



Ovingham Middle School

Ovingham, Prudhoe, Northumberland, NE42 6DE

Headteacher: Mrs J Bullock

Tel: 01661 833215 Email: admin@ovinghammiddle.co.uk

Website: www.ovinghammiddleschool.net

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31st August 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

Important information for our return to school.

Here we are at last; returning to school after such a long break! We hope you have had a good summer and are all safe and well. We are really looking forward to seeing you again, and I am especially looking forward to finally getting to meet you all.

Pupils will return to school as follows:

- Wednesday 2nd September - Year 5 pupils
- Thursday 3rd September - Year 6, 7 and 8 pupils

We are so pleased that we are in a position to welcome you all back into school, but there are some important bits of information we need you to read carefully and share with your children in order that the new routines work effectively and help everyone to stay safe and secure. Much of this information was sent out before the summer holiday, but I thought it would be useful for you to be reminded of it just before we come back. Please also read and share the following documents which have been key to shaping our plans throughout the preparation for school return:

[guidance for school opening](#)

[school opening - guidance for parents and carers](#)

Key Arrangements

Uniform and attendance:

All pupils should return to school from the beginning of the autumn term according to the DfE guidance. and therefore our usual arrangements regarding attendance will apply again. Please contact school if you have any questions about attendance or absence.

Children are expected to be in school uniform when they return in September. Details about uniform expectations have already been sent out and our school uniform policy can be found on the school website. School uniform includes appropriate black footwear and does not include trainers. It has been brought to my attention that some parents have already purchased shoes which may, in some eyes, be described as trainers. I do understand that it is difficult to sometimes decide if some footwear is a shoe or a trainer, however, we will be issuing further guidance to assist you with future purchases which will make the expectations regarding footwear more explicit.

Please note also the change in uniform this year which requires long hair to be tied back at all times, not just for PE.

On days when your child has PE or Games we would like them to come to school dressed in their kit and stay in it all day. Please refer to your child's individual class timetable which will be issued on their first day in school. As we will endeavour to take pupils out as much as possible for PE and Games, please ensure that they also have a warm top and tracksuit / jogging bottoms.

Year group bubbles/classroom/school day arrangements:

All year groups will form a bubble and contact between year groups will be kept to a minimum through the following measures:

- Each year group will have their own zoned areas outside for the beginning of the school day, and break and lunchtimes
- School will be zoned into year group areas
- Each year group will have their own entrance
- Each year group will have their own toilets for their sole use
- Classes will, as far as possible, remain in their registration classrooms to minimise circulation around school and their teachers will move from room to room to deliver lessons. Whilst maintaining safety, our overriding priority is to provide a broad and balanced curriculum and offer the unique features of the middle school system wherein specialist teaching can take place. Pupils will only move around school to access the Science, Food tech, DT, music and PE facilities. All movement around school will be supervised
- Classrooms will all, where possible, be forward facing. In others, there will be a 2m front facing distance between pupils. Windows and doors will be kept open as far as possible.
- Staggered break and lunchtimes

Enhanced cleaning:

School will be cleaned thoroughly at the beginning and end of the school day with additional cleaning of toilets during the day. Each classroom will have a supply of wipes, spray, hand gel and paper towels to enable regular cleaning of surfaces, and shared spaces will be cleaned between each use by a different bubble.

Any sharing of resources will be kept to a minimum. Resources / equipment will be wiped down and cleaned between use by different year groups.

Hand and respiratory hygiene

There will be signs in all rooms, toilets and corridors reminding pupils about hand and respiratory hygiene. Children will be reminded regularly about careful washing of hands, keeping hands away from their faces and the "catch it, bin it, kill it" message, and there will be a supply of tissues in each classroom with a lidded



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bin to dispose of any used tissues. There will be hand gel in each classroom, in the toilets and in the dining area. Pupils will use hand gel as they enter and exit a classroom. We ask for your support in enhancing the impact of these measures by ensuring that pupils wash their hands before leaving the house in the morning and on return after school and we have included timetabled opportunities for all pupils to wash their hands during the day. Pupils will be allowed to bring their own hand gel and tissues into school which they must not share with anyone else and these must be kept in their bag or pencil case. Please note that if your child is travelling on school transport, they must bring tissues in case they cough or sneeze on the bus. If this happens, they must place the tissue into a plastic bag and dispose of it in the lidded bin in the classroom as soon as they arrive at school.

Face coverings:

You may be aware that the guidance on wearing face masks in school has changed in the last few days: [face covering guidance](#).

