



LEADHILL PRIMARY SCHOOL

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20 August 2021

Information about Plans for the New School Year

Dear Parents

I hope that you have all had an opportunity for rest and relaxation over the summer months. We are really looking forward to welcoming the children back to school next week.

Thank you for your patience in waiting for the information about the restart of school. The Department of Education advice arrived on Wednesday evening so this has delayed me being able to write to you.

There are a lot of details contained in this letter but many of the measures that we had in place during 2020-21 will be continuing. As a school, we were so pleased to see how the measures we introduced were successful both in keeping our school community safe, but also in providing as much 'normality' for our children as possible. Measures such as staggered starts to the day, Rainbow Hoodie days, decreased use of the school bell and a slightly earlier finish on a Friday were really positive initiatives that enhanced school life rather than restricting. We want to continue with the positives and move forward cautiously in our steps towards returning to 'normal'. We will be continuing to focus on the children's mental and physical health at this time, and some of the additional measures we are introducing have been prompted by this goal.

I have included all of the details about school routines, as I know that it can be hard to even remember things that were automatic routines in the previous school year! We also have a number of new families for whom all the routines are new. Please take time to read through the sections that are relevant for your family. I apologise for the amount of information that you will need to process.

You will already have heard headlines about an end to 'bubbling' in schools. DE advice is actually that schools continue to have an element of bubbling in order to control the ability to track and trace as well as reduce the potential of infection spread. In Leadhill, children will continue mostly in their class bubbles, with continued emphasis on good hygiene and allowing for levels of social distancing.

Returning to school

The First Day Back

P2 – P7

P2-7 children will be returning to school on Wednesday 25 August, with a half day on that day.

All children will have a flexible start to the day. They can arrive at school between 8:45 and 9:00am. (See information about **Morning Routine**) They should be collected from the Upper Playground at the times listed below. (See information about **Afternoon Routine**)

Breakfast and Afterschool Club will be running from Wednesday 25 August. (See information about **Breakfast and Afterschool Club**)

	P2 – 7 School Day 25 August 2021	Collection Area
Wednesday 25	P2 – 8:45 – 9:00am to 11:50am	Lower playground
	P3 – 8:45 – 9:00am to 11:50am	Upper Playground
	P4 – 8:45 – 9:00am to 12 noon	Upper Playground
	P5 – 8:45 – 9:00am to 12:05pm	Upper Playground
	P6 – 8:45 – 9:00am to 12:05pm	Lower playground/Upper Playground*
	P7 – 8:45 – 9:00am to 12:05pm	Upper Playground

P1 Children

P1 parents were given a plan for the first two days of school in their welcome book. This plan allowed for two bubbles to start school separately on 26/27 August or 30/31 August, with all children coming together on Wednesday 1 September. P1 children will be finishing at 11am on their first day with their bubble, and 12 noon for the rest of September. P1 children will be collected from the Lower Playground.

Morning Routine

The school day will have a flexible start with children coming in to the classroom between 8:45 and 9:00am. Please note that this flexible period has been reduced this year by 5 minutes to allow classes to get started on their official day at 9am. Teachers will be waiting in the classrooms for children to arrive.

Parents of children in classes other than P1 and Pre-school, will be asked not to enter the site unless their child unless this has previously been agreed. Instead, children will enter through the front gate on Casaeldona or the side gate on the lane, where a member of staff (Generally Mrs Millis or Miss Gillespie) will welcome them into the site. Any arrivals after 9:00am will be asked to come into the site via the Casaeldona entrance. The foot gate on the lane will be closed at 9:00am. Parents and children who arrive after 9:00 will be asked to wait at a designated point outside the front door. A member of staff will admit children only.

Members of staff will be positioned around the school site to ensure that children get safely into the school building.

P1 parents will be able to enter the site in the mornings, but we ask that face masks are used when accessing the school site. Parents not using face masks for medical reasons are reminded that they **must** adhere to 2 metre social distancing.

P1 children will be using the classroom at the front of the school. P2 will be in the classroom at the rear of the school that was used last year by P1. P3, 4, 5 and 7 will be using the rooms that have been the traditional rooms for these classes. They will enter school each day through the rear door.

P6 will be using the mobile classroom and so will only need to enter the school building to use the toilet facilities.

The staggered start to the day provided a really positive start to the day for our classes, allowing time for the children and staff to have a gentle start to the day and to be ready to start work promptly at 9am.

Afternoon Routine

In order to allow for social distancing, children will continue to be released from classes at staggered intervals. Parents will be permitted to wait in the Upper or Lower playgrounds around collection time. Some of our older children will not need an adult to collect them from the playground, and will be able to make their own way to cars or to walk home. Classes have specific collection areas and times.

