

THE FEDERATION OF MIDDLEHAM (VA) AND SPENNITHORNE (VC) CE PRIMARY SCHOOLS



Executive Head Teacher Mrs L. Evans

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Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

EPHESIANS 4:32

2nd September 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

As we approach the start of the new school year and prepare ourselves to welcome you all back to school, I wanted to update you on changes which have occurred over the summer holidays but also resend the letter I sent out to you at the end of last term about revised procedures to ensure that our children and staff are safe and secure returning to school.

Both myself and my staff are looking forward to seeing all the children again on Tuesday 8th September. We have missed them, whether it has been for the summer holidays or in many cases, since March.

Many of you will be feeling apprehensive about sending their children back to school. This is completely understandable but we have to return to what is the 'new normal.' I have seen the positive impact that coming back to school and returning to a structure has had on the children who have returned, not just academically but socially too. Children also thrive on routine and getting back to school will help with that.

For me, there are several big messages to assist in keeping our children safe. Firstly, we need to ensure good handwashing routines for all our children and you can help with that by instilling this message with your child before schools restarts. Nothing beats soap and water but we have sanitiser units at key points in both schools now erected and we will be expecting children to either wash or sanitise their hands every time they enter the school building and at regular intervals during the day. For older children, practising social distancing is also important and we would appreciate you reinforcing this message at home too. It will be harder during playtimes for groups of children but chatting about this with your child will support us too. However, we know this is going to be hard for all pupils.

MRS IBBOTSON

As you are all aware, Mrs Ibbotson is expecting her first child and was due to go on maternity leave after the October half term. Guidance from the Royal College of Obstetricians states that pregnant women over 28 weeks should not be working in a classroom environment as the impact of the virus on pregnant women is unknown.

Although this is a major disappointment to us all, as parents, I hope you can understand that the health and wellbeing of Mrs Ibbotson and her baby is paramount.

We had arranged interviews for a part time Year Two teacher in the last week of term but sadly both candidates pulled out. Due to house moves, the number of children in that class has decreased so all children will be taught together and there will be 2 teaching assistants in the classroom so a ratio of 11 students to 1 adult. We are very pleased to have secured Mrs Semple's services to return to work with us at Spennithorne alongside Miss Russell. In this period of change, Mrs Semple's presence and class room knowledge will be able to ensure routines put in place by Mrs Ibbotson are maintained.



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I am pleased to confirm we have secured the services of Mrs O'Neill for the first half of the Autumn term to teach the Badgers class. She has a lovely sunny personality and the children will love her, much like Mrs Ibbotson and I did when we met her online. Thereafter, we will be welcoming Mrs Bowkett back to the Badgers class for the remainder of Mrs Ibbotsons' maternity leave.

We will email a message from Mrs O'Neill to all Badger pupils during this week.

START AND END OF THE SCHOOL DAY

We encourage all children and parents to walk to school if at all possible.

Due to our small numbers, as long as we all follow guidelines, we do not need to stagger the start and end times of the day at the present moment but that might need to change in the future.

On arrival and departure, please follow the arrows on the floor for the one way system.

SPENNITHORNE ONLY - The way in is through the carpark and the way out is through the normal gates. Arrows and signs will direct you.

Please ensure you socially distance on arrival in the playground and keep your children with you to avoid cross contamination of bubbles. If possible, please only bring into the playground the children attending school. I know for many, this is logistically impossible. If this is the case, you must keep your children with you.

Please do not come into the playground before 8.35am

At Spennithorne, at 8.35am, rather than a staff member come out and be on playground duty, we will open the doors and the children can come into school straight away. The Badgers will come into through the main door and those going by bus, will go in via the hall fire door to be registered for bus travel to Middleham.

At Middleham, we ask that children accessing the bus do not enter the school building but meet at the front entrance where a member of staff will be there to register all those on the bus. The bus leaves at 8.40am, only waiting for pupils accessing school transport.

Those children arriving at Middleham will access the building in the normal way; Rabbits via their classroom entrance and Foxes through the main doors at the bottom of the stairs.

PLEASE FOLLOW THE ONE WAY SYSTEM AT SPENNITHORNE AND THE ARROWS ON THE FLOOR AT MIDDLEHAM

We ask that if parents accompany their children into the school grounds, to prevent a bottle neck, they say goodbye to their children in the main playground and not at the doors. Please keep away from any entrances.

At the end of the school day, children will be either accompanied outside by their teacher and/or handed over to parents one at a time.



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Those children arriving on the bus at Middleham at the end of the day will enter the school through the front entrance and be returned to their parents using the hall door which remains unchanged

Those arriving on the bus at Spennithorne at the end of the day will enter the school through the fire exit and be returned to parents from that door as well.

Each of these will prevent cross contamination of bubbles. At the end of the day, please leave the playground immediately.

