this letter. The most important thing at the moment is to keep all pupils and staff as safe as possible and prevent any spread so please keep a very careful eye on your son/daughter and, if they have any symptoms, then follow the procedures and get them tested as soon as possible.

We will continue to have staggered start and finish times to help minimise the numbers on site at pinch points in the day, these apply to all parents/carers and children. At all times, parents/carers should keep at least 2 metres away from other adults and if children can be dropped off at school entrances then please consider doing so. Please wear a mask when dropping off and collecting your child – you have been great at doing this last term, thank you!

Breakfast Club and Portway Plus After-School facilities will still be open. Obviously if numbers reduce to the point where we have to subsidise, then we will have to look at other options. We really hope this will not be the case as we know lots of parents find the before and after school clubs very useful.

We recognise that the impact of living in an area of rapidly increasing confirmed cases and living within Tier 4 restrictions will vary from family to family. We would like to reassure parents that whatever decisions they make to protect their family at this uncertain time will be fully supported by the school.

We have been updating our risk assessments and will be introducing new measures to further protect our community in light of this significant move. As ever, if there are any further changes from Government, we will write to you to let you know how they affect you and your child. At the end of term we didn't think we would have to contact everyone until the New Year, but this is the second time we have had to do so. This underlines the challenging situation we are facing but, as always, by working together we will get through this and with the good news about the vaccinations then hopefully there is a light at the end of the tunnel. Let's hope 2021 is a better year for us all.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mr Deery".

Mr Deery
Headteacher

Symptoms It is even more important that parents keep their children home if they develop symptoms of Covid-19, as we understand the new variant is even more transmissible. As I am sure you are aware, the most common symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) are recent onset of:

a new continuous cough

a high temperature/fever

a loss of, or change in, your normal sense of taste or smell

Advice from NHS is available at www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/check-if-you-have-coronavirus-symptoms or by phoning 111. If anyone in the household has symptoms then the whole family should isolate until a clear result is obtained. Pupils can then return to school if they are well enough to do so. If a positive result is received then please contact us asap as we have to notify Public Health England (PHE) and then follow their advice about whether bubbles, etc need to close.

Staggered Start/End of Day It is also vital that pupils come to school in their allotted spot. This helps to limit pupils and families meeting and avoids congestion around the school. This reduces the risk and was important in September, but is now probably even more important. The biggest risk in spreading the virus is through adult to adult contact so please make sure that we keep our distance at all times in school. If you have to be on the school site then please make sure you wear a face mask (unless exempt for medical reasons) and also avoid getting near anyone else. Please also avoid speaking to staff at the classroom door and use diary or email for messages. The office is open from 8:30 for urgent messages.

The arrival times are:

Year 3 can arrive 8:50-9:00 (Finish 2:55 or 3:05) **Year 5 can arrive 8:55-9:05 (Finish 3:10)**

Year 4 can arrive 9:00-9:10 (Finish 3:15) **Year 6 can arrive 9:05-9:15 (Finish 3:20)**

Layers & Ventilation Despite the cold temperatures, we are still being encouraged to keep some windows open as ventilation has a significant role in reducing the spread of the virus. This means the classrooms can get quite cold so it is important for pupils (and staff!) to come to school in layers, etc. Base layers, vests, etc. are a good way of keeping warm. Obviously we will need to balance the need to ventilate with the need to keep a comfortable and safe environment. In September we reduced the uniform requirements (see previous letters) and this should help parents/carers to be flexible with what pupils can wear in school. This continues for the spring term.

Talking to Teachers at the Classroom Door As we have said before, we have been trying to reduce this to a minimum in order to protect staff. Most of the areas outside of classrooms are quite tight for space and keeping 2 metres away is very difficult. Please avoid talking to staff at the classroom door and use admin email to pass on messages if you can. Staff may now be wearing visors when they stand at the door at the end/start of the day. This is intended to add an extra layer of protection.

Visitors From next week the only visitors allowed into the school building will be those who are *absolutely essential*, which means no parent and carers will be allowed in the school building at any time.