It states that:

“Schools and colleges will have the discretion to require face coverings in indoor communal areas where social distancing cannot be safely managed, if they believe that it is right in their particular circumstances.”

Our planning means that there will be little movement around school as pupils will largely be based in their classrooms, and additionally, the school has been zoned into year group areas. Any movement around school will be closely directed and monitored, and different year group bubbles will be kept separate from each other in all communal areas. We have therefore made the decision that we will not enforce the wearing of face masks in school. However, we will allow any pupil or member of staff to wear a mask whilst moving around school if they choose to and if it makes them feel more comfortable to do so. Within the safety guidance for school transport, pupils aged 11 or over are strongly recommended to wear masks.

Some guidance regarding the wearing of face masks can be found here: [face coverings - when, where and how](#)

Additional rules for wearing face coverings:

- Never share your mask with anyone else
- Do not place your mask on any surface. If you do, the surface must be cleaned down immediately.
- Do not touch the front of the face covering, or the part of the face covering that has been in contact with your mouth and nose.
- Store reusable face coverings in a plastic bag until you have an opportunity to wash them. They should be washed regularly and you must throw away your face covering if it is damaged. If the face covering is single use, pupils should put them either in the lidded classroom bins, or put used masks in a small plastic bag and dispose of at home.

- Pupils should bring a small plastic bag to store face masks in whilst not in use
- Face coverings should be appropriate and suitable for school
- Face coverings should not be worn within classrooms

Start and end of the school day:

On arrival to school, pupils will go directly to their zoned area of the yard.

- Year 5 pupils: yard area around the Year 5/8 court.
- Year 6 pupils: Sectioned off area of Year 6/7 yard and paved area outside the Year 6 classrooms
- Year 7 pupils: Sectioned off area of Year 6/7 yard
- Year 8 pupils: Year 5/8 court

Pupils walking to school will arrive as usual through the gate where a member of staff will greet them and remind them where to go. If you are walking your child to school, please do not congregate around the school gate and ensure you social distance yourself from other parents / carers.

Pupils getting dropped off by car should adhere to the normal rules of following the yellow path and the zebra crossing and head directly to their zoned area. Parents should remain in their cars.

Please ensure that your children are not at school any earlier than 8.35am as we will not have staff to supervise them before that point.

Pupils arriving by school bus should follow the guidance sent out earlier from Northumberland County Council regarding school transport.

In terms of cycling to school, we do not currently have any secure bike storage. We would dearly like to encourage pupils to cycle to school for all of the obvious health and environmental reasons and we are investigating options for funding of cycle storage. We are also working with some parents and the local authority to be able to issue safety advice relating to the cycling routes to school. We are aware that some parents do intend to send their children to school on their bikes, but we must emphasise that bikes will be stored at your own risk and please be aware of the danger points on the route to school, particularly around the church in Ovingham. We will issue further safety guidance in the new school year at which point we will have more confidence in encouraging cycling to school.

To minimise risk of contamination between groups, each year group has their own designated entrance to the school building. Pupils will line up in their classes outside their own designated entrance and be controlled on entry to school to avoid congestion and will go directly to their registration classrooms.

There will be a slightly staggered end to the day to avoid congestion as pupils are leaving school, but not to the extent that it will disrupt any collection arrangements. **Pupils walking home will be dismissed at 3.25pm.** Please remind pupils that they should not mix in different year group bubbles and retain social distancing as far as possible when walking home.

Pupils catching the school bus or being picked up by car will leave at 3.30pm. Pupils being picked up will go straight to the car park and follow the usual rules to go to the car picking them up. Pupils catching the school bus will follow normal arrangements of lining up in the Year 5/8 yard, in year group order to ensure an organised boarding onto the buses.



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If your child has any medical appointments during the school day, please phone the office and let us know prior to their appointment. Children can be collected from the main entrance for their appointment. Please note, we cannot accept parents into the building without a prior appointment.

Lunches/snacks:

The school kitchen will fully reopen in September and so school dinners will be available. Alternatively, you can send your child with a packed lunch. Pupils will eat packed lunch in their classroom. Their packed lunch will stay in their bag until lunchtime and any rubbish should be put back in bags and disposed of at home. Only pupils purchasing a school dinner will use the dinner hall. Year groups will use the dinner hall one at a time and surfaces will be wiped down between each year group's sitting.

Initially, the kitchen will not be able to provide break time snacks so, if they would like one, pupils will need to bring a break time snack in from home.

