



Old Heath Community Primary School

Headteacher
Amanda Mitchelson

'Tell the truth & show respect.
Think of others & try our best'



17th July 2020

The first day back, classes, teachers and staff!

During lockdown we have had three members of staff retire, one resignation and a pregnancy!

Firstly, let's do the 'CONGRATULATIONS' and thank you to those staff who are retiring, for all their hard work and support of Old Heath School:

Mrs Jackie Wright in Early Years
Mrs Jacky Rice in Year 4
Mrs Veronica Webb on the MDA Team

CONGRATULATIONS to Miss Kirsty Boyce who is expecting a baby in November!

GOOD BYE & GOOD LUCK to Mr Wheeler, who after five and a half years at Old Heath is moving on to pastures new. Thank you Mr Wheeler for all your teaching, your sporting events and residential!

We welcome Mrs Natasha Borges to our Old Heath family and the Year 1 class. Mrs Borges has just completed a very successful Year 1 maternity cover at another local Colchester school. Mrs Russell will regain the mantle of the Year 5 class teacher. Mrs Humm, our SENCO and Mrs Jackie Langford will form a teaching partnership for the Year 4 class. Mrs Langford has taught at Old Heath previously and it is lovely to welcome her back to our teaching team.

On Friday 4th September this is what will happen;

The old Early Years class will return for a day in the Early Years class to 'finish the year' with Mrs Ford. The children will also spend some of the afternoon with Mrs Borges in the Year 1 class so that they can meet Mrs Borges, find out where they will hang their coat and bags, where to line up and which door they need to use to come in on the following Monday etc.

The old Year 1 class will return to the Y1 class for the day with hopefully Miss Boyce for some of the time depending on guidance re pregnancy and COVID. They will then also visit the Y2 classroom and Mrs Careford in preparation for Monday.

The old Y2 class will return to the Y2 class for the day so they can 'finish' their year off with Mrs Careford. The children will also go to visit Y3 and Miss Baker so they can see where they need to



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line up etc ready for Monday morning! Some Y2s have spent time with Miss Baker during Key Worker provision so they will be able to help their class mates feel at home in the new classroom.

The old Y3 class will return to their classroom (some of them have been in it all the way through Key Workers!) and finish the year off with Miss Baker. They will also move round to the new Year 4 room (old Year 5) to visit their new class and meet up with Mrs Humm who will be teaching them Monday, Tuesday & Wednesday and Mrs Langford on Thursday & Friday. We have been very lucky to be able to create this job share with two very experienced teachers at short notice.

The old Year 4's will be meeting back up with Mrs Russell in their old classroom and then turning into Year 5s!

The old Year 5's will be going straight into Y6 with Mrs Rudd. We have planned some face to face time together at the start of the holidays and hopefully some days towards the end to try to catch up a little and ensure they hit the ground running in September.

From Monday 7th September the class teachers will be as follows and the children will move to their proper year group class!

Early Years ~ Mrs Ford

Y1 ~ Mrs Borges

Y2 ~ Mrs Careford

Y3 ~ Miss Baker

Y4 ~ Mrs Humm & Mrs Langford

Y5 ~ Mrs Russell

Y6 ~ Mrs Rudd

Coming into school

The expectation from the Government for the September return (as published in July) is that we will still be working at maintaining social distancing at 2m, especially adults, when not in the 'class sized discreet bubbles' and in accordance with Essex County Council, professional associations/unions advice, checklists and risk assessments.

We have tried to model an up-scaled version of the staggered approach we have used during the phased return of the priority groups, however with so many overlaps of siblings in different classes and needing several start times, we cannot get all the children in school within a sensible time frame.

So we will be returning to the 'open classroom' strategy that we used just before we went into lockdown. The school will be open as normal from 8.45am to 9.00am, the expectation is that parents bringing children to school or older children coming into school independently will take responsibility for keeping 2m social distance from other family groups. Parents must ensure that younger brothers and sisters stay with them at all times as they walk up on to the school playground.

Once on the playground children will then need to go directly to their classrooms. School staff for September are still being advised to keep socially distanced so we should not be physically taking children from parents even if a child is having difficulty separating from a parent. Parents without buggies/pushchairs who can manage the steps must then leave through the secret garden and out onto the driveway and then Abbot's Road. Only parents or carers with mobility issues and buggies, pushchairs can then wait in a socially distanced way until 9am when we will stop incoming via the front gate and reverse the pedestrian flow so parents with buggies etc can exit the school grounds via the front gate in a socially distanced way.

PLEASE REMEMBER THAT DESPITE THE RELAXING OF LOCKDOWN IN SOME AREAS IE PUBS ETC SCHOOLS ARE STILL EXPECTED TO FOLLOW SOCIAL DISTANCING GUIDANCE.

What will happen in school?

So at the moment the guidance is slightly inconsistent so we have the idea of 'social distancing' for 'older' children and 'class sized bubbles' for 'younger' children, though the documentation doesn't clarify what 'older' or 'younger' children may mean and all children are expected to return to school with children sitting in rows in their classrooms which would mean no real social distancing between individuals sitting next to each other at a table. The set up in classrooms will be for Y2 to Y6 formal rows of tables, facing forward. We feel that this is not really suitable for Early Years or Year 1 children, so they will be listening to whole class teacher led learning from the carpet and then using outside spaces, table top activities, small group adult led learning at tables etc

For Old Heath given the size of our classrooms, the building & grounds themselves and the logistics of classes moving, how to work lunchtimes and break times etc.; **we are proposing that each class remains together as their 'own class bubble', so social distancing between themselves is not required. Each class bubble however does not mix with any other class i.e. separate area to play in at playtime and lunchtime, sectioning the hall for dinner, cleaning after each service, timetabled slots for the main toilets and copious cleaning between class visits.** This is all very similar to how the school has operated for the priority groups (except we were attempting 2m social distancing as well) but we will need to allow extra time as it will take longer to get more children through the process of having lunch plus the whole going to the loo and washing hands etc!

From the guidance it would seem that staff can move between 'bubbles', something we haven't officially been able to do this term, as long as we are all keeping at a 2m social distance. At the moment we will try to limit movement of staff between classes. It is expected that all adults, including parents on school grounds will be keeping at 2m social distance.

Dinnertimes may work something like:

Y1 & Y2 lunching from 12 to 12.30, Y3 & Y4 12.30 to 1pm and Y5 & 6 1pm to 1.30pm. Then when the new Early Years start having lunch the times will be adjusted slightly or if we have low numbers having hot dinners and good weather then packed lunches can eat outside in their specific year group areas which would free up space in the dinner hall. A whole class takes up three of our big tables and we can fit two sets of three in the hall with spacing to ensure 'whole class bubbles stay separate'! We will continue to section the field and playgrounds for class bubbles playtime.

Of course as we are very aware that guidance may well change again!

Concerns about coming back

I am aware that there will be several families for whom coming back to school under these circumstances will be a concern. I realise that the Government message is very clear with regard to the expectation that all children should return to school, however I am very happy to have conversations with parents where a return to school causes great anxiety with regard to shielding and supporting families to manage the situation as best we can together.

Best wishes to you all, stay safe, stay well and keep a look out for ParentMails re reports and Breakfast Club.

Amanda Mitchelson

