



EDUCATION AUTHORITY SOUTH EASTERN REGION



LONGSTONE SCHOOL

Principal: Mr I. Skarmoutsos B Sc PGCE M Ed
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Dear Parents/Guardians,

I hope you are all well and enjoyed a relaxing summer break.

It has been a time of uncertainty and worry for all families in relation to plans for the new school term but I hope you understand that final guidance from the Department of Education was only made available on the 13th August.

In relation to dates for our School Re-opening this academic term, we will start with induction days for yr1 and yr8 pupils during the week beginning the 24th August and full-time return for all pupils from Tuesday 1st September 2020. There will be separate induction arrangements for our nursery pupils and parents will be contacted for more detailed information.

The 20/21 academic year will bring a lot of changes to the way the school functions in every level and we have been working hard over the summer to make the appropriate arrangements for our children to return to school.

In the light of many Government updates and guidance over the last weeks, I would like to assure you that we are doing all we can to keep your children, families and our staff as safe as possible. I am writing to you to inform you about all the measures we are implementing but to also remind you that this is a new situation for all of us. We will be constantly reviewing our practices and continue to make further adjustments. We really appreciate your understanding and co-operation.

Please read the following carefully. It is extremely important that you follow this advice:

If you have been medically advised that your child should not attend school for the 20/21 term or attend part-time, please phone the school to discuss Educational Provision arrangements with a member of the Management Team. If you are unsure, please seek medical advice as soon as possible.

Hygiene

Additional hand sanitizing stations have been placed in each class and strategically around the school. When and where possible hand washing with warm water and soap will be encouraged and staff will assist children to wash their hands properly. This practice was already adopted prior to March 2020. **Please take time to prepare children by promoting**



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good hand washing at home prior to their return to school and encourage them to avoid touching their face when possible. Further advice on Personal Hygiene can be found here:
<https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/search/node?keys=Personal+Hygiene>

All adults will adopt the practice of regular hand sanitization and will be encouraged to use hand sanitizing units when entering the building and during the day.

Class staff will be carrying out routine cleaning of surfaces and resources and older children will also be encouraged to do the same in between periods/activities.

Members of the cleaning team will be carrying out regular cleaning of toilets and other frequently used areas, as well as door handles etc.

Social Distancing

Although Social Distancing measures have been relaxed by the Department of Education we will still encourage social distancing when appropriate and possible. Staff will continue to observe Social Distancing of 2 metres between adults. Parents should also follow the 2 metre Social Distancing rule during drop off and pick times.

If a child presents symptoms

If a child or a member of their household presents symptoms such as fever, cough or loss of taste or smell then the child **should not attend** school under any circumstances and parents/ guardians should inform the school as soon as possible. This will help us implement track and trace measures and take the appropriate precautions.

If a child suddenly becomes unwell during school hours with a fever, cough or loss of taste or smell, we will contact you immediately. We will then isolate the child until you are able to collect them. Due to the seriousness of the current situation I would ask that you do come and collect them immediately, or send a nominated adult to collect them in your place. Children that present symptoms will not be allowed to travel home on school transport.
PARENTS HAVE TO ENSURE THAT THEY ARE CONTACTABLE AT ALL TIMES.



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It is very important for parents to plan for the case of a school closure or closure of parts of the school at short notice.

As we have over 225 children accessing our setting, we would ask you to help us try to stop the virus from spreading.

If we are advised to close Longstone School, we will let you know by text. We will also put regular updates on our website: Please ensure that our office staff are kept up to date with your contact details in order for us to keep you fully informed.

We would encourage all parents/guardians to download the Northern Ireland Track and Trace phone app: StopCOVID NI. Further information about this application can be found here:

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/coronavirus-covid-19-stopcovid-ni-proximity-app>

Uniform

Uniforms should be washed daily. Until further notice children should NOT wear ties. Some of our older students have opted for blazers in the past but unfortunately this will also NOT be an option. The reason for this is that ties and blazers cannot be washed daily.

Access to the School

Parents and other visitors will not be allowed on the school premises without an appointment. In the event of a meeting being necessary, an appointment should be made, and strict social distancing rules will be applied throughout the meeting. We are also introducing an electronic sign in system for staff and visitors, to keep a record of who is in the building each day in order to comply with track and trace efforts and inform appropriate individuals in the event of someone in school has been diagnosed with Covid 19.

First Aid and Administration of Medication/Intimate Care

If your child requires any First Aid /Administration of Medication during school, they will be tended to as usual by a trained member of staff, but that member of staff will wear full



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Personal Protective Equipment. This will consist of gloves, an apron, a face mask and a visor. The same will be applied in the cases of Intimate Care/Toileting. You may wish to discuss this with your child, as it is not what they are used to and could be potentially distressing for them to see staff dressed in this way.

Pupil Resources

Classroom risk assessments will be carried out and we will try and limit the use of shared resources as much as possible using a variety of methods. At this point we would ask that all parents send in a plastic "wipeable" pencil case with the following resources inside it:

- Pencils and Colouring Pencils
- Pen
- Rubber
- Sharpener
- Glue stick

Cloth material pencil cases cannot be cleaned/wiped effectively and therefore we will not be able to use them

The pencil cases will be kept in school.

Transport arrival/pick up and pupils moving around the school

Buses will be instructed to offload children by a member of staff to ensure a staggered arrival and children will be encouraged to use hand sanitizing stations on entry. Breakfast Club will not be available until further notice and children will go straight to their classrooms as directed by adults.

Pupils' movement around the school will be limited where possible. There will be limited interaction between classes and especially between Key Stages. Floor markings will promote a "Keep to the left" system and there will be allocated areas in our playground for each Key Stage. Children will be encouraged to social distance when this is possible. Children of all Key stages will always be accompanied to the toilet by an adult ensuring that only one child is using the toilet at a time.



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Further information for parents that do not use transport will be issued in due course.

Dinner Money Payments and Communication.

To avoid handling money and also make it easier for the parents to make payments we are currently introducing the ParentMail app. This will allow parents to make all payments online as well as receive school messages in the form of notifications. We are currently in the process of setting up the system and we will send you the appropriate information as soon as possible. The app might not be ready for use on the first day back so we will send you further information about first week dinner payments / menus etc. very soon.

Dinners and Breaks

All children have to bring their own snacks for break time. Snacks will not be prepared in the classroom for the foreseeable future. Guidance for Healthy Breaks can be found here:

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/healthy-breaks-school-children-guidance>

For the first 2 weeks of this academic year (1st September -11th September), our Dinner Service will only offer Packed Lunches with the view to introducing hot dinners after this initial period. Further information, menus etc. will be made available to you soon.

I am aware that this is a lot of information and I am sure that not all your questions have been answered. We will continue with regular updates over the next 2 weeks. Our main aim is to reduce risk as much as possible and we would ask you to follow any advice given in order for everyone to keep safe.

I would like to thank you for your patience and co-operation during what I appreciate is an anxious time for you all.

Ioannis Skarmoutsos (Principal, Longstone School)