



Midsomer Norton Schools Partnership

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Dear Parents/Carers

I am writing to you with information about September 2020 opening of Schools within the Midsomer Norton Schools' Partnership, following guidance issued last week by the Government. Firstly, I intend that all schools will be fully open from September and that the curriculum being taught will be as close as possible to that we would normally deliver. Of course, some arrangements to ensure the safety of pupils and staff may make the school day feel a little different, but we are confident it is possible to minimise the risk to all those on schools sites, whilst also delivering an excellent education. The remainder of this letter details some of the principles of our planning for September and expectations of children. I will also be writing to staff with similar guidance and information.

Bubbles

Schools will be arranging classes or groups of children in what are called 'bubbles'. These are contained groups of children in a class, year group or key stage. We will endeavour to prevent these bubbles from mixing, particularly in the primary schools. Classes or year groups of children will be the bubbles in primary schools and in secondary schools, we are planning to have year group bubbles. In order to prevent casual mixing of bubbles, children in secondary schools will not be moving as frequently from classroom to classroom, as would normally be the case. At Key Stage 3, it is likely that staff will move to children and only where there are specialist rooms required, will children themselves move around the site. Clearly, the less mixing of children across age groups, the less likely it is that any infection is spread.

Classroom layouts and equipment

Social distancing is still important to prevent the spread of Covid-19. However, the Government has said that social distancing in schools is now required less than previously, as there are far fewer people with the Covid-19 virus in communities. We have been told that classrooms can now be used with the normal number of children. Adults must endeavour to be two metres away from children and therefore teachers will largely be at the front of classrooms. Teaching Assistants are also expected to maintain a two metre distance, although this will not always be possible if children need support that requires closer supervision. Classrooms will have tables and chairs in rows and we will aim to have all children facing forward to reduce the risk of any infections being passed between individual children. In Nurseries and Reception Classes however, we will continue to teach in the usual manner, where children have the opportunity to move freely around rooms and interact in groups. Excess furniture will be removed from classrooms to allow children to be seated away from one another as much as possible.

Hand cleaning

Keeping hands clean is one of the most important ways of preventing the spread of Covid-19. Children and adults will be expected to wash their hands or use sanitiser on entry to school in the morning and at other regular points during the day – break times and lunchtimes for example. The Trust has purchased further supplies of hand sanitiser and will be constructing more dispensers before September to meet the demand of some of the larger schools. Clearly, sanitiser will be used a lot, as there are limited numbers of wash basins in schools.

Staggered start and end to the school day

Schools, particularly those with large numbers, may decide to have a staggered start to the school day and indeed a staggered finish. This will prevent cross-bubble mixing as much as possible and





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help reduce the numbers of people congregating on or near school premises. Your child's school will write to you before the end of term with details of any arrangements.

Break times, lunchtime and school dinners

Break times and the lunch period are likely to be staggered. Again, this is to reduce mixing of pupils across bubbles and to avoid cross-contamination. Children may be asked to eat in their classrooms or in defined areas of the school.

Hot meals and other food will be available as normal across the schools in the Trust. In some schools, particularly primaries, these will be delivered to classrooms to avoid queuing. In secondary schools, pupils will be able to access canteens and any queuing required will be managed in bubbles and social distancing will be observed.

Transport and PPE

Pupils will be able to use transport provided by the Local Authority, ourselves or public transport. If using public transport, all children will need to have face coverings which they must wear to and from school. I would advise that children using Local Authority transport or that provided by the MNSP Trust, also wear face coverings. Parents/Carers will need to supply face coverings for each journey. Alternatively, you may prefer to bring your children to school by car or if possible, allow children to walk or cycle.

Cleaning in schools

We are arranging for adults in schools to have access to cleaning materials throughout the school day to ensure surfaces are kept as clean as possible. We are arranging for cleaners to be in school during school times to support with cleaning procedures, but see the cleanliness of sites as the responsibility of us all whilst we deal with the Covid-19 pandemic. Cleaning staff have received additional training to support them in the important role they are undertaking.

Parent consultation events and open evenings in primary and secondary schools

We have taken the decision to hold secondary school open evening events virtually this year. In all schools we have also decided that any parental consultation events between September and December will also be held virtually. We will review this decision in December for the events in 2021.

School Trips

There will be no trips in the Autumn term of school between September and December. This is because additional staffing required for health and safety ratios on trips would result in an increase in pressure on staffing left at school. Given that there may be staff that become ill as well, schools will not be able to maintain the required bubbles if too many are out of school supervising trips. Again, we will review this decision at Christmas in preparation for the New Year.

If your child was due to take part in a trip in the Autumn term of the new academic year, you will either receive a refund for any payments you have made, or we will hold payments if the trip is being rearranged for a later stage in the academic year.

Wrap around Care

Primary schools in the Trust will offer wrap around care from September. Clearly, this will be difficult given the demands of containing bubbles. We will ensure that cross contamination of teaching bubbles is kept to a minimum, by ensuring social distancing is observed in wrap around care environments.



