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Education and Families
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Dear Parent/Carer,

Happy New Year to everyone and I hope 2021 brings us an end to the current Covid19 situation. We had expected schools to reopen on the 18th January but this has been extended to at least the 1st February. Given the current lockdown restrictions and the general political mood, we are making preparations for school closure to continue beyond this date. The recent decision at government level indicates the seriousness of this new variant of Covid19 and presents fresh challenges for us within education that we hoped we would not have to face. I am aware that North Lanarkshire Council have written to parents and I have already emailed information to all parents registered on the parent portal. Instructions for this are on the school blog <https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/nl/StGerardsBlog/>. Please continue to use the school blog for information as well as twitter and NLC website. We will of course continue to use "Teams" for online learning.

Keyworker Children

Many of you have completed online registration as a keyworker for your child to be admitted to school. Can you please ensure that this is both parents/partners? One parent working at home is still required to take responsibility for their child's care. You are only eligible to apply if both adults are keyworkers and both are required to attend a place of work. Children should only attend school on the days that both adults are required to attend; it would be helpful if you could supply the school with shift patterns if this applies. While I appreciate that this is a challenge, schools are closed to suppress the virus and the extensive numbers of applications will only exacerbate the schools' ability to provide face to face learning as well as support on-line learning.

Parents as keyworkers should email or bring on Monday 11th January, letters from your employer stating that you are a key worker.

Many key workers work from home. If this is the case you should not send your child to school.

I have always been accommodating of family needs and will always look to help out where I can but equally I have a duty of care to colleagues and our school community health, wellbeing and safety. This new variant is 70% more transmissible and this leaves teachers and school staff in a very compromising place. Since August their contribution has been nothing short of fantastic and our measures to deal with the virus enabled us to complete the term with 100% teacher attendance. This is astonishing given the crises we are in and is a testament to their professionalism and dedication. It is important that moving forward we support our teachers and staff by sharing responsibly the sacrifices we are all making in very difficult and challenging times. Your support in this area is immensely appreciated

Start/Exit times for Monday 11th August 2021

Children should enter their assigned gates for 8.50am and will leave at 2.50pm

Risk Assessments for Covid 19

We are in the middle of reviewing our risk assessment and we will be reinforcing hygiene procedures with your child when they arrive. Obviously staff will carry this out with due care and sensitivity. Please take a moment to chat through social distancing and hand hygiene prior to them coming to school.



New School Bubbles

When children arrive they will be greeted by their own teacher. They will then be re-bubbled depending on the numbers that arrive. Our current assessment based on our intake criteria will mean that the following classes will be bubbled
P1 & P1/2 P2/3 & P3, P4 & P5, P5/6 P6/7 & P7

This possibly will change and I will update you accordingly. Our plan at the moment is that one teacher will take responsibility for class based learning while their stage colleague will take responsibility for online learning of their class group. This will change every week meaning your child should see their current teacher on Teams every alternate week; we hope this provides some continuity for all the children. With a highly transmissible virus we are preparing for various potentialities with staff absences and a change of teacher is something that may be highly likely.

Online Learning

We have set in place a variety of online platforms with appropriate usernames and passwords for your children. We will communicate through Teams on a daily basis with daily and weekly tasks for your child to complete. We want children to engage with their learning tasks from 9.15am every school day. Teachers will begin online Teams meet at this time. As previously stated, their teacher may be class based so on that given week your child should engage with their daily tasks from 9.15am.

My teacher is in Class – Week 1

Children should engage with the tasks set for that day from 9.15am.

Teams chat will be created on that week with another member of staff and times indicated for children on the Teams chat. This will not be regular so children should look to see times arranged. This will be 2/3 times per week.

My teacher is on Teams – Week 2

Children will be invited to a Teams chat with their teacher at 9.15am Monday to Friday. There they can discuss their tasks and chat to their teacher regarding all aspects of schooling.

Teams chat at 9.15am will begin on Tuesday of the first week and daily thereafter.

If there are any questions or comments children can leave them on the Teams chat or email. Their teacher will reply as soon as is possible given the competing demands.

Please remember that you can use the task information flexibly and, given home circumstances, that we will all have to cope with, you can decide how to plan the learning on each day. Please do not allow learning to be a source of stress or anxiety and get in touch if there is anything we can do to support further. We are aware that not all families have appropriate devices and will endeavour to support you as quickly as we can.

The Digital Virtual School

The Digital Virtual School has been set up by North Lanarkshire Council and is further support for you and your child. Attached to this email is a Child and Parent guide as to its use. This information is also on the school blog.

The password for the Digital School is **r0f8wg2**

Ongoing information

I will continue to be in touch over the coming weeks to update you on our school status and with supportive measures that we can roll out over the coming term. There will be a few developments within Teams that teachers will speak to children about over the next two weeks. Further information will be signposted to the school blog, address above.

For the moment please follow the guidance above and support your child and the school as much as you sensibly can. Working together, as we have previously done, we can get through this period a stronger and more caring community.

Along with all the staff, I will keep you in our thoughts and prayers.

Many thanks for your continued support,

Ian G Conaghan
(Head Teacher)