

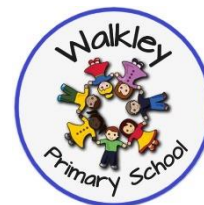
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'Enjoyment, Achievement and Learning for life...'

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Deputy Headteacher: Chris Wallis

Chair of the Governing Body: Andy Wilcock

28.5.21

Coronavirus Update: Friday 28th May 2021

Dear Walkley Parents / Carers,

Hope everyone is keeping safe and well. What a half term that was..... The never- ending roller coaster of the pandemic still lingers and it really impacted on Walkley pupils and staff with 55 children self isolating on one day in May. Thankfully all our pupils, staff and families are doing well.

As a Headteacher speaking on behalf of Walkley staff, I can assure you that we are as tired, disappointed and as frustrated as you that this wonderful new building, 6 years in the planning can still not be utilised as we so desperately want it to be. We want to welcome you onto the site and join in the usual Summer Term events, but as everything changes very rapidly, we are still awaiting SCC and Public Health Sheffield risk assessment version 14 so that we can plan ahead.

Although the roadmap out of Lockdown was announced by the Prime Minister on 17th May, it quickly became very apparent that life for primary schools was still going to remain inhibited. As explained in an earlier letter sent to parents by Greg Fell from Public Health Sheffield, primary schools will remain at risk due to having younger pupils and therefore a younger parent population who are less likely to be vaccinated. The new advice received from public Health on **Thursday 27th May** immediately impacts on our future plans.

Summer term in schools is traditionally a time of transition and celebration. Children, staff and parents may particularly need such community events after this very difficult year, but because of the ongoing global pandemic, the new variants, and with large numbers of people still not fully vaccinated, schools are being advised to continue to do things differently. We know that this is a difficult message to convey and may cause disappointment. We hope that with some creativity and by following the basic principles of reducing transmission we hope that we can still have a successful Summer term.

Tennyson Ted

The Sheffield Bear has been named through a democratic voting system as 'Tennyson Ted'. The Bears of Sheffield will showcase 60 big and 100 little bear sculptures in both indoor and outdoor locations and will raise vital funds to transform the Cancer and Leukaemia ward at Sheffield Children's Hospital. Tennyson Ted will return to us, where we intend to build a 'Bear Garden' for the pupils based near to the Forest School and the Old Tennyson site.

School dinners

As bubble life looks as though it is going to continue for now, the pastoral team have been in talks with Taylor Shaw to establish if there is a way that our children can have a choice of a hot dinner which can be delivered safely to the classroom. With 375 pupils attending, it is no mean feat but we seem to have found a solution. More information to be provided after half term.

Transition

One of the key areas to be affected by COVID restrictions is transition. Here is a quick update from PHE which will affect the way we conduct transition this year:

'Transition to a new school may be an exciting or anxious time for children, parents, and staff. Transition days are important for emotional wellbeing and feeling prepared for the move, and also for practical information such as where packed lunches and coats go, and where the toilets are. Some of this information can be conveyed virtually and digitally – a narrated virtual school tour video for example, FAQs, or web-based guide to starting school with photographs and video clips. Schools should complete thorough risk

assessments to ensure that they are run in line with your system of controls and align with the advice contained within the DfE schools guidance and the roadmap out of lockdown’.

Nursery children transferring to Walkley Primary School.

Under our current restrictions, transition booklets including photographs which will be provided to all pupils from their new class teacher, highlighting what to expect in their new class. We will have virtual tours; hopefully a chance to meet outdoors as well as the chance to meet their new teacher and teaching assistant virtually. We will also have a virtual meet with all of our new parents in July.

Children transferring to a new class

Under our current restrictions, transition booklets including photographs which will be provided to all pupils from their new class teacher, highlighting what to expect in their new class. We will have virtual tours; hopefully a chance to meet outdoors as well as the chance to meet their new teacher and teaching assistant virtually.

Year 6 pupils transferring to High School

Individual receiving High schools have already been in contact with our Year 6 pupils and parents to explain the transition process and significant dates.

Year 6 performances

The Year 6 performances are to be held outside this year, after school on the evenings of 14th (Kensuke) and 15th July (Potters) around 4 p.m. If advice continues in its present form, Year 6 will perform as separate classes with parents invited to sit in household bubbles via ticket admission only, therefore you can only attend the performance that your child is performing in.

Sports Events

PHE guidance states that ‘Where possible, groups should be consistent, so you may have a sports day for a particular bubble of students and staff rather than for the whole school or year group. This will depend on how you organise your bubbles as a school. If equipment is handled – such as relay batons, hoops, skipping ropes - then it should be thoroughly cleaned in between use by different groups.’ The Walkley team is now looking how we can provide activities for all of our pupils during Sports week beginning Monday 5th July and you will receive updated arrangements after half term.

Phase 2

Phase 2 of the building project continues over the half term with a massive seeding programme, the levelling of the sports pitch, removal of the soil heaps and associated landscaping.

Breakfast Club

As you know pre-lockdown March 2020, we offered a very popular free Breakfast Club to pupils offering a choice of hot and cold breakfasts and this was attended by nearly 100 pupils. Demand for Breakfast Club indicates that these numbers would rise when re-opened and under the present guidance we **expect up to 130 pupils** to request this facility. We are presently adhering the DfE/Sheffield City Council and Public Health risk assessment guidance which states:

‘If you normally run sessions indoors, you should consider whether you can run them safely outside instead, as the risk of transmission is lower outdoors.

To reduce the risk of transmission, you should also aim to minimise mixing between children as far as possible. This can be achieved by keeping children in consistent groups or ‘bubbles’. Therefore, where the activity is taking place indoors, you should first consider whether children can be kept in the same bubble as they are in during the school day in order to minimise mixing between different children.

Where it is not possible to group children in the same bubble as they are in during the school day, you should keep them in small groups of no more than 15 children and at least one staff member; and where possible, with the same children each time they

attend. Further steps that can be taken to minimise the risk of mixing between children would include keeping children from the same school together, or working with parents and carers to keep siblings from the same household together’.

We are really hoping to reopen in some form during Summer Term 2 if and when the guidance alters.

After School Club

The Walkley After School Club is run by a private company and usually caters for between 10 – 20 pupils. They are presently thinking about opening in September. We are as confident as we can be that both Breakfast Club and After School Club will be open from the beginning of September 2021, if not before.

Help Us to Win a Canopy!

Walkley Primary School have entered a competition to win a shade sail from [A&S Landscape, a supplier of school shelters](#). We love to learn outside and this would be perfect for outdoor learning to take place in safety. For us to win this exciting competition we have to collect the most votes! [Please click here to vote for our school.](#)

Once you have voted, please help us to spread the message on friends, parents and supplier’s websites as well as social media to help us win!

Here’s hoping we have a warm relaxing half term where we can feel some sense of normality and that more safe freedoms come our way next term.

Keep safe,

Val Sian and the Walkley Team.