

ABBOT'S LEA SCHOOL

Headteacher: Mrs Ania Hildrey, M.Ed, B.Ed(Hons), NPQH

1 September 2021

Dear Families

Ref: Return to school

I am writing to you today to welcome you to this new academic year and for those new to Abbot's Lea School, to extend my warm welcome to you as you join our community.

Today marks the official start of the term and so, we mark this week as Week 1. Whilst Week 1 is devoted to staff training (INSET), I wanted to take this opportunity to contact you with the practical arrangements for next week (Week 2), when your children will be returning to school.

COVID-19

Covid-19 is still a threat to the local community and so, we will continue following governmental guidance for schools and the Public Health England and Liverpool City Council's Health and Safety advice for Abbot's Lea School.

Whilst most of the operational practice will return to normal, there will be enhanced hand hygiene, cleaning and ventilation and we will continue promoting regular testing, vaccinations/boosters and, when required, self-isolation of individuals directly affected by the infection. Our Covid-19 risk assessment specifies measures required of us that we have put in place to minimise the risk of Covid-19 infection: <http://www.abbotsleaschool.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/ALS-COVID-19-risk-assessment-v4-1.9.2021.pdf>

Communications from Liverpool City Council have been sent to you via Parentmail previously and specifies expectations placed upon the families at the start of this year:

<http://www.abbotsleaschool.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Start-of-year-letter-for-parents-Autumn-21.docx>

We strongly encourage all students to take a lateral flow test at least twice between now and Sunday, 5 September 2021. Test kits are available free of charge from the school, should you wish to collect a pack, or from your local pharmacy. You can also order them online.

Any student confirmed as positive, or showing symptoms of Covid-19 and so requiring a PCR test, must refrain from attending school please – this is to protect them and others.

Please kindly communicate any such absence to us via: covid@abbotsleaschool.co.uk



UNIFORM

All students must attend school in the correct school uniform and this includes school footwear. Please note that students may not wear any items of clothing that are non-uniform and this applies to all Key Stages. This applies to class uniform and PE uniform (no football/rugby or other team kits are permitted).

We understand that some students may take the time to learn to accept different fabrics, textures and clothing style items. If this directly affects your child, please may I request that you discuss this with the Class Team and work together to help support a gradual adaption of the school uniform. If a morning starts with a child's reluctance to wear the uniform, and the time for leaving home fast approaches, please kindly put the uniform into a bag and hand it to the Class Team. The team will then work on supporting your child during the day to begin to tolerate it. Please be assured that any such attempts – like everything that we do here at Abbot's lea School - will always be positive and never punitive – we will take one step at a time and keep you fully updated on the responses to our support attempts during the school day. For most students, this is a swift learning journey, whilst for others, we need to show patience.

The expectation is that we work together to ensure that all students wear their full school uniform as soon as possible.

Any non-uniform days will be communicated to the students and the families in advance of such occasions.

Please refer to the uniform list communications shared previously and available on our website: <http://www.abbotsleaschool.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/ALS-UNIFORM-ITEMS-BY-KEY-STAGE-2021-22.pdf>

All items of uniform (including footwear) must be labelled with the student's full name to help us locate any lost items and reunite them with the owner.

PERSONAL ITEMS

Students may wish to bring into school a personal item that comforts them on the journey to and from school. Any such items should be clearly labelled and will be put away into the student's own bag or a backpack for the duration of the school day.

MOBILE PHONES AND ELECTRONIC DEVICES

We also accept that some students may be using electronic devices on the way to and from school.

It is our school's firm policy to request that any such devices are given to the Class Team immediately upon arrival to be given back to the students at the end of the school day. We store such items as securely as possible during the school day, whilst not accepting any liability for loss or damage.

This system is not to inhibit our students' use of the Internet during the day – as you know, we are fully committed to digitalisation of learning and provide each of our students with the suitable technology to access learning.

Equally, if any point in the school day a student requests that they are able to contact their family member, we can support them by allowing them access to the school phones (this is likely to be with staff supervision and only to the numbers you have provided us with).

The reason for not allowing the students to keep or use their personal devices during the school day is related to our statutory safeguarding duties.

