



11.09.20

Dear Parent,

Thank you for continuing to support us in our new entry/exit systems, staggered timings and efforts to keep us all as safe and healthy as we can. I am aware that there are quite a number of schools across the province who already have had to send bubbles home or indeed the whole school. Everyone has been following our helpful Quick Guide Sheet and keeping children off if they are unwell. Your support is vital in this, so on behalf of all the staff, thank you.

At this stage, I want to relay to you some feedback and new information;

Communication: During Lockdown, we had to adapt and amend how we communicated with each other. As we are back in the building, with limited personal access I want to clarify methods for communicating with staff this year;

- The School Office is open from 8:30am to 3:30pm daily.
- All non-urgent queries and communication should be directed to the school Email: [info@rathmoreps.bangor.ni.sch.uk](mailto:info@rathmoreps.bangor.ni.sch.uk) or by a note/letter directly to the specific staff member and we will get back to you within three working days.
- If your issue requires immediate action, please phone:
  - Main School Office 02891270399 or Nursery 02891469192.
- Our Seesaw has reverted back to our tool for home sharing what is happening within the classroom. The private messaging service is no longer in use.
- Please note that staff do not have telephones in their rooms and they teach children full-time within the bubble system. They will respond to non-urgent communication within three working days.

PE Uniform: Rathmore will introduce an outdoor track-suit to our PE uniform next month. This is a first for us and means that children from P1-P7 (and staff) can wear their PE uniform to school on their outdoor PE days. A leaflet has been attached with details of the design, cost and ordering. While the lack of pre-communication is not ideal, we hope that you understand this decision has been taken for the benefit of children and homes during this pandemic.

We are grateful to Signature Works who have managed to work with us to design and produce stock with little notice and know the children and staff will be warm and look smart in their new uniform.

The track-suit is not compulsory but an enhancement to our existing uniform.

Foyer Access: Thank you for following our new procedures. Phoning the office number from outside the door/ in the car-park for arranged meetings or collections means a member of staff can attend as required.

Drop Off/Collection of Items: This new system is working well. Thank you. Remember to label the item with your child & teacher's name before placing in the box outside the front door.

Change of Pick-Up Time: Again, thank you for your understanding and foreword planning to ensure teachers have at least 24 hours' notice of changes. This has meant arrangements can be made for your child's safe collection from the school front door at the agreed time.

Absences: A phone call is not required. If your child misses any school, a note must be sent to the class teacher, outlining the reason on their return. If your child is ill and/or receiving medication, please keep them off school until they are well enough to return. As usual, any child with vomiting or diarrhea must be symptom free for 48 hours.

COVID Absences: If you are keeping your child at home because they have COVID like symptoms, a member of the household has symptoms or they have had close contact with someone outside of school who has tested positive for COVID, you must phone the school with all relevant information-refer to DE Leaflet emailed yesterday.

COVID Test results: Please phone the office with all test results for COVID. If your child receives a positive test result this should be considered an urgent matter and you must telephone the school immediately-refer to DE Leaflet emailed yesterday.

School Dinners: Currently children are eating their school dinner (packed lunch style) in their classroom bubble. EA Catering have advised that hot dinners should be served by October. For Rathmore this will mean using the dining hall for three sittings of children who share the space but remain seated in their class bubbles. Parents should note this change of location for school dinners and book a dinner understanding that their children will leave the classroom to eat in the dining hall.

Week 21.09.20 School dinners (packed lunch style) will be served and eaten in the hall.

Week 29.09.20 School Dinners (hot) commence will be served and eaten in the hall.

Calendar: Due to three additional school days in August, the amended school calendar has just received DE approval and is attached for your information. Term 3 will end three days earlier in June, and all other dates remain the same for your convenience. Please note our first Exceptional Closure is on Monday 28 September 2020.

Finally, as we plan new '3-sitting' lunch-time timetables, routines and staffing, it is clear to us that we will require additional staffing for this process to keep everyone as safe as possible. If you, or someone you know would be available daily 12 noon-1pm and interested in being employed as a temporary Lunch-Time Supervisor, please get in touch with the school.

Thank you for taking the time to read another long letter. It is important that we keep informed and up-to-date as we continue to rely on each other to keep everyone as safe as possible.

We hope you have an enjoyable weekend.

Yours sincerely,

Julie M Hardy

Principal