



DROMORE ROAD PRIMARY SCHOOL

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Principal: [Mrs S McGrath B.Ed, M.Ed](#)

24th August 2021

Dear Parent/ Carer

I hope you are all well and have enjoyed a well-deserved summer break. As we prepare for the start of term on Friday, I just wanted to update you regarding the latest guidance and how this will impact on the school day.

Updated Restart Guidance

On the 12th August 2021 the Executive ratified a range of relaxations, some of which impact on the delivery of education and more widely on children and young people. The updated Restart Guidance published on Thursday remained predominately the same but did confirm that educational settings are no longer required to operate a system of formal protective bubbles. We are hopeful that this can lead to a more 'normal' school day for the children however, the need for educational settings to continue to support effective contact tracing means that we still need to maintain a cautious and measured approach that still seeks to maximise the time where pupils are within a consistent group of pupils. With this in mind, we will continue to use some principles of bubbles throughout the 1st term of the 2021-22 academic year to facilitate us to effectively track and trace.

In terms of the requirement for staff and pupils to self-isolate if they are identified as a close contact of a positive case, the Public Health Agency is currently preparing guidance to ensure that the new requirements for school aged children to only self-isolate until they have received a negative PCR test applies equally to all pupils in each year group. Staff who are fully vaccinated are not required to self-isolate if they are identified as a close contact. It is important for parents to comply with PHA isolation guidance due to:

- The child having COVID-19 symptoms, in which case parents should book a PCR test and support the child to isolate until a negative PCR test is returned.
- The child being identified as a close contact, either as a household member of a symptomatic or confirmed case, or as a close contact of a case not in their household.
- The child having returned to Northern Ireland from another country and isolating in line with NI Direct Travel advice and regulations.

More information will follow regarding self-isolating when PHA guidance is released.

The Guidance remains largely unchanged regarding mitigations that schools should have in place to reduce transmission and we will continue to encourage adults to social distance and use face coverings where social distancing is not possible. Parents/ visitors also need to continue to wear a face covering when entering the school building.

Key Dates

Our Induction Day for P2-P7 pupils is on Friday 27th from 9am-12.30pm.

School is closed on Monday 30th August for the Bank Holiday.

Our first full school day for P2-P7 is on Tuesday 31st August but please note as the school kitchen is not operating, all pupils need to bring a **packed lunch**.

P1 will have a staggered start from Wednesday 1st September-Friday 3rd September *and will finish at 12 noon until 17th September.*

Staggered Day

Arrival

Pupils should arrive between 8.45am and 9am as normal. All children will be supervised in their own classroom until 9am. If arriving by car, a member of staff will be in the playground to meet pupils being dropped off in the car park and pupils will be directed straight to their class to wash hands. If arriving by foot, pedestrians must not use the main car park gate entrance. Please drop your child at the pedestrian entrance where a member of staff will be at the front door to meet your child on arrival.

Departure

We have decided to slightly stagger home times initially in term 1 to help with the traffic management in the afternoon. If being picked up by car, pupils will leave by the side entrance.

Pick up times

1.30pm	<i>From Monday 20th September P1 stay for dinner. P1 pupils must be collected from the front door at 1.30pm, unless staying for 321 Club.</i>
2.00pm	<i>Y2 Children go home, unless staying for 321 Club. Y3 finish at 2pm on Wed/Thurs/ Friday</i>
2.45pm	<i>Year 3 at 2.45 pm Mon/Tues</i>
2.45pm	<i>Year 4/5 finish</i>
2.50pm	<i>Y6 and 7</i>

Break, Lunch and Hot Meals

We are continuing to encourage healthy snacks for break and lunch time. No fizzy drinks will be permitted in school, but I would encourage each child to have a water bottle of **still water** to sip throughout the day. Please ensure your child's water bottle is clearly labelled.

Hot meals will be available to all children from Wednesday 1st September. Dinners currently costs £2.60 per day or £13 per week. This menu will be uploaded to the school website before the start of term - www.dromoreroadps.com, Click Parents tab, then Dinner Menu.

Any pupil bringing in a break and/or a packed lunch can now use a lunch box moving forward. Lunch boxes should be clearly labelled and the content of their lunch should constitute a healthy balanced meal **(Please note we have a child with nut allergies in school; therefore, no nut or nut products are allowed in school)**. As our Eco focus this year will be on reducing single use plastic and packaging we would ask for your support in reducing packaging waste when preparing breaks/ lunches.

Hygiene

Children will continue to wash and sanitise their hands throughout the school day. Hand sanitising material will be made available at each entrance point to the school and classroom. Pupils are encouraged to bring their own labelled hand sanitiser to stay in school as well as a pack of tissues to encourage our "catch it, bin it, kill it" approach.

School Uniform/ School Bags/ Stationery

Uniform - For 2021/22 we have again decided to streamline our uniform and pupils should wear the school logoed tracksuit and polo shirt with black trainers. Please note that children are not permitted to wear jewellery (with the exception of a watch) to school. This includes earrings and these should be removed rather than covered.

PE- Pupils need black shorts and plimsolls for indoor gymnastic lessons. These should be brought in a bag and left in school. Please remember to clearly label all items of clothing.

School bags -The Updated Guidance has indicated that items can now be carried back and from between home and school. Last year we found the use of plastic wallets for carrying homework items really beneficial as school bags traditionally take up a lot of space and create a trip hazard. Consequently, we plan to again provide pupils with a plastic wallet for carrying their school things. A school bag can be used as well, if desired.

Stationery- As communicated in June, each child in P2-7 needs to bring a fully stocked, easily wiped, pencil case with them on their first day. This can be carried back and forth from school on a daily basis. Suggested stationery items include: pencils, rubber, enclosed sharpener, ruler, colouring pencils and pritt stick.

Afterschool Clubs

321 Club

Traditionally children in our Y1-3 can extend their school day by attending our 321 Club. Last year due to 'bubbles' we were unable to offer this facility to our P1 pupils. This year, we plan to offer 321 Club to all our pupils in Y1-3 and this group will be treated as a 'bubble' for track and trace purposes. It will run from Monday to Friday from 1.30-2.45pm and will cost £1 from 1.30-2pm and £1.50 from 2-2.45pm or alternatively £2.50 per day.

321 will commence on Tuesday 31st August for Y2 and will be available for Y3 to access from Wednesday 1st September. Y1 can stay for 321 Club from Monday 20th September.

Clubs for P4-7 pupils

When the pupils return to school, we can begin to timetable for the restart of all our afterschool clubs.

Homework

There will be no homework given to the pupils for the first few weeks of term. This will give teachers time to assess pupil level for spelling and reading groups. When homework does commence, homework will be completed through Seesaw and also in homework books, which can now move between school and home. Reading books can also now be used both at home and in school. Seesaw was a great success during remote learning and for homework last academic year and we will continue to use this during the

academic year in case of further closures due to the impact of the pandemic or pupils self-isolating. Seesaw Codes and codes for Mathletics and Reading Eggs will be sent home during the first few weeks of term for all pupils.

Absence

If a child is unable to attend school, please contact the school in the morning to let us know. This can be through a phone call to the school (followed up with a note) or alternatively an email. Please note that as advised by the Restart Guidance, work will not be provided to children off sick as they need to rest. Work will be provided remotely in cases where PHA has advised self-isolation.

I appreciate that there is a lot of new information to process in helping the school run smoothly but please contact the school office if you need any clarification. We will continue to review our procedures in the coming weeks and will keep you updated of any changes. We look forward to seeing you on Friday; it will be lovely to have our school building and playground filled with the sound of children again!!

Yours faithfully,

Mrs S. McGrath
(Principal)