Regrettably, we have experienced some difficulties with implementing this safeguarding duty in the past, as students have refused to hand over their devices. This has been difficult for the students in question, others in the class and also for the staff. I therefore share here the process we follow in such situations:

1. Students are encouraged to come to school without phones or other devices
2. If families decide that their child will benefit from having such device with them on their journey to school, they must reiterate our school's expectation of surrendering these upon arrival
3. Staff will do their best to keep all such devices safe, whilst we do not accept liability for any loss or damage
4. If a student refuses to hand over their electronics to the class team, staff will support them to do so for a period of up to 15 min
5. If after that, the situation is not resolved, the family will be called and expected to arrive on site without delay to collect the item and take it home with them.
6. If the student continues to refuse to hand over the item, the family will be asked to take the student home and the learning that day will be home-based/remote. The family will also be asked to ensure that the next morning the student arrives either without such technology or with full acceptance of the school rules and commitment to handing it to the class team.

I realise that for some it is very difficult as technology is now a major part of our lives, but I know you will agree that safeguarding of the children and young people must always come first.

LIABILITY

Please be advised that the school will not be responsible, nor will accept the liability for, any items of lost or damaged items of uniform, personal belongings or electronic devices.

TERM DATES, SCHOOL DAY, ATTENDANCE AND TRANSPORT

Term dates

We operate six terms per year. Our term dates are published on our school website: <http://www.abbotsleaschool.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Term-dates-2021-22-1.pdf>

Please note that, having published our Term Dates 2021-22, we have been advised today that we must deduct one additional day from the 190 days of term, in lieu of the 2022 Royal Jubilee Bank Holiday. As a result, I have decided that we will shorten the longest of this year's terms - Term 2, by finishing a day earlier just before Christmas.

I therefore need to draw your attention to the fact that Term 2 will now finish on Tuesday, 21 December 2021, instead of Wednesday, 22 December 2021. The finish time will remain unchanged, at 1pm.

I apologise for not spotting this sooner and hope that this change will not be too inconvenient.

Term time absence

Please be aware that we LOVE holidays, but do not approve any such treats during term time. Our term dates are published well in advance and so, we thank you in advance for making any personal plans for the school holiday periods.

There may, however, arise some situations when you do need to seek authorisation for term time absence – please contact my PA, Kim Adair, who will support you with any such requests: kim.adair@abbotsleaschool.co.uk

School day

Our school day starts at 9:00 and finishes at 15:00 (with the exception of end of Term 2, 4 and 6 when we finish at 13:00). All students are expected to attend the school full time and be punctual in doing so. Support will, of course, be offered to those who may struggle at times and we are very experienced in helping improve many of our students' attendance patterns over time.

Transport

The school is not in charge of the transport provision to and from Abbot's Lea School.

If your child has been granted your Local Authority transport provision, please contact your LA's SEND transport team to ensure that your child is collected at the time sufficient for them to arrive at school for 9am.

If you transport your child to school yourself, please note that the school gates will be closed until 8:45am each day. When the gates open at 8:45am, all traffic will be directed to form a queue, with the specific disembarking point managed by the school staff. Equally, collection time will open at 14:45pm, with the gates opened at that time, and a queue forming toward the designated collection points.

Please note that the staff car park may not be used as a drop off point and so, all those entering the site in a vehicle to drop off/collect students, will follow this system.

You may wish to consider a swifter system of parking in the neighbouring residential roads and walking over to the “welcome” point on site.

FOOD

Please note that we provide healthy snacks free of charge to all of our students. There is therefore no need for you to send a snack in. This applies even if you know that your child has a very selective diet and you are concerned about any restrictive preferences affecting their day – we are very experienced in this area and promise to look after your loved ones!

Our school lunches are delicious, too and so, I encourage you to give them a go, too!

If your child is eligible for free school meals, please rest assured that all students eat together and there is no way of the children identifying who is, or is, not funded for this wonderful support.

If your child opts for a packed lunch, please note that we ask for healthy choices to be prioritised and that we are a nut-free school and so ask you to check ingredients of any products very carefully to help us support the health of those with severe nut allergies at school.

COMMUNICATIONS

At our school we believe that the best way to communicate is to do so directly, with the right persons – this way, most questions, concerns or feedback can be acted upon quickly and lead to a feeling of mutual respect, satisfaction and joint working.