SCHOOL BUS BETWEEN MIDDLEHAM AND SPENNITHORNE

These children are not on a public bus so will not need to wear a face mask but if you feel this is the best for your child, I am happy with your choice. However, we will group children together in their bubbles so the peer support we use with older children supporting the younger children, cannot be employed. We will keep these groups as separate on the bus as we can. On boarding and disembarking, children will use hand sanitizer and there will be additional cleaning of the areas often touched by others.

The children will have the same seat for every morning and afternoon journey.

Children lining up to get on the bus will be socially distanced in their bubbles. Those from Spennithorne will line up away from the main gate so that distance can be maintained as the pupils from Middleham disembark.

CLASSROOM

In line with government guidance, desks will be facing forwards.

With our youngest children, sitting at desks is not appropriate so the classroom learning areas will be clearly marked with the maximum number of children able to play in certain areas.

Staff will maintain distance from pupils and other staff as much as possible, including face to face contact and we will encourage children to maintain distance from their peers as well. However, we appreciate that with some of our pupils, this will be more challenging.

Equipment is available for each child on their table so they are not borrowing anything touched by another child.

CLASS BUBBLES

Our children will be in class sized bubbles and with us having 2 school buildings, this is to our advantage as it allows us to minimise contact that a pupil has during the school day with other children and reduces risk of transmission. At Middleham, we have put in place a one way system up and down the stairs. This is not required at Spennithorne.

To prevent bubbles mixing, we have changed our morning and afternoon procedures for those using the bus which is explained later in this letter.



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ATTENDANCE

As from September, as circumstances have changed, it is vital for all children to return to school to minimise the longer term impact of this pandemic on children's education, well-being and wider development.

We therefore are expecting full time attendance from all pupils.

If you have concerns after reading this letter, please contact school via email - middlehamadmin@fed-mas.n-yorks.sch.uk and I will endeavour to allay any fears you may have.

Some children will still be unable to attend because they are self-isolating and have had symptoms or a positive test result themselves; or because they have been in close contact with someone who has coronavirus (COVID-19). Some pupils might need to continue shielding. Some of our pupils might be unable to attend as they are complying with medical and/or public health advice due to medical conditions.

If this is the case, please email/call the school and discuss this with us.

HYGIENE

As mentioned earlier, we will be asking the children to wash their hands or sanitise on entry into the school building and regularly during the school day. Your assistance in getting this message across to your child will support us greatly. We will also continue to push the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach and have ensured an ample supply of soap, sanitizer and tissues.

Playground toys are organised in bubbles so that there is no risk of cross contamination with children from different classes sharing each others' toys.

We will not request that children have clean clothes every day as we have done since reopening on the 1st June but we are asking that children are in school uniform. If this is going to be a problem, please let us know. There will be regular cleaning at both schools during the day. Doors will be left open to prevent the need to touch items and tables, toilets, door handles and banisters will be wiped.

We will not be taking pupil's temperatures on arrival in school as this is an unreliable method for identifying coronavirus at this present moment.

There is no need for pupils to wear face masks (except for medical reasons). If pupils are wearing a mask, we will support them in how to remove and store these safely in a zip-lock bag (which we ask you to provide) which is in line with government guidance although please be aware that this guidance changes frequently.

However, if you feel it is appropriate for your child to wear a mask on the bus, we are happy with your choice. It would be advisable to spend the week before school talking to your child about how to put it on and take it off safely and store it securely.



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UNIFORM

Our uniform is navy blue polo shirt, purple cardigan/sweater and grey trousers/skirt. Please ensure shoes are black **and are not trainers**.

If you are going to struggle with the cost of uniform, please let us know as we can help you with this.

Our PE uniform is white t-shirt and black shorts. As we will be utilising outside space as much as possible, children do need a pair of black joggers when the weather gets colder. To assist you, we are going to be using part of our Sports Premium funding to purchase a school hoody for every child which can be used for PE. We are expecting delivery of the hoodies in the first week of term.

BREAKS AND LUNCH TIME

At Spennithorne, due to the fact there is only 1 bubble, there will be no need for staggered lunches or breaks but we will do this at Middleham. This is what we have already been doing.

RESOURCES AND EQUIPMENT

We ask that the children limit the equipment they bring into schools and only bring in essentials: lunch box, hat, coat, water bottle, book, purple school bag and PE bag.

For the time being, instead of a plastic daily folder, we will be putting everything in a card folder as this material does not hold onto the virus as long as plastic coated products.

With regards to reading records, we will ask you to record your home reading in the record book but teachers will not be writing in these, recording class reading in the class based record. Books will be changed regularly but with having to rotate products, there will be fewer resources available to share.

The PE bag can be brought in on a Monday and taken home for washing on a Friday.

Resources used in class will be rotated and left unused for 48 hours. (72 for plastic products)

ILLNESS

If your child has any symptoms of the corona virus, **DO NOT send them into school**. I understand that this is hard as moving into winter, a new persistent cough can be signs of a cold but we must all be careful in these strange times and I must look after every child and member of staff. We will isolate children who exhibit these signs and there is an expectation that you come and collect them from school immediately. We would recommend you book a test and isolate straight away, in line with government guidance.

