

Risca Primary School

Return to School Newsletter No 7

16th July 2020



Dear Mums and Dads,

You will be aware that we have now had the new guidance for our September opening. The guidance document is lengthy and we are currently working through the document in order to ensure a smooth transition back to school in September.

Please be aware that there is an expectation that we use the first two weeks to build up our capacity to ensure that by September 14th, all pupils are in school. Following consultation with all Caerphilly Headteachers and the Local Authority, I am in a position to give you a broad outline of what the first two weeks of September will look like.

If you have read the guidance, you will be aware that the first two weeks are designed to allow us, where appropriate, to prioritise year groups to ensure that they have a smooth transition into school. We are very aware that we have not been able to complete formal arrangements for the transition of our Nursery, Reception and new Year 3 pupils this year. Therefore we will utilise the 'run up' to September the 14th, not only to build up to getting all pupils back into school, but also to invite new parents (those of Nursery, Reception and **new** Year 3s) into school to meet formally with teachers to prepare for the weeks ahead. Any meetings will be of course socially distant but we hope that this will give you an opportunity to see your child's classroom before they start school, and to ask your child's teacher any questions you may have..

In terms of our plans for September we have made the following plans. These are designed to ease all pupils back into school gently, and to allow pupils to get to know their new teacher in smaller, more personal groups. The emphasis for the first days of school will be 'getting to know you' and wellbeing.

Week One

September 1st and 2nd (Tuesday and Wednesday)

In line with the advice from the Local Authority, the first two days back (September 1st and 2nd) have been designated as *planning days*. This will ensure that our environment is ready and exciting for all our pupils and will also allow us to share any new risk assessments with staff. Additionally, it will allow us to re-assess any staff who are vulnerable or shielding in light of any new advice /guidance after the Summer break. I am sure that you will understand that it is very important for us all to be fully conversant with the new guidance, and that all staff are risk-assessed before pupils arrive in school. These days will also allow us to get our environment ready for our pupils, and have this assessed and checked by our Health and Safety Officer.

September 3rd and 4th. (Thursday and Friday)

We will use these days to improve our transition planning for our Nursery/Reception and new Year 3 pupils. If your child is due to attend our school next academic year and is new to our school, please keep an eye out in the post for details of our transition plans.

Week Two

Year 1 to Year 6 pupils.

September 7th-10th (Monday to Thursday)

Pupils will come to school in their groups of 8 as we have been doing for the last 3 weeks. Pupils will attend on the same day as they have this term. When they attend school they will go to their new classroom. This will allow their new teacher to get to know pupils in small groups. We really hope that this will ease the transition process and that it will allow the pupils to meet their new teacher in a small group which is more personal.

September 11th (Friday)

All year 1 to year 6 pupils will attend school in their new classes. This will be the first time that pupils have the opportunity to meet with their entire class and we will make sure that all of the children are comfortable and feel settled.

Week 2

Nursery and Reception Pupils

Pupils will attend school in small groups, and over time we will increase the time that pupils spend in school. Please anticipate that in the first few days the pupils will not spend a whole day in school, but that over the week the time will increase. This will give all children time to adjust to their new environment, and for some of them, to being away from parents for the first time. Please note that Nursery and Reception transition will continue into week 3. Please refer to your letter which will arrive in the post in the next few days.

Week 3

All pupils will attend school as normal. Please see our handbook for the new school hours and times. (Reception and Nursery parents please check your letter for exact times of the school day, as we will build up the hours that our younger pupils attend over week 3. Many thanks.)

What will the school day look like?

We anticipate that pupils will be taught in year group contact groups, and the Guidance requires us to minimise mixing between those groups. Therefore, as an example, Year 1 will be kept separate from Year 2 and this will include break times and lunch times. We anticipate that we will still need to stagger the beginning and end of the school day and that we will need to stagger playtimes and lunchtime. We are currently looking at this and pulling together timetables for the day. To manage the return of all pupils requires considerable planning. As soon as we have further information and finalised timings we will send these out to you.

We are currently waiting on firm guidance on breakfast clubs and catering. Once again, as soon as we have confirmation of the way forward we will pass this information on to you.

As a part of the re-organisation we will be once again repurposing our building. This is especially relevant in KS2, where the guidance recommends front-facing desks where possible. Unfortunately, we are unable to complete this repurposing until we break for the summer holidays, but as in the past, we will send some photographs of classrooms to allow you to share these with your child prior to their return.

We are currently constructing a short handbook for parents for our September reopening. As soon as this is ready we will send it out via Seesaw and Twitter. Please bear with us. There are

a number of decisions to be made prior to us sharing this with you, and we would rather wait for complete guidance before sharing the handbook.

As a reminder for those of you who have not sent your children back this term, we will resend the Seesaw message so that you can be fully aware of what day your child is due to attend. For parents new to our school, please look out for communication by post.

Seesaw and Communicating with Parents.

We will soon be in the position where we will need to 'roll over our Seesaw app into the pupils' new classes. Therefore, whilst this is completed we will naturally have some 'down time' on the See-Saw app. Can I ask that all parents follow us on Twitter over the summer holiday? This will ensure that if we have final information that we need to share with you, we can continue to communicate with all parents. All teachers will be unable to communicate with parents or pupils over the summer break. For any parents new to our school, we will support you to access our Seesaw apps as soon as possible in September.

Reports

For those pupils who have attended school, we have sent all reports home with your child. All other reports should arrive in the post sometime next week.

And finally.....

Just a reminder that school finishes on Friday. In terms of this year, I am sure that you will agree that no one would have predicted how this year would evolve. Can I thank all of you who have worked with us over the last few months to support your child to complete their home learning? We are very grateful. We are also very grateful for those of you who have passed your good wishes on to us over the last few weeks. We have thoroughly enjoyed seeing our lovely children again and of course we absolutely look forward to seeing them in September.

All of the staff at Risca Primary School send you our best wishes. We hope that you have a relaxing summer break and we look forward to getting back to more 'normality' when we return in September.

Many thanks

Mrs Arthur and staff.

