

5 March 2021

MESSAGE FROM THE HEADTEACHER

'People need people, To walk to, To talk to, To cry and rely on, People will always need people.'
– Benjamin Zephaniah

Dear Parents/Carers,

I am delighted to be welcoming all of our children back to school on Monday 8 March. As staff we have been counting down the days and cannot wait until next week when we are all back together. Our school arrangements will remain similar to those during the Autumn Term but with an increased emphasis on ventilation. Everyone's health and safety is our top priority and we hope that, by reading this document and my letter last week, all parents and families are reassured that the school is taking every possible measure to create a happy, healthy and safe learning environment for all our community.

As in the Autumn Term, can we ask you all to continue to support the safe drop-off and collection of your children by maintaining adult to adult social distancing (at least two metres), **wearing a mask whilst on site**, and entering and exiting the school from the allocated entrance at the designated time. In order to limit the number of adults on the school site, we would also ask that **only one adult** per household enters and exits the site and that you leave the site promptly.

Although the government guidance for primary pupils does not mandate the wearing of a face mask in the classroom, pupils are more than welcome to wear a mask should they or you want them to do so. Staff will also wear face coverings in areas of the school where social distancing cannot be maintained. We are mindful that case rates in Handsworth remain stubbornly high and are still well above the national average.

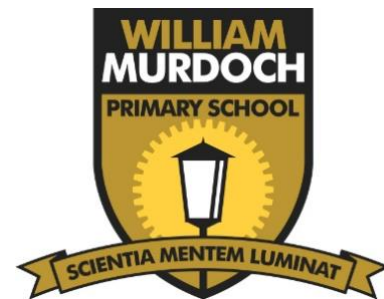
Should we have any confirmed Covid-19 cases, we will continue to work closely with Public Health England and Birmingham City Council to ensure we take all necessary actions. If we do have any cases which require any members of our school community to isolate, we will communicate this at the earliest opportunity. Any closure or partial closure would result in the children being provided with remote learning in line with our published offer. Following government expectations, learning taking place at home will reflect that of the experience children would get if they were in school. Please note this may differ slightly from the remote learning offer provided during lockdown and is dependent on who is required to isolate, for example: one child or the whole class. We will continue to use Class Dojo to send remote learning where this is required, but please do contact us if you have any difficulties accessing this learning for your children – we are always here to support you.

WILLIAM MURDOCH PRIMARY SCHOOL

ANTROBUS ROAD, HANDSWORTH, BIRMINGHAM, B21 9NT, TEL: 0121 554 0999, FAX: 0121 554 6332

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HEADTEACHER: MR M. SINGH



What hygiene measures are in place? What are we doing to keep the school clean?

We will continue with the same hygiene and safety measures that we had in place in the Autumn Term, including:

- Hygiene kits in each classroom;
- Surfaces are cleaned regularly and all equipment is cleaned in between use;
- We have an extra cleaner on site each day to conduct a 'midday' clean, as well as cleaners in the morning and after school;
- We have removed lots of the equipment and items from the rooms to ensure surfaces are easily cleaned;
- Most soft furnishings have been removed from classrooms;
- Children will continue to wash their hands multiple times throughout the day; members of staff will continue to support and supervise handwashing where it is appropriate, and we have visual reminders in all of the toilets and sink areas about good handwashing;
- We have plenty of tissues and remind children about good nasal hygiene;
- We have supplies of hand-gel throughout the school and children will continue to use this regularly (in addition to handwashing);
- A deep clean of the whole school will take place in school on Friday afternoons.

How will we maintain good social distancing?

- Children will continue to be organised into their class and year group bubbles. Staff will continue to maintain 2m social distancing wherever possible. Our staffroom will not be used for staff to congregate and our school office is out of bounds to all but a few members of our team.
- We will not allow visitors or parents into the school building, however, school staff are still available to talk to parents either over the phone, email or online via Class Dojo. We are very accessible and want to continue to have very positive relationships and communication with families.