Teachers will bring children to their collection point and children will be released to parents one at a time. This will be particularly important for our younger children who may struggle to see their parent in the larger number of waiting adults. Please be patient, as the handover process is always more time-consuming early in the year. It would be helpful if parents who see that their child is the next child to be released step forward to make their presence known to the class teacher.

From 26 August 2021, classes will have the following finish times:

Class	Collection time	Collection Area
P2	Mon-Thurs 2pm Fri – 1:50pm	Lower playground
P3	Mon & Tues 2:45pm Wed - Thurs 2pm Fri – 1:50pm	Upper Playground
P4	Mon-Thurs 2:55pm Fri 1:55pm	Upper Playground
P5	Mon-Thurs 3pm Fri – 2pm	Upper Playground
P6	Mon-Thurs 3:05pm Fri – 2:05pm	Lower playground/Upper Playground *
P7	Mon-Thurs 3:05pm Fri – 2:05pm	Upper Playground

* P6 children will be exiting from the mobile classroom. Mr Maher will allow children who exit by the Casaldona Exit to leave first, and will then bring the rest of the P6 class to the Upper Playground for collection.

Children who are booked in to attend After School Club will be escorted by a member of staff to the Afterschool room.

Snacks, Lunch and Milk

School Dinners will restart on Wednesday 1 September. From 25 – 31 August, children will need their own lunchbox, clearly named, which will contain their lunch and break. School dinners will be available to book on Schoolmoney. All children taking school dinners need to have these booked on Schoolmoney. This includes children who are in receipt of free school meals. If a child's meal is not booked in Schoolmoney, there is a risk that the dinner will not be ordered and that the school will have to contact parents to arrange for a packed lunch to be provided. Bookings can be made up to midnight of the night before the dinner is required. If you have forgotten to book a dinner, please telephone the school office to ask for a booking to be made manually. Please also speak to the school office if you are having any difficulty using the Schoolmoney App.

If you feel that you may be eligible for Free School Meals, but have not applied, applications for Free School Meals are made to the Education Authority, by completing a form which is available on the Education Authority website: www.eani.org.uk/financial-help/free-school-meals-uniform-grants. Children who received Free School Meals in the past year are not automatically carried forward to the new school year and a new application has to be made. Please speak to the school office if you need any guidance about this application.

We continue to ask that lunch boxes should be washable, so hard plastic would be preferable to fabric containers. All lunch boxes should be clearly named.

We encourage healthy snacks for break and lunch and a balanced lunch. We are a nut free school and children are not permitted to bring items containing nuts to be eaten in class. This means that cereal bars need to be carefully checked and most chocolate spreads will **not** be permitted. Children should bring a refillable water bottle with them to school each day. They will be given opportunities to refill these throughout the day. All lunch boxes and water bottles should be clearly named.

P1 and P2 children will be provided with a daily snack in class. The cost for this snack is £1.50 a week, which will be payable on Schoolmoney on a half-termly basis.

We will be once again offering school milk this year. Details about the cost will be distributed in the coming weeks. Distribution of milk will start on Monday 13 September. All orders for school milk should be made on Schoolmoney by Monday 6 September.

Measures to reduce contamination

Regular hand washing and good hygiene with coughs and sneezes continue to be an important part of keeping our school community safe and healthy. Sanitation stations are installed at all entrances to school and in key positions around the building. Regular handwashing is now an integrated part of our school routine. From time to time we may ask for donations of handwash to help us keep up with demand.

We will be continuing to be vigilant about children or adults in school who are feeling unwell. Children who are unwell should not be sent to school. If your child is unwell, please contact the school office to inform them of the absence and reason. This will help us to manage any issues relating to track and trace. On children's return to school an absence form needs to be submitted through our school website.

If children present as unwell during school hours, we will contact you to arrange for their collection from school. We will ask you to have them tested for Covid 19 if their symptoms are suggestive of this and will need you to keep in touch about the results. Families will need to follow the PHA guidance on quarantine and should liaise with Mrs Millis and the class teachers to ensure that school work is made available if this is appropriate. These strategies were used throughout the time when school was open last year, and worked really well in both supporting children and families who were needing to quarantine and in preventing the spread of any possible infection. This was only possible because we have had such excellent support from all our families and staff.

Children will be asked to bring their own, clearly named, pencil case and equipment.

This will stay in school for daily use. Early next week, individual teachers will post a reminder on Seesaw about the equipment that should be contained in the pencil case.

We will be reintroducing limited use of cloakrooms for storage of coats. Children will continue to mostly store all their belongings at their own work station in a storage box. We would prefer that children do not bring schoolbags to school. Instead, we recommend the use of folders, book bags or a reusable bag (not plastic) that can be stored in their storage boxes. The storage boxes are 30cm X 40cm, so will not be able to be used for larger bags.

