

The Downs Primary School and Nursery

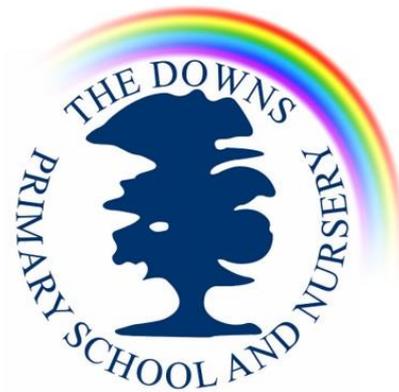
The Hides, Harlow, Essex, CM20 3RB.

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Friday 5th March 2021

We are very pleased to be returning to face-to-face teaching from Monday 8th March. The government has made the decision that this is compulsory, unless your child has a letter from the NHS telling them to shield. We have not had many questions this week about the return to school, but in case you are unsure about any of the guidelines we have added a poster to remind you of all the rules we all still have to follow to remain safe and to be able to come out of this lockdown.

In school, the children will remain in their bubble, they will need to wash their hands regularly and will have staggered breaks, lunches and each year group will have their own toilets to use. This is all done to keep as much distance as possible from others. Children need to wear school uniform, but if they have grown out of an item of clothing and you are having difficulty shopping please just let the teacher or the office know. They can wear their PE clothing on their PE day.

In class, children will continue to sit facing forward and we will give them time to reconnect with each other and to talk about their experiences. We will continue to teach the full curriculum and start off from where the home learning lessons ended. We will assess for gaps in learning and using the Covid catch up funding we will work with children to close those gaps. We think that the majority of children will be happy to come back to school. However, we have our school counselling team in from next week and they can chat with children who we are worried about. Of course, we will let you know if we are worried about how your child has settled back in.

The DfE states that in primary schools it is recommended that staff and visitors wear face coverings where social distancing cannot be maintained between adults. These measures will be in place until Easter. Children in primary schools do not need to wear a face covering and they should not be asked to wear one. Staff can also choose to take part in the twice weekly lateral flow testing. Many staff are doing this and we encourage the wearing of masks when meeting with parents or when on the playground. Staff are reminded to keep a distance from each other and where possible from children, but we realise that when teaching, especially with younger children, this is not always possible or in the best interests of the children.

Parents can really help by arriving at the allocated time when dropping off and picking up. Arriving too early causes the playground to become congested and does not allow for adequate social distancing. Arriving late means children have to walk through the whole school as the gates are closed. When on the school site please adhere to the one-way systems and social distance from each other. We will be using the same entrance and exit points as we did in September. If you do need to speak to a member of staff this can be arranged but will need to be outside.

School dinners will resume as before, the menu was sent to you yesterday via email and is on the website. Children can of course bring in their healthy packed lunch and we ask that all children bring in water to drink. Children do not need anything else. They will have their pack with their resources labelled to use in class as before.

We will be running Breakfast Club from Monday, if your child was attending Breakfast Club prior to Christmas they will still have a place. This will need to be booked, please complete the form <https://www.downsschool.com/page/?title=Breakfast+Club&pid=1020> or collect a copy from the school office.

Please make sure your account is clear of any arrears for school dinners, Nursery wraparound and breakfast club.

We will not be running any after school clubs or attending any trips whilst in lockdown. However we are in the process of booking virtual experiences for the children to enjoy, linked to the curriculum.

Moving forward it is more than possible that we will still be dealing with the implications of Covid and might have to close a bubble in school. If this happens we will follow the same procedures as before:

- In school anyone developing a high temperature, new continuous cough or a loss / change in smell or taste will be moved to our first aid room until collected.
- They will be advised to go for a test and to self-isolate (along with everyone else in their household). They can only return to school within 10 days if their test result is negative.

If at home, you or anyone in your household develops symptoms or tests positive, please let us know. The isolation period is now 10 days and all cases need to be reported to us so we can work with Test and Trace.

We need to remain cautious. There can be no easing of our Covid awareness. We must remain constantly vigilant and ensure we maintain social distancing, wash our hands and not use the playground/school gates to socialise. **It is illegal to meet with more than 1 person from another household and even then, you must remain two metres apart.**

On this link there is an Essex press release regarding the arrangements for schools returning from next week, which is here for your information: [Essex prepares for return to schools and colleges - Essex County Council](#).

On a much lighter note, we hope the children enjoyed World Book Day. We tried to celebrate this in the best way possible, considering the circumstances, and it was really lovely to watch the Masked Reader on our school YouTube channel https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC_WcWfYKMDwbz2PHZj9I6IQ

We have randomly selected one child from each key stage as a winner of the Masked Reader. The winners are:

Early Years – Kye (Nursery)

Key Stage 1 – Kadie (Year 2)

Lower Key Stage 2 – Najib (Year 4)

Upper Key Stage 2 – Ellie (Year 5)

Did you guess who the staff were? We have added the answers on a separate attachment, in case you still want to view the videos and guess first. This was a good opportunity to promote a love of reading as reading for pleasure can change a child's life!

We have added a fun science competition run by Stansted Airport that children can take part in at home.

We have also added a lovely flyer from Harlow Youth Council (HYC). This is a group of young people aged between 13 and 19 years old who have been elected by their peers to serve for a period of two years to represent the views and interests of young people in Harlow. They are tackling a really important issue which we felt was important to share with you all.

We have also received some milk vouchers, if you would like to collect one please come to the main office between 10am and 2pm.

Enjoy the weekend, we look forward to seeing you all on Monday.



Kind regards

Ms Jeanette Allen
Headteacher

Key Dates for the Spring Term 2021	
Monday 8th March	All Children to return to school
Tuesday 16th March	Funky Socks Day for Young Carers
Friday 26th March	Purple Day to support Epilepsy
Friday 26th March	1.30 school closure
Monday 29th March – Friday 9th April	Easter Holidays – School Closed