Classroom Set-up

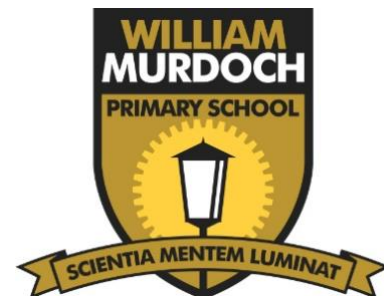
Within school, the same hygiene measures are in place. Children use hand sanitiser and wash their hands throughout the school day. Handwashing stations are in all classrooms. Children use individual packs so they are not sharing essential resources. Each child will need to bring essential items into school such as: a coat, library/home reader books, a water bottle and a school bag. Key Stage 1 and 2 classrooms are set up so that children are not facing each other. In line with the guidelines, children are sat side by side facing the teacher who will be at a 2m distance where possible.

Transition Back to School

What will we do to help the children transition back into school?

- When children return, we will focus on supporting them to reconnect with the WMPS School Expectations of Respect, Effort, Attitude, Cooperation and Honesty, classroom rules and a more formal approach to their learning.

KNOWLEDGE LIGHTS UP THE MIND



- Their physical and mental wellbeing will be prioritised and teachers will focus on assessing the gaps in children's learning so that they can be supported in building new knowledge on prior learning. We know that most of our children have engaged brilliantly with remote learning, so we are confident that children who have had good learning routines during the lockdown will adjust well to being back in school.
- There is a lot of talk about a quick 'catch-up' in the media; we firmly believe that the first step in children recovering from the interruptions to their education over the last year is to ensure they have the time and support to adjust to the changes that have taken place.
- At WMPS, we have high academic expectations for all children and we are very ambitious for them, so we will continue to focus on children's progress and attainment in a way that does not cause unnecessary pressure.
- The government guidance states that no trips or visits can take place for the rest of the term; this will be reviewed at the end of March.

We have planned a range of wonderful activities to support all children's transition back into school full time. Please also have a look at some ideas in the attached document by Nottingham Healthcare Trust. The document includes a range of mini activities and top tips about supporting your child with their return to school.

Breakfast Club

The school has limited places available in the morning breakfast club. The club runs from 8.00am to 8.45am and will be open from Monday 8 March 2021. If you are interested in reserving a place, please contact the school office for further information and details of costings.

Uniform

Children must attend school in their school uniform and are able to come to school in their full PE kit on the day they have a PE lesson. All children should wear the William Murdoch PE uniform, with compulsory items being the William Murdoch PE polo shirt and PE shorts. Children are also permitted to wear the William Murdoch PE track pants and the William Murdoch PE hoody. Those who do not possess the PE track pants are permitted to wear navy track pants/jogging bottoms or they can wear school trousers and change into their PE shorts in school. In place of the PE hoody, children are permitted to wear their polo shirt underneath their school jumper on their dedicated PE day. No other non-uniform hoodies/sweatshirts can be worn on PE days.

Items to Be Returned to School

All children **must bring** their Power Maths book, Science Booklet (Upper School pupils only), class novel and any outstanding library and reading books back to school on Monday 8 March. Children in the following classes will need to wear their PE kit to school on Monday 8 March 2021 as they are timetabled for PE:

Y4.3, Y3.1, Y6.2, Y4.2, R.1, Y1.3

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Attendance

From 8 March school attendance will be mandatory and our usual rules on attendance will apply. As a reminder, your child should self-isolate and not come to school if they:

- Have coronavirus symptoms or have tested positive
- Live with someone who has symptoms or has tested positive
- Are a close contact of someone who has tested positive

In line with the latest government guidance, **pupils who are clinically extremely vulnerable should not attend school**. If your child is in this group, they should continue to learn from home until further notice. We know that some parents may be anxious about the school reopening and we are here to talk and support you if you have any concerns.