Children will not be permitted to bring toys and other items to school each day.

Children will be continuing to have split lunch and break times in order to reduce the number of children using the playground at any one time.

Visitors to school will continue to be kept to a minimum in order to reduce the opportunity for infection to spread. Where possible, meetings with staff will take place outdoors or by phone.

All adults entering the school site will be asked to wear facemasks. People not using face masks for medical reasons are reminded that they **must** adhere to 2 metre social distancing. Adults who are waiting at the school gate or onsite are reminded to be aware of the continuing need for social distancing.

We hope to be able to move towards offering a range of afterschool activities in addition to our Afterschool Club. It is likely that these will be able to begin over the next month or so. We will keep you informed about the clubs that will be available and details about registering for these activities.

We are planning for music lessons in guitar, drumming and piano to start week beginning 6 September. Again, we will distribute information about these in the coming weeks.

Homework

We will be returning to the provision of homework on paper copies, rather than purely through Seesaw. Teachers in individual classes will communicate with you about the homework requirements for this year in the coming weeks. Reading books will be sent home on a weekly basis.

Clothing for School

Children will continue to require a school uniform and a PE uniform. To reduce contamination, children will be asked to wear fresh clothing each day. Children will wear uniforms on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays and their PE uniform on Tuesdays and Thursdays which we now call 'Rainbow Days'. The majority of PE sessions will take place outdoors and will be timetabled for Tuesdays and Thursdays. We will be beginning to make use of the PE hall for sessions on wet days or for areas of PE best suited to indoors, such as gymnastics.

As we continue to focus on health and wellbeing, we will also be providing a range of physical activities for all of the children on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. In order to protect their black school shoes, and to ensure that they have footwear suitable for outdoor activities, we ask that each child bring a pair of trainers to school for use throughout the week. These trainers will be kept in school throughout the term and will only come home if your child is finding them becoming too small. Please do not send expensive trainers to school. We do not want families to be put to great additional expense.

P2 - P7 children will wear their school uniform on their first day back, as it is a Wednesday.

Uniform for P1-4

Boys

Jade or white polo shirt
Grey trousers
Navy V-necked jumper
Black School shoes

Girls

Jade or white polo shirt
Grey skirt, pinafore or trousers
Navy V-necked jumper
Black School shoes

PE Uniform

Jade PE T-shirt
Navy or black track suit bottoms
Rainbow Hoodie/ Navy V-necked school jumper
Trainers

Uniform for P5-7

Boys

White shirt and school tie
Grey trousers
Navy V-necked jumper
Black School shoes

Girls

White blouse and school tie
Grey skirt, pinafore or trousers
Navy V-necked jumper
Black School shoes

PE Uniform

Jade PE T-shirt

Navy or black track suit bottoms

Rainbow Hoodie/ Navy V-necked school jumper

Trainers

All items of our uniform, except for Rainbow Hoodies, can be purchased from School Days on the Newtownards Road. We have a good number of second hand uniforms in stock which might provide a cost effective way to have a larger number of items of uniform. In exchange for items of uniform, we ask that parents make a donation to our PTA. If you would be interested in obtaining some items of uniform, please email Mrs Millis on amillis370@c2kni.net with details of your requirements. We will check our stocks and contact you to make arrangements for collection if we have what you require.

We will arrange to do an additional Rainbow Hoodie order in November.

Breakfast and After School Club

Breakfast and After School Club will be running as normal. The Breakfast Club will be operating in the PE hall and the After School Club will be returning to the room also used by playgroup. Children attending Breakfast Club should enter through the school front door. After School collections will be through the After School room door at the side of the school.

If you will be needing to use the Breakfast and After School Club, especially in the first week of our return to school, please email Mrs Millis to confirm that this booking is required.

The Breakfast club will operate from 8am to 8:45am at a cost of £2.50 a session. Children will be escorted to their classrooms at 8:45am.

After School Club will continue to offer Wrap Around Club, running from 2-3pm Monday to Thursday and 1:50-3pm on Fridays, at a cost of £3.50 a session. The 3-6 club will continue to operate at a cost of £8 a session, when booked on the Friday of the previous week. Please note that these costs will increase to £4.50 and £10 a session for late bookings. All payments should be made in advance through Schoolmoney or by using childcare vouchers or the Tax-free Childcare Scheme. If you would like more information about this, please contact Mrs Millis.

Even though there are not a huge number of changes, I realise that this is a lot of information to absorb. As always, any decisions made about the day to day running of the school have been made with reference to DE advice and with a view to creating a safe and happy school environment in which your children can grow and flourish.

We look forward to a great year in 2021-22.

If you have any questions about information in this plan, please contact me by email.

Kind regards



Anne Millis
Principal