All children need their own **NAMED** water bottle filled at home every day. **NAMED** lunch boxes and water bottles should be sanitised every night before being brought back into school. Pupils will not have the opportunity to refill their water bottles so, if you feel your child will need more water, please send two filled water bottles to school. However, water will be provided for pupils following games and PE lessons.

Items to be brought into school:

We are trying to minimise the transfer of resources between home and school to a minimum. Pupils should therefore bring as little as possible using the following as a guide:

- One clean school bag - zippable so that it can be stored safely under tables
- Water bottle(s)
- Stationery items should be limited to one pencil case. Pupils should be reminded that they **should not share** any of their own resources.
- Reading book
- School planner which will be issued on the first day.
- Packed lunch if bringing one from home

Most homework will be set on google classroom to minimise items being brought back and forth to school.

Your child will need to come to school in their PE kits on the designated day linked to your child's timetable. As we will aim to maximise our outdoor learning opportunities, it is important that your child **has a warm, waterproof coat in school every day.**

We do have sets of headphones but it will help with the cleaning of equipment if pupils can bring their own headphones on the day that they are timetabled for their music lesson.

Pupils will need to bring their own apron in a separate bag if they are timetabled to do Food Technology. They will take the apron in the bag to the lesson, and then put it straight in the bag after the lesson for it to be washed at home.

Lockers:

Initially, lockers will not be used. This is to minimise congestion points around school. We would like to introduce the use of lockers, but we will do so when we can be clear about the risk involved. Pupils will leave their bags in their registration classrooms. Phones will be collected by a member of staff and taken to the office for safety. They will be re- issued to pupils at the end of the school day.

Clubs:

No clubs will be running until we have embedded the new routines and systems. We do hope to run a full programme of lunchtime and after school activities and will share information as soon as we can.

Sickness Absence Procedures:

If your child is unwell and unable to attend school, please follow school's usual absence procedures and alert school to the absence before 9am, stating clearly the reason for absence, including whether this is due to a suspected Covid infection. If we do not have a reason for a child's absence we will have to contact you to ascertain this.

Covid-19 symptoms:

Should your child, or anyone in your household, display symptoms of Coronavirus, they **MUST NOT** attend school for a seven day isolation period or until a test has been undertaken and they have received a negative result. If a positive result is received, then the clear medical advice is that they must self-isolate for at least 10 days from when the symptoms started. Please see: [stay at home guidance](#)

Any child who develops symptoms while at school, will be isolated from the rest of the school and will be supervised until parents/carers can collect them. It is crucial therefore that you are able to respond to any contact from school promptly.

In the case of any confirmed case of coronavirus, school will work with Public Health England Health Protection Team to carry out a rapid risk assessment and follow their advice on the actions needed. Please ensure school has up to date contact details in case of any emergency.

Behaviour expectations.

I know that we can expect fabulous and positive behaviour from all our pupils at OMS. It is crucial that pupils do follow the behaviour expectations in order to keep themselves and others safe and well. Staff will spend time with pupils going through all the new and different routines, and will remind them regularly about the following essential expectations:

- Follow altered routines for arrival and departure
- Follow school instructions on hygiene, such as handwashing and sanitising
- Follow instructions on who / how they can socialise with at school
- Move around the school as per specific instructions given



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- Cough or sneeze into a tissue, dispose of the tissue immediately and wash/sanitise hands ('catch it, bin it, kill it')
- Avoid touching mouth, nose and eyes with hands as much as possible
- Tell an adult if they are experiencing symptoms of coronavirus
- Only touch and drink from their own water bottle
- Not share food from packed lunches or school dinners
- Follow instructions on use of resources
- Follow instructions on where they may or may not go
- Use the toilets as instructed
- Ensure that they never cough, sneeze or spit at or towards any other person

Pastoral care and support

I apologise about the length and detail of this letter but once again, thank you in advance for sharing this information with your child and ensuring they are absolutely clear about routines and expectations when they return. We are confident that we have put measures into place which will alleviate any worries you or your child may have and we know that most pupils will be looking forward to the routine of returning to school. We do however realise, of course, that there will be some who are anxious about coming back, and may feel overwhelmed by the new measures in place. As always, our overriding priority is the care and welfare of pupils and we will do all we can to support all pupils in the transition back to full time education, and staff will be available to support individual pupils where necessary. Please do contact us at school if you have any concerns about your child or about any of the measures outlined above.

Yours sincerely

Jenny Bullock

Headteacher