

Mossgrove Primary School
and Nursery Unit



Learning, Caring, Achieving

Education Authority

MOSSGROVE PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY UNIT

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Principal: Mrs E Sinton B.Ed(Hons); M.Ed; PQH

June 2020

Dear Parent/Guardian

I hope you and your family continue to remain safe and well in these most challenging and uncertain times. For every individual and family in our community and right around the world, life has changed beyond comprehension in the last few months, and I don't think any of us could have contemplated the challenges this has presented.

We have really missed your children in school and we are all looking forward to welcoming everyone back to school full time as soon as possible. The home learning programme is now coming to an end, and I want to sincerely thank you for all the support and help you have sought to give your child with their learning over these last few months. I am aware that this has had advantages and disadvantages for each family depending on individual circumstances, and therefore I want to acknowledge all your efforts. As a school we appreciate that children, parents and staff have all had to adapt and evolve to a whole new set of circumstances with regard to learning.

I would also like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank the teachers who have worked diligently and creatively to connect with the children on a daily basis and to continue to very effectively provide teaching and support for children's well being, learning and progress. I also want to thank both teaching and non-teaching staff, clerical staff, the building supervisor and staff, for supporting the school to open and be able to support a group of keyworkers' children throughout this time, and indeed to support the school as a whole to continue to function and operate in challenging circumstances.

As we come to the end of this term and begin to move forward towards a new school year, thankfully, at present the current public health situation has rapidly started to move in a more positive direction, and all of us very much hope that this will continue to be the case.

With this in mind, in relation to children returning to school, I personally think and hope that by late August/September, the ideal scenario may be that it is safe for children and staff to return to normal full time schooling every day, with appropriate safety measures in place. At present, using the current guidance (<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/news/weir-publishes-guidance-new-school-day>), this will include appropriate hygiene measures, enhanced cleaning, staggered arrival and departure times, operation of packed lunch arrangements/staggered play times with 'protective bubbles' for each class group. The current guidance also explains how the 'track and trace' system will operate for schools should someone become ill.

However, at this point in time, the guidance for schools, issued on Friday, 19 June 2020, is that in order to ensure pupil and staff safety, children are to remain 1 metre apart and/or operate in protective bubbles, and adults are to remain 2 metres apart. The additional safety measures outlined above will also be in place. The minimum face-to-face teaching time for pupils is 40% with consideration given, where possible to using additional space.

Hence we need to plan for the guidance issued at present, which would result in the following if necessary:-

School Start Dates

All P7 children begin school on Monday, 24 August 2020 on a full time basis in the Assembly Hall.

Nursery will begin on a part time, staggered intake basis (individual details will be communicated separately to each family regarding initial visits and start dates).

Primary 1 will begin on a part time, staggered intake basis to include part time attendance and blended learning (individual details will be communicated separately to each family regarding initial visits and start dates).

Primary 2 - Primary 6 will begin school in groups, as per the normal school start date (Thursday, 27 August 2020 onwards, depending on each cohort's start date), on a part time basis, with blended learning. Individual start dates and details will be communicated to each family in August.

This means P1 -P6 will attend school for 2 days each week (either Monday/Tuesday or Thursday/Friday), with a blended learning approach.

Groups of children will be organised with consideration where possible given to sibling groups along with any additional relevant factors within year groups.

Whilst I will give due consideration to any unique set of circumstances some families may have and if relevant, may wish to make known to me (please email info@mossgroveps.newtownabbey.co.uk), it is unlikely given the already complex situation that I will be able to resolve or accommodate the extensive range of scenarios this may involve.

Unfortunately, at this stage it will not be possible to facilitate the Breakfast or Afternoon Club.

Blended Learning

Blended learning will involve a combination of hard copies of work and/or digital learning. Staff will consider and draw up suitable ways to manage this and will be preparing, co-ordinating and facilitating this work each Wednesday. On-going planning and preparation will continue to be developed in this area.

Preparing Pupils

In order to support pupils for their return to school, child-friendly information will be prepared for you to share with your child in terms of what school will physically look like and what the routines will look like. This will be forwarded as soon as we are in a position to do so, in August, prior to starting school.

Staffing

Below I have listed the teaching staff members in our school, and am delighted to be welcoming Mrs Brownlee back to our school team in September, following her career break. As you may already be aware, I am also delighted to be welcoming back the recently married Mrs Jinariu (previously Miss Smyth). The current school staffing is as follows:

Mrs Dickinson/Mrs Brownlee
Mrs Elliott
Mrs Gillespie/Mrs McCallen
Miss Heaney
Mrs Jinariu
Mrs Penney
Mrs Poots/Mrs Wilson
Mrs McKee
Mr Wenlock

At this stage, I can confirm that the proposed staffing for Nursery - Primary 3 is as follows:

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|-----------|----------------------------|
| Nursery | Mrs Elliott |
| Primary 1 | Mrs Gillespie/Mrs McCallen |
| Primary 2 | Mrs Jinariu |
| Primary 3 | Mrs Poots/Mrs Wilson |

Primary 4 - Primary 7 staffing is presently under review and in conjunction with the Board of Governors, will be confirmed as soon as it is possible to do so. Please be assured that we have expertise across our staff team and that we will seek to provide as smooth a transition as possible for all children.

Ongoing Preparation/Communication

Along with the staff and the Board of Governors, I will continue to consider the guidance issued, in terms of whether we are able or not, to re-purpose other parts of our building to facilitate some additional year groups to attend on a full time capacity. I have also written to the Minister of Education with regard to this matter and await his response.

I will be in touch (via your recently updated email addresses), in August with further cohort details, staggered starting times, cohort entrance doors and relevant procedures.

These plans will be kept under review and adapted should advice from the Department of Education change and I will inform you of the school's response to such changes as quickly as possible.

Annual Reports

Normally at the end of a school year you would receive a report which covers all areas of the Northern Ireland Curriculum, including End of Key Stage Levels. However, given that schools closed on 20 March 2020, the Minister of Education informed schools that it was suitable to amend reports accordingly and without the need for End of Key Stage Levels. Also most of you will have had the opportunity to meet with your child's teacher regarding their progress in February, just prior to closure.

Hence this year's annual report for Primary 1- Primary 7, provides an overview of your child's progress up until 20 March 2020, in the areas of Communication and Using Mathematics, along with some General Comments from across the curriculum. The Nursery report is based on the areas of the Pre-School curriculum and is similar to the interim February report issued at that time.

Reports will be posted from school on Friday, 3 July 2020.

On behalf of the Board of Governors and staff, we are very much looking forward to welcoming you and your children back to school in the new term, and wish you and your family a safe and enjoyable summer.

Yours faithfully

E SINTON (MRS)
Principal