

September 2020

Dear Parents,

I would like to welcome you back to Ballard and I hope that you and your children have had an enjoyable summer holiday. A special welcome to the new families starting this term too; I am sure your children will settle into the Ballard family quickly.

I am writing this letter to give you the information you need for your child to have a happy and positive start to the new academic year in Pre-Prep. We have been working hard to put arrangements into place to ensure School is safe for everyone. We were fortunate to return to School for a few weeks last term so we saw how the children adapted to small changes in routines, required to minimise the risk of spreading the virus and I would like to let you know these arrangements.

How Pre-Prep will look

There will be two 'bubbles' within Pre-Prep: Nursery and Kindergarten will be one bubble and they will have sole use of the three classrooms they currently use. They will also have use of the outside area, under the canopy and the outdoor space beyond the Nursery classroom. They will use the toilets and wash basins within their classroom.

The second Pre-Prep bubble will be Year R-2, who will use their normal classrooms and outdoor areas. Year R will use the toilets by the entrance and Year 1 and 2 will use the toilets near to the Year 2 classroom.

We have planned to provide the full curriculum which we normally offer so, although the Pre-Prep teachers teach much of the time, the PE, Dance, Music and French teachers will come into the bubbles and teach these lessons. Adults will endeavour to maintain the social distancing guidance of 2 metres between themselves and the children; however the children are not expected to distance between themselves even though they will be reminded not to touch and hug each other. If any shared areas are used, such as the Sports Hall and Dance Studio, they will be thoroughly cleaned between lessons.

The curriculum will be delivered with a mindful focus on pastoral provision to support the children's social and emotional wellbeing when returning to School. Gaps in learning, caused by the disruption of School closure last term, will be identified so that appropriate learning may take place.

Date of Return

Thursday 3rd September 8.30am.

Normal school hours: Mon - Fri 8.30am – 4.00pm

Early and Late Club

We are able to provide Early and Late club in Pre-Prep. Nursery and Kindergarten should be dropped off at the Nursery entrance and they will go into in the middle classroom with the adult on duty and YR-2 should be dropped off at the Pre-Prep entrance under the canopy, where they will be taken to the conservatory. Please email your child's class teacher and myself to

let us know if your child will be attending any Early and/or Late Club sessions so that we will be aware to look out for you arriving.

Activities

We will be offering some activities for YR-2 children throughout the week which will start on Monday 7th September. You will be sent a letter with details about these. If your child is taking part in an after-school activity, they will be given a snack and drink at 4.00pm so that they are refreshed before starting the activity at 4.15pm. At 5.00pm, the children will be escorted to meet their parents under the canopy or in the courtyard for Year 2 pupils.

Drop off Arrangements

Please arrive promptly between 8.30am and 8.40am to drop off your child.

Nursery and Kindergarten pupils should wait outside the Nursery entrance, Nursery children to stand to the left of the entrance (as you look straight at it) and Kindergarten should stand to the right. Year R and Year 1 should hand their children over to the class Teacher/TA at the coloured picket fence. Please remember to maintain the 2 metre social distancing rules whilst you are waiting to hand your child over. Please also follow the one-way system through the playground, walking down the path and back over the grass area. We are sorry that parents are not able to enter the School building but this is another measure that is advised by the Government to help to keep everyone safe.

Year 2 parents are asked to park in the main car park and walk your child over the courtyard to the fire exit which leads into the Year 2 classroom. Again, please be mindful to maintain an adequate distance when walking from the car park and waiting to hand your child over. A member of the Leadership Team will be in the car park to show you where to park and to direct you towards the courtyard.

Your child's temperature will be taken on arrival at School using a remote infra-red thermometer. If your child's temperature is 37.8°C or greater, their temperature will be checked again after a few minutes and if it is still high you will be asked to take them home immediately. The children's temperatures will also be taken after lunch.

Pick up Arrangements

Nursery and Kindergarten children will be picked up from the Nursery entrance; Year R and Year 1 children will be picked up from the coloured picket fence near to the canopy and Year 2 children will be picked up from the classroom fire door in the courtyard. Please maintain the 2 metre social distancing rules as you wait for your child and as you leave the school grounds.

Uniform

The children will wear School uniform; they may wear their summer uniform until the October half-term and when they return after that, we ask that they wear their winter uniform please. We will notify you on occasions where formal uniform is required.

They should bring their PE kit into School at the beginning of the week and it will be sent home on Fridays. Kindergarten to Year 2 children will also need to bring their Forest School clothes, depending which week they take part in it. The children will change in their classrooms, as normal, for PE and Dance.

