



# Somerville Federation

Somerville Primary School and Somerville Nursery School

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Executive Headteacher – Mr M J Forber

8<sup>th</sup> January 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

I would dearly like to say welcome back to all after the Christmas break, but unfortunately at this time we can't welcome all children back to the primary school. However the Nursery School remains open and if you completed our online Nursery School form before the deadline your child has a place. At the Primary School staff had been preparing their lessons, plans and resources over the Christmas break for the weeks ahead. Unfortunately this all had to change after the announcement by the Prime Minister on Monday night, those plans instead have been set to one side and within 12 overnight hours of his announcement the school welcomed those children of critical worker families and vulnerable children.

In less than a few hours on Tuesday morning, the primary school has been transformed yet again to not only take these children into school, but also establish a new system of home learning via Evidence Me and SeeSaw. I'm sure that you, like me, are feeling extremely proud of our whole staff team and thank you for your patience as we embrace new technologies. If you are having any issues, please contact the school office and we will respond to you as soon as possible. The office is only being staffed from 9am to 12 to reduce staff contact, so please email if it is after 12pm.

## Stay at Home.

At the moment, all schools are being instructed to keep children in small consistent bubbles which means that unfortunately there is a limit to the number of children who can be in school during this time. I must remind parents that this is a national lockdown and the government have made it clear that people should **stay at home**. The places offered in school are for the children of parents who are critical workers and **who are unable to work from home and/or unable to make other arrangements for their children** so have **no alternative** but to attend school. We have received a high demand of applications from our school cohort. We must ensure that this provision is at the correct scale **to protect both our staff and the children who attend.**

The "**Stay at Home**" advice is to try and reduce numbers and through this, reduce the spread of this highly infectious new variant. If the provision is too large it negates any benefits of the social distancing measures the government has imposed and through associated contacts, children and staff will be exposed to unacceptable risk. Comparing average attendance of key worker bubbles during the first lockdown to now at Somerville Primary School, shows a 400% increase.

This is not 'business as usual'. Despite how safe we have made our school, all medical advisers are clear that the safest place for children and families to be at present is **at home with as little social contact as possible**. Children at home are not 'missing' anything. The usual lessons are not happening, the children's normal staff will not be in school and most of their friends won't be here.

These emergency places are intended for families who have **no other adult at home and who are immediately required in the response to this virus**. Unlike the first lockdown, families are now able to establish a support bubble to help look after children from home.

It will not be easy but that is not a reason for your child to be in school. It is now our moral and civic duty to remain home. I know that the next six weeks will be difficult with your child at home. However, sending your child into the school building should be your last resort. As always, parents working at home and family in your childcare bubble must be the first option for critical worker parents who must still attend their workplace. **Home is the safest place for everyone at the moment.**

Having read this letter please email [schooloffice@somerville.wirral.sch.uk](mailto:schooloffice@somerville.wirral.sch.uk) or [schooloffice@somervillenursery.wirral.sch.uk](mailto:schooloffice@somervillenursery.wirral.sch.uk) if you are able to withdraw your place for either the Nursery or Primary School and keep your child at home.

As during the previous lockdown; I hope to provide you with at least a weekly update to keep you informed about various items. Please remember we are here for you, if there is anything you need please email the school office and we will try and support you as best we can during this challenging time.

### **Contacting the school.**

We continue to check answer phone messages daily and any emails sent to the [schooloffice@somerville.wirral.sch.uk](mailto:schooloffice@somerville.wirral.sch.uk) will receive a response as soon as we can. On Tuesday we had over 500 emails to respond to so please understand we will get to your email or phone message. If your query relates to the nursery school please email [schooloffice@somervillenursery.wirral.sch.uk](mailto:schooloffice@somervillenursery.wirral.sch.uk) . If you have any issues at all about school, critical worker provision, free school meals, remote learning devices or anything else please get in touch and rest assured we will respond to you. If you need to email your child's year group teachers, each year group has their own email for instance [year1@somerville.wirral.sch.uk](mailto:year1@somerville.wirral.sch.uk), just replace year1 with your child's year group. [F2year@somerville.wirral.sch.uk](mailto:F2year@somerville.wirral.sch.uk) is the only one that differs slightly in format.