Way-out Wednesday Creative Task

The child's task for this week's Way-out Wednesday was to design a reading den. As you can see from the following photos, our children have really excelled this week. It certainly looks like a lot of fun was had by all concerned.



World Book Day Costume Winners

Congratulations to all the World Book Day costume winners and a huge well done to all those who took part. A £10 Amazon voucher awaits you on your return to school.

New Art Competition - My Favourite Memory

A reminder that the deadline for the 'My Favourite Memory' art competition is Wednesday 10 March and entries should be uploaded onto Class Dojo.

Science Day - 5 March 2021

British Science Week is a celebration of science, technology, engineering and maths, and takes place annually. Due to the current remote learning programme, we will be dedicating today as a 'Science Day' to mark the event. The theme this year is all about 'Innovating for the Future', and children have been given various tasks to choose from, where they will focus on different aspects of scientific enquiry. These have been adapted for home learning, and it is hoped that all the children and their families have enjoyed the investigations.

Window to the School

As pupils will be back in school next week, there will be no further photos in this section. The photo from last week was taken from Y3.2. Well done to everyone who worked it out.



Mr Panichi's Book of the Week

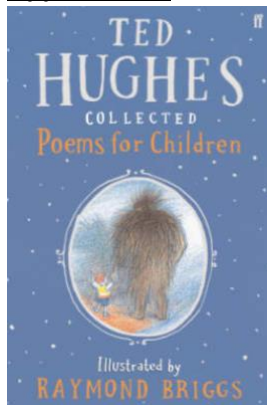
Lower School



Rapunzel – Bethan Woollvin

A pared back and twisted take on the traditional tale told with humour to be gleaned from reading the pictures. It begins with Rapunzel, here portrayed as a child, already encased in the tower without the back story explaining how she came to be there and reaches a conclusion in which she makes a joyful escape without the aid of a prince. As in her previous book Little Red, Bethan Woollvin uses a colour palette which incorporates only one standout colour amongst black, white and grey – in this case a golden yellow used to highlight Rapunzel's hair. A really great storybook that will help young children to see things differently.

Upper School



Collected Poems for Children – Ted Hughes & Raymond Briggs (illustrator)

This brilliant collection, illustrated by Raymond Briggs, includes poems composed from 1961 until Ted Hughes' death in 1998. Hughes always experiments with wordplay and image making whilst playing to a child's imagination. His work is accessible yet hugely original. You have heard of the 'Iron Man' but what about 'The Iron Wolf' who 'licks the world clean as a plate'. For exquisite fun, why not try the 'Meet My Folks' section where we can all find an echo of someone in our family; or the Moon poems where a whole world of images unfold. There is ample opportunity for parents to delve deeper and richer even in a single ending like in 'Moon Whales': 'their eyes closed ecstatic'. A wonderful book for any poetry novice.

Lockdown has been a challenging period for all of us, and I would like to thank you for helping your child learn from home and for your continuing support during this difficult and uncertain time. If you or your child have any concerns about returning to school, or if you think your child might need extra support when they return, please get in touch with Mrs Baker/Mr Harris.

We will continue to keep in touch if we update our plans or if we need to make changes due to new government guidance. Have a lovely weekend and we look forward to seeing you and your child back to school next week.

Yours sincerely



Mr M Singh
Headteacher

Dates for the Diary

School will re-open to all pupils on Monday 8 March 2021



The graphic features a blue-tinted grid of images showing various people, including healthcare workers and individuals wearing masks. The text is overlaid on the grid. In the top left corner, there is a small logo for the HM Government. In the top right corner, there is the NHS logo. The main text is in a white box with a blue border, and the URL is in a yellow box at the bottom.

HM Government

NHS

Covid-19 vaccine

The NHS will get in touch when it's your turn to be vaccinated

Find out about the roll-out at nhs.uk/CovidVaccine