If it is sunny, please apply 12 to 24-hour sun cream before arriving at School; this is essential as we will be spending much time outside.

What to bring to School

Your child will need to bring a named water bottle which can be refilled in the classrooms. Please wash and sterilise the water bottles every evening.

Year R-2 will bring their book bags with their reading folders inside every day. We will 'quarantine' returned reading books for 72 hours, in line with Government advice.

Classroom Environment

The children in Year R-2 will be given their own equipment; such as pencils, coloured pencils, rulers, rubbers, whiteboards and clipboards, to use within the classroom and they will be encouraged not to share these resources.

Any resources that will be shared within the individual bubbles will be steam cleaned at the end of each day. The windows and doors will be opened to ensure good ventilation.

Any unnecessary items and soft furnishings in the learning environment have been removed or made inaccessible to the children.

Playtimes

Both bubbles will play outside in the Pre-Prep playground at different times; Nursery and Kindergarten will go out to play at 11.00am and 2.00pm and YR-2 will go out at 10.30am and 1.30pm. Whilst the Government's guidance acknowledges that it is difficult keeping young children 2 metres apart, they will continue to be encouraged to keep their distance during playtime, whilst still having fun playing together.

Snacks and Drinks

A healthy snack (fruit, vegetables, cheese, breadsticks) is available for the children in the morning and in the afternoon and Nursery –YR children have the choice to enjoy a drink of milk during morning snack.

The children will have access to their water bottles at all times and these will be topped up when required.

Lunch

The children will sit down to eat lunch in the dining room every day with their teacher and teaching assistant. We encourage the children to try the food which has been prepared for them to provide them with a healthy, well-balanced lunchtime meal. We also encourage important table manners, thinking about how to hold a knife and fork correctly and appropriate conversation whilst enjoying lunch together. The catering staff will prepare individual meals for children with dietary requirements which you will have informed School about when completing the medical forms.

Hygiene

The children will wash their hands when they arrive at School, before and after eating and playtimes and at regular intervals throughout the day. They will be supervised by a teacher or teaching assistant to ensure they wash their hands with soap and water for the recommended time of 20 seconds and dry them well with paper towels. Each classroom has access to hand sanitiser.

Good respiratory hygiene will be encouraged and children will be reminded to cough or sneeze into a tissue or their elbow; all tissues will be disposed of into lidded bins, which will be emptied regularly throughout the day.

Enhanced Cleaning

The whole Pre-Prep area has been deep cleaned.

Classrooms will be professionally cleaned at the end of each day and frequently touched surfaces will also be cleaned regularly throughout the day.

Cleaning and sanitising materials will be available for use by the teachers and teaching assistants in every room.

PPE

Staff will be trained in the new procedures. They will have access to PPE for dealing with intimate care needs and in cases where the child falls ill. Government guidance suggests that face coverings in schools are not routinely recommended for young children however, adults will wear a face covering when moving around the rest of the School.

Responding to someone becoming unwell at School

If a child shows symptoms of COVID-19 whilst at School, the School Nurse will be contacted. They will be cared for in an isolation room, either with the School Nurse or with a teacher or teaching assistant. Their parents will be contacted to come and collect them immediately. The government advice below should then be followed

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance>

Communication

Staff can be contacted via email using their first name.surname@ballardschool.co.uk. This is a good way to communicate and the staff member will respond as soon as they are able to without disrupting the children's lessons. A note may be written in the children's reading diaries also but please do speak to your child's teacher, teaching assistant or myself in the morning or afternoon if it is something urgent.

School news will be communicated through the Weekly Bulletin which can be accessed on My School Portal which is available on the School website. The portal also displays key dates and forthcoming events and homework is posted on it for the older children. You will also find the absence forms (illness and medical appointments) and leave request forms (any other absence during term time) which you should fill in and send to your child's teacher for information and approval. If you have any difficulty accessing this, please contact the IT department on ITHelp@ballardschool.co.uk.

Dogs on Site

Please can I remind you that dogs are not allowed in the Pre-Prep playground; we have some children and staff who have allergies and we need to be mindful that some people feel uncomfortable around dogs. Thank you for your understanding.

If you have any questions, please contact me on my email address (jane.hunt@ballardschool.co.uk).

We are looking forward to welcoming you all to Ballard and I wish you and your children all the very best for the academic year ahead.

Yours sincerely

Jane Hunt
Head of Pre-Prep