We will have a small number of home testing kits that we can give directly to parents who are picking up an unwell child and cannot easily access a testing site. If the test comes back negative and your child feels well enough, your child may return to school.

For more information about this, [click here and follow this link](#).



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If either school has 2 or more confirmed cases within 14 days or an overall rise in sickness absence where COVID19 is suspected, this might be considered as an outbreak and we would need to work with our local health protection team with the view of possibly taking further action.

FEDERATION DAYS

We have put these into our calendar but they do involve mixing groups which at present we cannot do. Like all other dates in the calendar this year, these are provisional until we return to 'normal.'

VISITORS TO SCHOOL

Visitors to the school will be limited to essential personnel although we are able to invite our sports club teachers and our music teacher back into school. They will ensure they also minimise contact and maintain distance as much as possible with staff and children.

Parents are requested not to enter the school building. If you wish to discuss something with a teacher, please call the school and a socially distanced or virtual meeting appointment can be arranged.

AFTER SCHOOL CLUBS

As we are unable to mix bubbles, we will be organising clubs from September slightly differently until restrictions are lifted.

At Middleham, there will be no Trekkers club until further notice. At Spennithorne, there will be no Film Club until further notice.

Spennithorne Sports Club will take place on Thursday only for children in the Badgers class. If your child wishes to attend, you will need to pick them up from Spennithorne at 4.15pm

Middleham Sports Club will take place on Thursday as well. This will alternate between the Foxes (Y5/6) and Rabbits (EYFS/Y1) each week to prevent bubbles mixing. If your child wishes to attend, you will need to pick them up from Middleham at 4.30pm.

Last year, the club was free to ensure there was parity between both schools and it was stated that the cost would be borne by the school for a year. As from September, the cost will be £1 per session, payable in advance via ParentPay.

As normal, attendance every week is expected unless we have contact with parents about this.

CURRICULUM

We aim, as always, to offer a high quality education and will not be removing any subjects from the curriculum. It will be broad and balanced but we will use other foundation subjects to promote the skills of reading, writing and maths to prioritise and address significant gaps.

We will be baselining all children within the first 4 weeks so that we can personalise any support required with the aim of returning to 'normal' by no later than the summer term 2021.



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Outdoor sports will be prioritised but the hall will be used when required, maximising distancing between pupils and paying scrupulous attention to cleaning and hygiene. This is particularly important in a sports setting because of the way in which people breathe during exercise.

This term, we have started the daily mile for all pupils and are hoping to maintain this in September which encourages both physical exercise as well as physical distancing.

WELLBEING

We understand that for some children returning to school will be hard. Pupils may be experiencing a variety of emotions in response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, such as anxiety, stress or low mood. It is important to contextualise these feelings as normal responses to an abnormal situation. We know that some may need support to re-adjust to school; others may have enjoyed being at home and be reluctant to return; a few may be showing signs of more severe anxiety or depression. Others will not be experiencing any challenges and will be keen and ready to return to school.

The return to school allows social interaction with peers, carers and teachers, which benefits wellbeing. It also offers structure to the day which children do thrive under. However, we will be putting together a plan of PHSCE and circle time during the summer break to help the children adjust to their return to school.

BEHAVIOUR

I am very proud of our pupils' behaviour but obviously, being away from school for such a long time, children might have forgotten our school's behaviour expectations. We have amended our behaviour policy during the pandemic which we shared with you. If a child purposefully coughs or spits at another child, they will be sent home immediately but we will support all pupils to remind them all about our great behaviour through our RESPECT school status.

	Attribute	What does this mean to me?
R	Respect people, property, opinions and our world	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Keep our hands, feet and unkind words to ourselves ✓ Speak politely to everyone ✓ Always use good manners ✓ We try to appreciate other opinions ✓ We are only stewards of our world ✓ We take responsibility by tidying up after ourselves
E	Encourage each other through friendship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Give praise to others (say well done) ✓ Give genuine or real feedback to help our friends' (and peers) learning improve ✓ Encourage others to join in our games
S	Speak truthfully and forgive others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ We are honest ✓ We speak truthfully



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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ We say or recognise what we have done and admit when we have done something wrong or made a bad choice and we apologise for it
P	Practise, persevere and make progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ We will try again and again to improve our skills ✓ We do not give up – END means Endurance Never Dies ✓
E	Embrace mistakes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ We know it's OK to get it wrong; FAIL means First Attempt In Learning ✓ We learn from our errors ✓ We see mistakes as a way of moving our learning forward
C	Challenge our choices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ We think before we act ✓ We know we always have a choice ✓ We can say 'no'
T	Trust in ourselves, each other and God, together as a school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ We work together ✓ We help each other and celebrate achievements of others as well as our own

I apologise for the length of this letter but I wanted to share with you all the changes we need to make to ensure every person who uses our school is safe.

I reiterate once again that if you have questions, please email school and I will do my best to respond any concerns you might have.

With regards

Mrs L Evans

Executive Head Teacher



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