



WESTGATE PRIMARY SCHOOL

“United in Life-Long Learning”

Head Teacher: Mr K Wright
01524 832747

Langridge Way
Westgate
Morecambe
LA4 4XF

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Welcome Back to Westgate Primary School

Dear Parents and Carers,

Well here we are again, a warm welcome back to Westgate Primary School and a special warm welcome to those of you whose children are joining us for the first time. The summer holidays draw to a close just when the weather appears to be heading towards a summer !!

Miss Hutton,

As we begin the term, we have been reflecting on the loss of our dear colleague Vicky Hutton. We, and not least her family, have been deeply touched by the messages of support and how highly regarded she was by us all. Our thoughts remain with them at this time. The staff have been using time before the children return to reflect on the work she did here and how we can ensure that her legacy continues as we continue on our school journey without her. This includes how we support the children, families and the wider community that she was most involved in. Below are details about how we will see through the coming days and weeks.

For the Children...

As part of developing children's emotional health and well-being in school, Years 1 to 6 will be running a series of lessons over the next week called 'Elephant's Tea Party'. The programme has been developed by the highly respected national charity 'Child Bereavement UK' and reaches approximately 500 schools per year.

Elephant's Tea Party is designed to help all children, whether bereaved or not, to begin to develop coping skills should they suffer any loss now or later in life. It will help pupils explore bereavement and emotions in an age-appropriate, straightforward and sensitive way. Children have a natural curiosity about death and the life cycle and are usually happy to talk and discuss feelings associated with loss.

If you feel the school needs to know anything in relation to a recent or significant bereavement or trauma your child has experienced, please don't hesitate to contact the school or your class teacher. These sessions will provide opportunities for children to share their experiences, if they wish to, and being aware will help the class teacher respond in a supportive and helpful way.

If you would like to read more on this Child Bereavement has an excellent website where you can read or download supporting information. www.childbereavementuk.org

For you...

We also want to offer our support to not only pupils, but to the wider community too. On Friday 3rd September between 9am – 10am, the Inclusion Team are running a coffee morning in the school library for any parents, families or carers who would like to pop in for a chat regarding

loss/bereavement or just a chat in general. COVID restrictions have really limited our ability to invite you into school and we are hoping to put this right this year if the current circumstances remain safe.

New COVID Guidelines,

As you may be aware, the government and Department for Education have issued guidelines to support the smooth running of the school from now onwards, and to avoid future closures where possible. There is a separate letter created by the Local Authority that will be issued in relation to what happens if your child develops symptoms of COVID which I hope you will find useful. But the main changes for the school are listed below:

- There are no longer bubbles; therefore there will not be the need to close year groups or classes unless there is a wider outbreak in school. If someone tests positive, NHS Test and Trace will contact you if your child has been a close contact. We will also alert you to a case in your child's class so that you can arrange a PCR to check that your child has not caught it as well until you hear from Test & Trace that your child is a close contact. Unless symptomatic, they will not need to be off school until you get the PCR result AND that it is positive. Should you decide to check with a Lateral Flow Test first, if that is positive, then your child will need to isolate until they have the proper result from a PCR Test. In either case, if the PCR is negative, it overrides any other results and if negative your child can then attend.
- Children below the age of 5 will not be required to take a PCR test if they are a close contact, but it will be important to monitor their health in case they develop symptoms of COVID.
- Adults who have had the full two-dose vaccination will not be required to self-isolate if they are in close contact with a positive case and are not unwell themselves. They will be strongly advised to take a PCR to ensure it is negative. If asymptomatic, they can remain in work until the result. Any development of official COVID symptoms will require self-isolation until the result of a PCR is obtained AND that it is negative.
- In the event of a positive result, the period of isolation will remain 10 days following either the first onset of symptoms or the test result whichever is latest.
- The one-way system will no longer exist but we continue to advise that you use the shortest route to drop off and collect your child(ren) and that you keep your time on the school site to a minimum wherever possible. The Meet & Greet System is now permanently in place.
- Face coverings are no longer required but you are at complete liberty to continue wearing them. This may be subject to change if we receive specific direction from Lancashire's Director of Public Health in the event of a larger than anticipated surge.
- We will continue to promote good hygiene practice with the children and to avoid unnecessary mixing of children over different year groups, and good ventilation.
- The staggered start and finish introduced in July will remain as follows
 - Reception to Year 2 – Doors Open 8.30am – Close at 8.50am – Day Ends at 3.05pm
 - Years 3 – 6 - Doors Open 8.40am – Close at 9.00am – Day Ends at 3.15pm
 - Children in the older years cannot be collected before the official end time.
- We are monitoring what is happening in Scotland, as children there have been back to school for a couple of weeks and cases are rising sharply. As a result, it is fully anticipated that cases in England will surge during the autumn term. We will manage this as best as possible keeping alert to any changes in guidelines or recommendations from the Authority or Government, but large-scale closures are unlikely. We will keep you posted if and when situations may change.

The First Day Back

Several of you have been asking about where your child should go when they arrive tomorrow. Most of the older children will have an idea, however, to ensure the arrivals and departures are as smooth as possible on Thursday and Friday, extra staff will be deployed around the school to direct you to where your child's new class is. Their teacher will be waiting at the door to greet them on arrival. By the end of the day on Friday, you and your child should be secure in where they are going, but from next week staff will still be present at the start and end of day to support if there is any confusion.

PTO

And Finally,

There is much more that I could discuss on this letter, but I am also aware that there is a risk of information overload at the start of the term so do look out for any additional messages specific for your child's year group as a separate letter; message on Google Classroom; or supporting video on Facebook. As ever, we are also just a phone call or e-mail away should you require any further information.

Hopefully, you have what you need for now, information regarding our new COVID procedures; the start and end of day times; and what to do on tomorrow morning; and how we can support you and your child in the first few days and weeks following our loss.

We all very much look forward to seeing you and the children again tomorrow; and the new Reception children and families when you start with us.

Many thanks again for your continued support, particularly at this time.

Yours sincerely,



Keith Wright
Head Teacher
Westgate Primary School