



Learning
Today,
Tomorrow,
Forever

HAWTHORNDEN PRIMARY SCHOOL
POLTON AVENUE ROAD
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CAROLINE ELSEY, Headteacher

10th August 2020

Dear Parents / Carers,

Firstly I'd like to welcome you all back to school and say how delighted we are that we will be re-opening for all our children and families after this period of lockdown.

I am also delighted to be welcoming our new staff members – Miss McLaughlin, Mr Thomson and Miss Bethke as well as welcoming back Mrs Birrell. Mrs Scott (Administrator) is also returning to work but will be working from home at present.

We are returning however to a situation which is different from anything any of us have faced before and as with everything at the moment, schools need to re-open safely for everyone – pupils and staff and we need to follow both national and local (Midlothian) advice.

Some things will be different from what your usual experience of school is like however I must stress that decisions have been made to ensure that schools are operating safely for all.

We value your support and understanding as we are also having to adjust and adapt to a changing way of working and ensuring that all our children are supported emotionally and educationally as best we can.

Lockdown will have been a very different experience for all our children just as it has been for us as adults. Some children will be afraid of the virus and need a lot of reassurance, some children will be anxious about returning to school and being apart from you, some children will have had a very happy experience and enjoyed learning at home, some children will have felt isolated and alone, some children may have experienced a bereavement.

What is important to us and to you, is that we recognise that we have ALL been through a life changing event and that we take time to recover and build resilience. Life at school is not going to be the same as it was before lockdown just as life generally isn't the same.

We will be concentrating our curriculum on literacy, maths and health and well-being focussing on a Recovery / Resilience curriculum developed by the Midlothian Educational

Psychology Team. Children need time to reconnect and also to adapt to new classrooms and teachers.

There are lots of practical information that I know you want to know about. This is following both national and local advice / guidance and what is also practical within our school.

We have large numbers of children and adults in our school and we need to ensure that everyone is safe and feels comfortable with arrangements.

Children with ASN and/or Medical Needs:- The senior team will be contacting parents to discuss arrangements and put together a plan and where needed set up a multi-agency meeting. We will also be meeting with our Educational Psychologist, Play Therapist and other support agencies to plan additional support where needed.

Attendance:- Whilst we fully expect and would want all children to return full-time to school, we appreciate that this might not happen for some children. If you are concerned about this, please contact me to discuss this further.

Absence:- Any child displaying Covid symptoms will have to be sent home. Do not send your child into school if they are displaying symptoms as they will be sent home. I appreciate that Covid symptoms are very similar to other illnesses including a cold but unfortunately there is no way to distinguish between them and we cannot have children in school who are symptomatic. ***Please remember we have vulnerable children with medical conditions / needs in our school as well as staff with underlying health conditions – we don't want anyone put at risk.***

Breakfast club:- At present this will not be running. We hope to get this re-started as soon as possible.

Start of Day:- We need to ensure that large groups of parents/ carers are not on the playground and as such we will not be allowing the children onto the playground until the start of the school day at 8.45am.

From 8.45 to 9am (Staggered start) – All children to arrive and enter their classroom directly from the classroom external door. One parent/ Carer may walk them to the classroom door but they are not allowed to enter the room. It is important that you explain this to your child.

We are encouraging parents of P1 and P2 children to use the main gate at the front of the school, P3, P4 and P5 parents to use the back gate and P6 and P7 to use the side gate. Gates will be locked just after 9am so parents need to be off the playground by then please.

End of the Day:- Please do not enter the school grounds before 3.10pm, wait near the external classroom door for your child. Teachers will release your child to you when they see you. If you have more than one child to collect, please collect the youngest child first then make your way to collect your older child / children.

Please can parents observe social distancing when waiting for children and make their way promptly from the school site.

Coats / Bags:- Children may bring a small school bag containing their lunch / pencil case / water bottle. Bags will remain with them under their school desk. Coats will be put on the back of chairs to ensure that cloakrooms do not become crowded. Water bottles will remain on the desk throughout the day and taken home to be cleaned each evening. **NO** water fountains are allowed to be in use so please ensure your child brings water to drink every day.

Playtimes:- Will remain unchanged, children will be given time in areas such as the MUGA, climbing frame etc.

Uniform:- School uniform is encouraged but Midlothian Council is maintaining a low key approach to this. Please ensure that clothes are practical for outdoor learning and also that clothes are washed and changed.

Lunches:- As intimated in the letter from the council on 6th August – **ALL** children will be required to bring a packed lunch to school until 18th Sept. Lunches have to be eaten in classrooms at present. Children eligible for Free School Meals (not P1 to P3) will continue to receive BACS payments as they have done throughout the summer.

PE:- This will take place but outside at present.

Indoor / Outdoor shoes:- Shoes at present will not be changed on entry to school.

Communicating with Teachers / School:- Please send a note in a school bag or email the class teacher / main school or senior team, Please email any requests for a teacher to phone you back. Teacher email addresses will be sent out shortly.

Property:- We have a large amount of uniform, shoes etc left by the children. The hall side door will be open on Thursday / Friday mornings from 9am to 10am for parents to come and collect. Anything left over will have to be put to recycling. You must enter the hall only through the side door.

Late arrivals:- All children are expected to be in school by 9am latest but if you are late, then please come to the main front door, ring the bell and someone will come and open the door for your child to enter. Parents cannot come in and wait at the school entrance before, during or at the end of the school day.

Home lunches:- These can continue but children must be collected and dropped off at the front door. Local business have been informed that school children going into shops before / after or during the school day will be monitored by the local police and they must wear masks and follow social distancing guidelines.

Masks/ Visors:- All Midlothian school staff are required to wear a visor under guidance from the Chief Executive. Masks may also be worn if required and certainly for staff working in close proximity with children. It is not a requirement for a child to wear a mask unless a parent wants them to and provides the mask.

Senior Team:- All initial class enquiries should be addressed to your child's class teacher however if you need to contact a member of the senior team then these are the staff to contact.

P1, P2, P3 – Please contact Miss Johnson (DHT) on R.Johnson@mgfl.net

P4 and P5 – Please contact Mrs Birrell (DHT) on L.Birrell@mgfl.net

P6 and P7 – Please contact Mrs Mellon (DHT) on J.Mellon@mgfl.net

You can contact me directly Ms Elsey (Headteacher) on c.elsey@mgfl.net

I appreciate that this is a lot of information to take in but please be assured that steps are being taken to ensure safety for all at this time and as soon as things can start to be adapted / changed then they will be.

Even with some restrictions in place, it is far better for your child and for everyone that schools are re-opened.

Thank you

Caroline Elsey
Headteacher