



St. Paulinus Catholic Primary School

Inspiring all to live, learn and love in the light of Jesus.

(cf John 8:12)



Wednesday 9th September 2020

Changes to hometime arrangements

Dear Parent/ Guardian,

I am writing this letter to you all as I was not happy with the end of school procedures yesterday and I want to outline the changes we have put in place which will hopefully improve matters. I met with staff straight after school and held an emergency SLT meeting to discuss how we could improve the situation in time for today. I have also received a number of messages from parents with ideas and also expressing their concerns over the behaviour of other parents during collection time which has added to an already challenging situation and I would ask, on their behalf, that all parents follow all guidance in this letter; it is our joint responsibility to look after one another during this pandemic.

Thank you:

Firstly, I would like to start by giving thanks to a couple of groups.

Most importantly, thank you to all the children. They have all behaved impeccably. They were an absolute credit to both yourselves and the school. It has been wonderful to have all the children back in school; the playgrounds were full of laughter and the classrooms full of learning again. I am so happy to see them all.

Thank you to the parents who followed all the guidance that has been given to you over the last few weeks. Our community is still at risk and we all need to do our best to look after one another. Parents who were able to follow our procedures really helped our before and after school arrangements go more smoothly as well, so thank you for that too. I also appreciate those parents that recognise how difficult this situation is for school and have supported us with their messages and understanding over the last few days, including with their messages regarding the going home procedures tonight. School is trying its best and as you can see from this letter we are, and will, make changes when needed.

And, last but not least, I want to say thank you to all the staff, who are working incredibly hard in extremely difficult circumstances to help us all get used to this new normal. I was incredibly saddened to hear that a number of staff on the gates experienced aggression, disrespect and parents shouting at them. All the staff at St Paulinus go above and beyond to help each and every child in school, we are always aware of things needing improvement and are continuously improving areas based on constructive feedback. I would hope that this behaviour is not seen in future as it is demoralising for staff and it is not nice for our children to witness this behaviour either. If you do have an issue, please take the time to calm down then contact the relevant person in school so you can talk it through and actions can be taken if necessary. I understand that this is a time of high anxiety for parents, but it is also a time of high anxiety for staff as well and ultimately we all want the same thing –we want what is best for our children.

Behind the scenes information:

A few weeks ago, I contacted Kirklees and asked them to help us by providing some temporary barriers that would allow our families to pass safely whilst we are following Government guidance which states that parents should not come on-site. Following several conversations, I was disappointed to find that these had still not materialised this morning as expected. However, after liaising with various people in Kirklees today, they have now agreed to come to school to assess the

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site on Thursday. Although, I would prefer that to have happened today, I am glad that it will be happening soon. I will let you know the outcome of this meeting as soon as possible.

We are also expecting some support officers from Kirklees to come and help us over the next few days. You will be able to recognise them as they will be wearing official lanyards etc. These 2 things will hopefully make a positive impact on our pick up and drop off arrangements for school.

Key Changes:

1. From Wednesday morning, Year 1 and 2 parents will wait going down the hill – this should alleviate problems we have had with people needing to pass each other on the pathway and also mean that we don't have lots of parents near where the buses reverse.
2. Parents have had some confusion over where to collect their families: siblings will all be collected together with the eldest sibling at their gate. If you would prefer to collect your children separately please write a note or send an email to your child's teacher and they will ensure they keep your child with them.
3. The staff and I have agreed that all children will be brought out at the same time. Part of the difficulties tonight were because parents were waiting for a later year group but were at the front of the queue, which caused congestion so to make this easier all children will come out at the same time, but we ask that parents try to keep to the staggered finish times to keep numbers waiting outside the gates lower.

We may also take further steps with the buses, but this will need to fit with their risk assessments and so cannot be done straight away. I will keep you posted on this one.

Key reminders:

Please follow the advice below during pick up time and drop off times-

- ✓ Wear a face covering, unless you are medically exempt
- ✓ Keep 1m+ in between you and the parent in front of you
- ✓ Do not gather in groups, only family groups
- ✓ When you have collected your child, please move away from the gate immediately so that parents who are waiting can collect their child
- ✓ Do not stand near the curb when the buses are arriving or leaving
- ✓ Please stand against the wall and leave a gap wide enough for parents to pass without them having to go on the road or brush past you
- ✓ Only 1 parent should come to pick up to reduce numbers

Helpful advice:

- Consider your time of arrival carefully. Part of the problems we faced this evening were because parents arrived before their child's pick up time which meant we had a much larger volume of parents waiting than we expected. There is no rush. Under the current circumstances we will keep children until 3.25, so if you are a family that is shielding or who need to be extra careful, we recommend coming at 3.20 after the main rush.

I thank you all for reading this letter. I hope that Wednesday night pick is more calm and orderly but if it needs tweaking again, we will do so. I was told by Kirklees today that this is going to be our new normal for a long time while we are still experiencing the pandemic. We are all in this together, and if we work together we will get this right in the end – hopefully it will be better!

Thank you for your patience and support in this matter,
Miss Hayes and all the staff of St Paulinus.