Therefore, your first point of contact will always be your child’s Class Team. Each Class Team has a shared email address and this helps with the efficiency of communication. Please note your child’s Class Name and a corresponding email address:

Early Years & KS1

Ireland@abbotsleaschool.co.uk

Key Stage 2

Italy@abbotsleaschool.co.uk

Portugal@abbotsleaschool.co.uk

Spain@abbotsleaschool.co.uk

France@abbotsleaschool.co.uk

Peru@abbotsleaschool.co.uk

Key Stage 3

USA@abbotsleaschool.co.uk

Brazil@abbotsleaschool.co.uk

Mozambique@abbotsleaschool.co.uk

CapeVerde@abbotsleaschool.co.uk

Botswana@abbotsleaschool.co.uk
Seychelles@abbotsleaschool.co.uk
Madagascar@abbotsleaschool.co.uk
Kenya@abbotsleaschool.co.uk

Key Stage 4

Australia@abbotsleaschool.co.uk
PapuaNewGuinea@abbotsleaschool.co.uk
NewZealand@abbotsleaschool.co.uk
Samoa@abbotsleaschool.co.uk

Key Stage 5

Malawi@abbotsleaschool.co.uk
ChristmasIsland@abbotsleaschool.co.uk
Fiji@abbotsleaschool.co.uk

Nurture Provision

Wales@abbotsleaschool.co.uk
Canada@abbotsleaschool.co.uk
Tasmania@abbotsleaschool.co.uk

If, for whatever reason, you need to contact the leader in charge of your child's provision, please contact:

EY/KS1 – Mrs Hattersley; maria.hattersley@abbotsleaschool.co.uk (previously Miss O'Neill)
KS2 – Miss Gibney; laura.gibney@abbotsleaschool.co.uk
KS3 – Mr Hodgson; richard.hodgson@abbotsleaschool.co.uk
KS4 – Mr Lyons; matthew.lyons@abbotsleaschool.co.uk
KS5 – Mr Mason; ryan.mason@abbotsleaschool.co.uk
Nurture Provision – Mr Terry; oliver.terry@abbotsleaschool.co.uk

You may also contact directly members of the Strategic Leadership Team (SLT):

- Mrs Tobin, Deputy Headteacher (in charge of teaching and learning across the school) – deputy@abbotsleaschool.co.uk
- Ms Twomey, Head of Care and Safeguarding (in charge of pastoral care and therapeutic provision, as well as family support) – alison.twomey@abbotsleaschool.co.uk
- Ms Kim Adair, (my PA who will schedule an appointment with me as the Headteacher) – kim.adair@abbotsleaschool.co.uk
- For general enquiries, or for reporting an absence on a given day, please contact our Reception: reception@abbotsleaschool.co.uk

Please note that we no longer send out letters home. All communication is electronic and so, please subscribe to Parentmail so that you receive all of the essential communications. If you have not yet signed up to Parentmail, or need any technical assistance to make your access

work, please contact our IT Manager, Miss Shipley, who is here to help: jennie.shipley@abbotsleaschool.co.uk

MEET THE TEAM

This Friday, 3 September 2021, at 15:30, each Class Team will hold a virtual Meet The Team session.

The session is aimed at ensuring that the students and the families can see some of the team members ahead of Monday's return to school to either meet them for the first time, or, in most cases, refresh their memory of the Transition Week's interactions.

Please do not worry if you cannot make this session, as there will be plenty of opportunities to communicate directly with the Class Team during the coming weeks; via email, Communication Books, or indeed, during meetings (which will remain, for the time being, remote in most cases).

Login details for the Friday's Meet The Team session will be emailed to you on the day. If you do not receive the details, please contact Kim Adair, my PA, who will be able to help (kim.adair@abbotsleaschool.co.uk).

FIRST DAY AT SCHOOL

Lastly, we look forward to seeing all of our students arrive for their first day of school on Monday, 6 September 2021 at 9am. Each Class Team will warmly welcome your children to Abbot's Lea School and we will look after them, care for them, inspire them to learn and support them in any way they require.

If we need to contact you with any urgent questions, we will do so that day.

Seeing is believing and I sincerely hope that soon I will be able to write to you to invite you to join us for the various school-based events!

Until then – please do keep an eye on our official Facebook and Twitter pages for daily updates about the lived experience of school of our students. After all, no amount of my writing can ever beat the photo-reporting by the students and the Class Teams!!!

I wish all of our students a very healthy, happy and successful academic year 2021-22!

Yours sincerely



Mrs A Hildrey
Headteacher