### **Critical Worker and Vulnerable children provision.**

Children will be attending on the days both of their parents or carers are in work. Children do not need to attend every day. Unlike last time there will not be a weekly google form to complete, we have managed to secure additional staff to support the classes in school and therefore we understand that shift patterns and your rotas change, so your child will always be accommodated. The majority have now been attending the last four days and are in a routine for their online learning which is the same that is taking place at home. We would ask from next week for all children coming to school to wear their school uniform from now on.

### **Remote learning devices and working from home.**

Once again we hope that you are not feeling overwhelmed supporting your child with their learning at home, whilst trying to do all of the other things at home including working from home yourselves. Remember you can only do so much and there is only so much time in the day. Please don't get stressed by the learning from home, you are not expected to be a teacher as well as a parent. Thank you to everyone who has now completed the google form requesting a remote learning device. I have now organised the Apple iPads ready to issue to parents from early next week and we will be in touch with a set time for collection by text message. In the meantime the laptops (Chromebooks) will soon be issued but we have to set these up with individual school email addresses assigned to your child. I have been in touch with the company who is working on behalf of google to set these up for us and they believe this will take another 4 days. I will be in touch as soon as the email addresses are set up and the Chromebooks are ready for collection. I have assigned most of the younger children an iPad and the older children a Chromebook so you may not get exactly your preferred device as written on the form due to limited devices available. I have now closed the google form, so if you need a device still please email the school office with the word DEVICE in the subject line.

### **Free Schools and FSM Vouchers.**

The school kitchen was all ready and prepared for the week ahead with ingredients for cooking hot meals for the Primary and Nursery School but unfortunately a lot of these items were then wasted and could not be cooked for the limited number of children in school on the Tuesday. Fortunately some non-perishable items could be salvaged. We apologise that we have not been able to get any lunches out to free school meal children as yet as we only had enough food parcels for 35 children in case a

class bubble closed and therefore have not had the stock delivered to provide hampers for the this first week.

From next week we will be in touch to provide food parcels for collection from the school however we are also hoping to have more information on meal vouchers from the government which to date has not been forthcoming. If you are in desperate need for any food items whilst you wait further information on either the vouchers or the food parcels please contact the school office ideally by email with FOOD in the subject line. We will then know that you urgently need support and will get some food items to you.

Please remember that if your circumstances have recently changed or you did not realise that your child was not registered for free school meals please click on this link <https://www.cloudforedu.org.uk/ofsm/sims-wirral/> and apply for free school meals for your child. We will then get vouchers out to you as soon as we have had more information from the government. In the first lockdown 50 children were eligible for free school meals but their parents had never applied. They therefore missed out on several weeks of vouchers until they applied. One misconception is that if your child receives a meal because they are in Foundation 2, Year 1 or Year 2 you are not automatically registered for free school meals. I have sent a text to all those who are not registered on Thursday evening. If you received this text and are in receipt of benefits it may be worth trying to see if you are eligible to claim free school meals.

### **Applying for a school place for September 2021**

If you know of anyone who would like a school place at Somerville Primary School for September 2021 the deadline is fast approaching. All applications need to be made by **15<sup>th</sup> January 2021**. Applications after this date may not be given the school of their choice. You will be too late and will be assigned a Wirral school which may not be near to where you live. You can apply by clicking on this link and registering your child [https://emsonline.wirral.gov.uk/CitizenPortal\\_LIVE/en](https://emsonline.wirral.gov.uk/CitizenPortal_LIVE/en)

I would just like to finish by offering our thanks once again to all our critical workers for your commitment and personal sacrifice during this pandemic.

*Continue to keep safe everyone and look after yourselves as well as each other!*

**STAY AT HOME** if you are able to.

With regards,



Mr M J Forber  
Executive Headteacher