

Garden Fields J.M.I School

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Dear Parents,

It was lovely to welcome our children back this week and to have everyone back together once more! I think we all needed it – children, staff and parents!

A special welcome also to our new reception parents who joined this week – we wish you and your children a very happy time here at Garden Fields!

Thank you for those who have shared their thoughts with me about our arrangements for the start of term. As has always been the case since the start of the pandemic, there are many different opinions on the best course of action to take and a range of feelings about the level of risk and what measures should be taken...or not.

A key principle for everyone is to respect the fact that our guidance is that social distancing remains an important way that we can halt the spread of the disease. So please, can we all respect everyone's right to keep apart and socially distance and if we all adhere to and recognise this, then it will be safer for all of us.

We are fortunate that we have large grounds at the school and so it is entirely possible for us to keep our spacing, but it may mean that we have to step back sometimes and wait for the right time before we step forward. We are also fortunate in terms of having a soft start system, which allows for a steady flow of traffic in and out of the school. We have to be cautious about extending this further as there has been a strong directive from both the government and Herts CC that schools should not be offering a shorter school day.

We put in some arrangements for the start of the term in order to 'spread' the entry and exit points around the school in order to allow for fewer parents in any one section of the school. Sometimes you have to see a plan in action to see how it works in reality and we have noticed that we have created some new 'bottlenecks' and so we have made some 'tweaks' to our plan for next week, starting on Monday. The one way system for entering and leaving the school site will remain in place.

The amended arrangements for **this coming Monday: 7th September** are listed below by year group:

Reception: As of Monday, we will be launching a 'soft start' for Reception from 8.50 a.m. This means that you can drop off your children any time between **8.50 a.m. and 9.00 a.m.** (This is different to your induction guidelines.) Please could you also, now that the children have all started, only have one parent/carer per child come in to drop off as it will be much busier now that the children are all entering at the same time. Also, at pick up time, please feel free to wait on the lower reception playground as well as the top one and then come forward to collect your child when there is space to do so.

Year 1: We are returning to soft-start between **8.40 a.m. – 8.50 a.m.** Children in Oak class can be dropped at Miss Phillips' door. Children in Willow and Beech classes will via the entrance to the lower school (entry point for the dining area/kitchen/hall). They should be collected from here at the end of the day too – please keep back on the lower middle playground (the playground where you have been dropping off/collecting this week) to allow the teachers to see the children off safely.

Year 2: A change to the morning arrangements here. Soft start will return from **8.40 a.m. – 8.50 a.m.** Instead of lining up on the playground, the children will go straight up the fire escape steps for Larch and Pine classes and Cedar class will go through the Hub (Mrs Gleeson will meet them at the Hub entrance). Larch and Pine will leave via the fire escape steps and Mrs Gleeson's class via the middle playground.

Year 3: Soft start will be from **8.40 a.m. – 8.50 a.m.** Children will continue to enter and leave from the top playground behind their classrooms. The corridor door will be open for the children to enter from 8.40 a.m. You are welcome to drop your children at the steps on the middle playground rather than walk all the way round. On collection could you please wait back on the playground so that the teachers have space to see who they are returning the children to.

Year 4: No change to this week's arrangements.

Year 5 and Year 6: As we trialled today, the Year 6 children will enter and exit from their playground. Please spread out on here if collecting to allow for spacing – there is plenty of room! Year 5 parents can wait at the rear of the Y5 classes.

Year 5 and Year 6 children can be dropped off/collected outside of school if you would prefer – you do not have to come in. Make sure they understand where you are collecting them from and give them clear instructions in the event you are delayed i.e. they must return to the school office.

I hope these steps will further improve the 'flow of people' at drop off and pick up time but they do require common sense in order to work – so again, please respect one another's space!

There will no doubt be further changes as we continue to refine and improve measures. We also have a great wish to return to providing school dinners and we are continuing to look at how we might achieve that. I will of course keep you up to date with any changes. More immediately, we are looking at how we will be arranging both home learning and reading books over the next week. As part of this, as we are unable to host curriculum meetings this year, our teachers are putting together virtual curriculum presentations over the next week which you will be able to watch from the comfort of your own home!

I would also like to say, many thanks for all of the amazing flags that you have made over the summer – fantastic work! There is still time over the weekend for more if you haven't started/finished yet!

Have a great weekend!

Yours sincerely

Mr Farrugia