



ST. THOMAS OF CANTERBURY C OF E JUNIOR SCHOOL
“Realising the potential of every child within a caring, Christian community”

25th August 2021

Dear Parents/Carers,

**IMPORTANT INFORMATION AHEAD OF THE START OF THE
NEW ACADEMIC YEAR 2021-2022**

I do hope that you are all continuing to have a wonderful summer holiday and as we draw close to the end of August are looking forward to a long Bank Holiday weekend. Let us hope the weather improves and we see some late August sunshine after what has been a disappointing month for weather. Whatever you have been up to and wherever your summer holiday has taken you I am sure we are all starting to turn our focus and attention to the start of the new academic year 2021-2022 which starts for all of our children on **Thursday 2nd September 2021**.

In our newsletter, dated 9th July 2021, I set out the changes that would be taking place following Step 4 of the recovery roadmap and the updated guidance found in the ‘Schools COVID-19 Operational Guidance – July 2021’ setting out the changes to restrictions that impacted on schools. Over the summer holiday period there has been little change to this guidance and so the main headlines remain as:

- From the start of the new academic year 2021-2022, it will no longer be necessary to keep children in consistent groups or ‘bubbles’
- Staggered start and finish times will end
- It will no longer be necessary to make alternative arrangements to avoid mixing at break/lunch times – communal dining in the school hall can resume
- Collective worship/assemblies can resume and singing indoors is now permitted
- Face coverings are no longer advised for secondary pupils, staff, parents and visitors either in classrooms, communal areas or outside
- As of 16th August 2021, children under the age of 18 years and 6 months will no longer be required to self-isolate if they are a close contact of a positive COVID-19 case. This also applied to adults who have been fully vaccinated (doubled jabbed). Instead close contacts will be advised to take a PCR test.
- Control measures will remain – continuing good hand and respiratory hygiene, maintaining appropriate cleaning regimes, keeping occupied spaces well ventilated and following Public Health advice on testing, self-isolation and managing confirmed cases of COVID-19.

Further information for parents and carers has been updated over the summer holiday period (17th August 2021) and can be found at: [What parents and carers need to know about early years providers, schools and colleges during COVID-19](#)

The Government continues to manage the risk of serious illness from the spread of the virus (COVID-19). Step 4 marked a new phase in the Government’s response to the pandemic, moving away from stringent restrictions on everyone’s day-to-day lives, towards advising people on how to protect themselves and others, alongside targeted interventions to reduce risk. As COVID-19 becomes a virus that we learn to live with, there is now an imperative to reduce the disruption to children and young people’s education – particularly given that the direct clinical risks to children are extremely low, and every adult has been offered a first vaccine and the opportunity for 2 doses by mid-September.



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Our priority at St Thomas of Canterbury Church of England Junior School is to deliver face-to-face, high quality education to all pupils. The evidence is clear that being out of education causes significant harm to educational attainment, life chances, mental and physical health. We will continue to work closely with the Department for Education (DfE), Public Health England and the Local Authority to ensure we follow the most up to date guidance and advice.

Start-End of School Day Arrangements from Thursday 2nd September 2021

With the removal of staggered start and finish times the arrangements for the start and end of day procedures will change. There will be some subtle changes from our pre-pandemic arrangements as follows:

Start of School Day

- ALL children will arrive and enter school at the same time. This will see an arrival 'window' for all children to enter school from **8:45a.m. – 8:55a.m.** The red barrier tape will be placed across the pedestrian path before 8:45a.m. and you must wait until it is removed – please do not arrive early as this will cause unnecessary congestion.
- Once the barrier tape is opened at 8:45a.m. all children will lead straight in to school. Lower School children in Year 3 and Year 4 will enter via the main school entrance (up the steps) whilst Upper School children in Year 5 and Year 6 will enter via the single pedestrian gate from the playground. There will be no waiting or congregating on the playground and adults will not be permitted in the school foyer or on to the school playground at the beginning of the school day. For parents/carers walking down the school path to accompany their children we will maintain the one-way loop system of entering via the single pedestrian gate next to the Caretaker's house and leaving via the exit from the school car park.
- By maintaining this system and routine, which we adopted for the pandemic restrictions, we are hoping to get a quicker, calmer start to the school day allowing parents/carers to get off site more quickly and teachers to start the school day promptly maximising learning time.
- A member of staff will remain on duty at the pedestrian gate on Sawyers Hall Lane and either myself or Mrs Coughtrey (Deputy Headteacher) will be managing the barrier tape each morning. Messages for the School Office or individual staff members can be communicated in the same ways as before, either via email (admin@stthomasjnr.essex.sch.uk), telephone or writing a note in your child's homework diary.
- All children and parents/carers MUST enter the school at the beginning of the day as detailed above. No adults or children should be entering via the Infant School pedestrian gates or walking around the back of the school across the Infant School playground. This has worked very well during the pandemic restrictions and we wish to maintain this to ease congestion and safeguard our children arriving in the morning.

End of School Day

- The school day will finish for ALL children at **3:15p.m.**
- At the end of the school day the double vehicle gates to the playground will be opened at approx. 3:05p.m. and parents/carers will be permitted to come on to the school playgrounds to wait for their children to be dismissed for the end of the school day. Please use all the space to wait for your child and do not wait on the pedestrian pathway, the bottom of the steps against the railings or the area which has the yellow hatched markings just inside the gate as this will just cause congestion and delay us dismissing your children safely.
- Classteachers/Teaching Assistants will accompany Lower School (Year 3 & 4) children to the playground area and only dismiss once the nominated adult is identified by the child. Children in Upper School (Year 5 & 6) will be dismissed from their external classroom doors, again once the nominated adult is identified by



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the child. In the first few weeks of a new academic year it will take us a while to learn new faces of parents/adults so please be patient – our priority is to make sure your child goes home safely with an adult.

- We would ask you leave the school premises promptly at the end of the day – the playground gates will be locked at 3:30p.m.
- At the end of the day please leave via the pedestrian path leading past the Caretaker’s house (in the same way as you entered) NOT via the path exiting through the car park as you would in the morning. The car park is much busier at the end of the school day and pedestrian safety is of paramount importance.

Year 3 – First Day only

For children starting the Junior School in Year 3 (Mrs Backhouse/Mrs Whitaker [3BW], Mrs Stonebridge [3S] and Mrs Antrobus [4A]) there will be slightly different arrangements for arriving at school on the first day ONLY – Thursday 2nd September 2021. They will be dismissed as above.

All Year 3 children will be admitted via the double fire doors to the school hall. Year 3 children will say ‘goodbye’ to their parent/carer at this door and come and sit in their new class lines to be greeted by their classteacher. Parents/carers will not be admitted to the school hall. Once all the children have arrived they will lead up to their new classrooms.

Over the course of their first day the classteachers will explain and teach your children the correct routines for arriving/leaving school so that on Friday 3rd September 2021 they can use the routines as set out in this letter.

I fully appreciate that explaining these routines and procedures may seem very lengthy and complicated, especially if you are new to the school. However, in reality once we get underway with the new academic year, these will become very familiar and ensure we have a smooth start and end to the school day.

Thank you in advance for your co-operation and support and I look forward to welcoming you back to St Thomas of Canterbury Church of England Junior School on Thursday 2nd September 2021 to get the new academic year off to a positive start.

Enjoy the remaining days of the summer break!

Yours sincerely,

Mr Dean Moran
Headteacher