

Thursday 2nd September 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope you all had an enjoyable summer, despite the 'variable' weather. I would like to introduce myself to you all as the new Headteacher of St Michael at Bowes. I have worked at SMAB for nearly 15 years so I know the school and local community very well. It will be my first and most important job to ensure continuity of the high standards of care and academic achievement SMAB has become known for under Mrs Jay. My challenge, and one I am incredibly excited to take on, is to build on that success while she enjoys her well-deserved retirement. I have always had big dreams for all children at SMAB and will work tirelessly with my fantastic staff team to realise those dreams this year and into the future.

I hope this letter gives you all the information you need for your child's return to school on **Monday 6th September**. If you have any questions prior to this date, do not hesitate to contact the school office by phone or email.

We had hoped to be able to remove all Covid restrictions from September and welcome you all back into school with open arms. However, our priority must be to limit Covid transmission in school so that our children are able to remain in school and receive the best possible education without undue interruption. Therefore, some restrictions will remain and we will review and relax them as soon as we can.

School Start and Finish

- Years 3 and 4 will enter and exit through the main Grenoble Gardens entrance. The gates will open at 8.20am and children will be allowed into their half of the playground. At 8.30am the bell will go for all children to enter their classrooms and begin their learning.
- Years 5 and 6 will enter through the Tottenhall Road entrance. These gates will also open at 8.20am and the children will be allowed into their half of the playground. They will enter their classrooms at 8.30am to begin their learning. Siblings may enter and exit together through their chosen gate.
- **Gates will close at 8.40am. Please make sure your child is at school before then.**
- We request that children are brought to school by one family member only and that you leave the area as soon as you have dropped off your child. Please try to maintain social distancing and mask wearing where possible.
- School ends at 3.15pm. Years 5 and 6 will leave through Tottenhall Road entrance and Year 3 and 4 will leave through the Grenoble Gardens entrance. Until October half term, **Year 3 and 4 parents only will be allowed into the playground to collect their children**, however we ask that you stand back from classrooms and doorways so staff can safely bring children out and dismiss them. As you arrive, staff will show you where to stand. You may continue to wait outside the gates if you prefer and staff will send your child out to you.
- **Year 3 children should arrive at school at 9.00am on Monday 6th September only.**

Updates to Covid restrictions

- Bubbles: Children will no longer be kept in year group bubbles. However, we will be staggering break and lunchtimes so that Upper and Lower phases are separate.
- Collective worship: Children will be able to access collective worship in the hall or outside on the playground (weather permitting) but we will keep Upper and Lower School separate inside and deliver a mix of in-person and virtual worship. Class assemblies will be filmed and made available for you to view on our YouTube channel.
- Lunch: Children will eat lunch in the hall on rotation, except on Fridays when they will eat in class.
- Hygiene: Hand washing and hand sanitising is still essential to minimise the spread of the virus so children will be hand washing and sanitising regularly throughout the day
- Seating in class: Children do not need to be seated in front facing rows any longer so staff will be grouping children according to the needs of the class and the lessons taught
- Cleaning: additional cleaning of key touch points will continue during the day as this is still recommended
- Ventilation: we are still required to maintain good airflow through the school so we will continue to have windows and doors open and allow pupils to wear additional layers of clothing, if necessary, as the weather gets colder
- LFD testing: Staff will continue to test twice weekly and we ask that families continue to test too, in order to identify any positive cases
- Masks: Masks no longer need to be worn by staff or parents. However, we will respect anyone's decision to continue to wear one
- Communication: We will continue to request that families communicate with school staff through Class Dojo, email and phone calls. Please make sure that important communication goes to the school office, e.g. reporting absences. Class Dojo is for general day-to-day questions and queries. Please limit your visits to the school office to essential business only. Senior staff will be on duty at both gates and in the playground at the start and end of every day and will be very happy to speak with you.

Managing Covid cases

- Staff or pupils **must not** come into school if they have Covid symptoms
- If you or your child has Covid symptoms you must arrange to have a PCR test as soon as possible. You can arrange this online ([Get a free PCR test to check if you have coronavirus \(COVID-19\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/get-a-free-pcr-test-to-check-if-you-have-coronavirus)) or by phone by calling 119
- Anyone with COVID-19 symptoms or a positive test result should stay at home and self-isolate immediately. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection>
- The self-isolation period starts immediately from when your symptoms started, or, if you do not have any symptoms, from when your test was taken. Your

isolation period includes the day your symptoms started (or the day your test was taken if you do not have symptoms), and the next 10 full days.

- If anyone develops Covid symptoms at school, however mild, they will be sent home. They will be taken to a room to self-isolate until collected. This is in line with government guidance. **Please ensure that all your emergency contact details are up to date.**

Close Contacts

- **The school will no longer identify close contacts;** NHS Test and Trace will identify them. Any contacts identified will be asked to take a PCR test. If the test is negative, they can continue to attend school or work
- Individuals **DO NOT** have to self-isolate if they live in the same household as someone with COVID-19, or are a close contact of someone with COVID-19, **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 an approved COVID-19 vaccine trial
 - they are not able to get vaccinated for medical reasons

This means that all primary aged children, identified as a close contact should come to school as normal, unless their PCR test result is positive or they have developed symptoms.

There is a lot of information for you to absorb, but please do ask a member of staff if you have any questions. We will be reviewing our measures regularly and will inform you of any changes.

We look forwards to welcoming you back to school on Monday 6th September.

Kind regards

Debbie Butcher
Headteacher