



# Margaret McMillan Primary School

Inspiration • Aspiration • Determination

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Dear parents / carers,

As you are aware we have had a number of positive cases of Covid-19 and you will have heard of a number of other schools locally who have also been affected. I would like to reassure you about some of the measures we have taken since the beginning of term.

Thank you for your continued support in getting all pupils back into school safely over the past month. All of us are committed to providing the best education possible for your child, while securing the health and safety of our whole school community.

Thank you for continuing to follow public health guidelines and encouraging your children to do the same.

You are already aware of the steps we have put in place to ensure the safe return of all pupils to school. We know that you will be keen to understand the impact that we have had in our first weeks of the term, and what our plans are to ensure all pupils catch up with any missed learning, and what will happen if your child is asked to stay at home over the coming months. That is why I am writing to you today in order to keep you fully informed. This letter will also be published openly on our website.

<p><b>School reopening</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We have morning, after school and during the day cleaning staff in order to support with ongoing cleaning and sanitising.</li> <li>• The school day has flexible start and finishing times to support social distancing whilst enabling parents to bring children from the same household to different bubbles.</li> <li>• Children access their classroom from the school path, rather than the cloakrooms to avoid mixing of class bubbles.</li> <li>• We have a one-way system on paths around school and inside school to support social distancing.</li> <li>• Regular and frequent handwashing and sanitising.</li> <li>• Resources are allocated to bubbles and frequently used resources to individual children. Any resources shared between bubbles are sanitised or quarantined between use.</li> <li>• Break times are staggered to ensure the children in different year groups do not mix.</li> <li>• Lunchtimes have different start and finishing times with children being expected to stay in their section of the playground with their identified mid-day supervisor. Each class bubble eats their lunch separately from the other bubbles.</li> <li>• No after school clubs are currently being run to aid social distancing, ensure staff have time to mark work at school and leave the building promptly to allow for a thorough clean.</li> <li>• All staff are encouraged to maintain social distancing in staff rooms and classrooms.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Attendance</b></p>	<p>We were really happy to get your children back into school and know you understand that attendance is a continual battle for us at Margaret McMillan for a range of reasons. Most children have come back to school and are able to access their learning in class.</p> <p>We have some children where parents have been more reluctant to bring their children in and we are doing everything to reassure parents that children are better off in school and sharing all the measures we have put in place.</p> <p>We are also aware that some children are not attending our school as they are waiting to access other schools due to house moves but are still on our records as they have not been admitted yet. We work very closely with the Local Authority and our attendance consultants BCL to ensure are children are safe and well and follow up closely any children who are not attending school.</p>



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	<p>We do however continue to have parents who keep their children off for holidays or 'occasional' days with no reason for this. Children have missed enough education and we will continue to be as diligent regarding attendance as we have always been.</p>
<b>Coverage of the curriculum</b>	<p>During the first few weeks of term, staff spent a lot of time talking to children about returning to school and how they felt and how they had coped over the last 2 terms. We have carefully planned to ensure that we consolidate last year's learning and identify gaps moving forward so we can be certain that we 'catch up' on these areas.</p> <p>Teachers will pick up and support children from where they are but we know there will be gaps in children's knowledge and some children completed work every day and some children, unfortunately did very little work. This means we are seeing a wide variation and difference between children academically.</p> <p>Teachers are working as hard as possible to give the children an enjoyable, broad and balanced curriculum while dealing with the constraints that the new situation poses.</p> <p>Teachers are working to ensure that children make good progress whilst ensuring that it is manageable for them. Intervention work outside of the classroom is difficult with the current restrictions. Our same day intervention approach developed prior to the Covid-19 restrictions has enabled teachers to support children at different stages in their learning. We still intend to assess our children but have to ensure all staff are clear of the expectations this year and it is manageable for pupils.</p>
<b>Remote Learning March – July 2020</b>	<p>We know how difficult it was to home school children and although many parents appreciated the learning packs and the online support we provided we know it was far from ideal and that many parents felt unable to support their children as they would have liked. At first, teachers posted home learning challenges on a daily and weekly basis using WEDUC and the school website. As it became apparent that this situation was going to last for a long time, we invested in See Saw so children could access more specific and appropriate learning support at home. This has been very successful and the large majority of our children were able to access home learning through the app.</p> <p>Our staff are great at supporting children by breaking down learning into small steps but we do need your help in supporting children as they bring home reading books, spelling and times tables to learn. We are posting weekly homework tasks on SeeSaw.</p>
<b>Remote learning in the future</b>	<p>Currently we are making good use of SeeSaw to post daily learning for children who are self-isolating and unable to come into school. We expect this work to be completed unlike the previous home schooling. Teachers are planning work which is relevant to current learning as well as supporting their catch up. Please make sure you have access to the app, and if you are unable to access it please ring us and we will offer alternatives.</p> <p>We are also posting regular updates to our parents in Early years as part of the Early Years curriculum – thank you so much to parents of Nursery and Reception children who have been commenting on the posts.</p> <p>Our Trust is working towards using a learning platform for all 5 of our schools. There will be further details about this later in the Autumn term.</p>
<b>Mental health and wellbeing</b>	<p>We continue to have times in the day when teachers discuss how children are feeling and because of learning bubbles all teachers and Teaching Assistants are spending break times with pupils when they can have 'little individual chats' when they are checking in with their pupils.</p> <p>We are finding however that the majority of our children just want things to be as normal as they can be and we are taking their lead on this.</p>

We have been asked to remind parents and carers that our local restrictions mean families in one house should not be meeting others in or outside of their homes. We have also been asked to remind you to download the NHS app. We have a QR code for school in the school entrance. I understand that this will be very challenging. Thank you for your support in these challenging times. Please remember to follow both the school's guidance and public health guidance to keep everyone learning safely.

Kind Regards

Lorraine Martin  
Headteacher

