



Somerville Federation

Somerville Primary School and Somerville Nursery School

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Executive Headteacher – Mr M J Forber

School closure update from Somerville Federation: 15th January 2021.

Applying for a school place at Somerville Primary School for September 2021

All applications need to be made by **15th January 2021 – TODAY!**. We currently have 90 places for September 2021 and 94 people have applied with Somerville Primary School being either 1st preference, 2nd Preference or 3rd Preference. If you have not applied yet please do so before midnight tonight. 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

Please read below an IMPORTANT MESSAGE from Julie Webster, Director of Public Health and Paul Boyce OBE, Director for Children, Families and Education. This week's update follows their message.

Dear Parents and Carers,

As you know the Prime Minister announced on the 4th January that the country needs once again to move into a national lockdown, because the new variant of COVID-19 is spreading rapidly leading to acute pressure in the NHS and further loss of life.

In the last week the situation in Wirral has become very serious which means we now all need to work together to drive infection rates down. We need to stay at home to protect the NHS and save lives. Only leaving the home when it is absolutely necessary to do so and when we do sticking to all the rules at all times.

In this context we are writing to remind you that your child should stay at home and access remote learning if it is at all possible to do so. This will reduce the number of households mixing and the transmission of the virus in the borough.

Our schools and colleges are open but only for those children who cannot learn from home. Many of our settings last week experienced many more children attending school than they expected and in some cases children who attended could have accessed their learning remotely.

Schools have to work within the capacity they have which is determined by the school based risk assessment, the need to provide remote learning for the majority of children and the number of staff they have available to work. On occasions last week this led some schools having to inform parents that they do not have enough places to accommodate their child.

Already this week the number of school based staff who have tested positive for COVID-19 or who are having to self-isolate has increased and this is likely to continue at least for the next few weeks due to the high levels of community cases in the borough. This means that school leaders will need to prioritise the return of children based on individual need, and on the safety of the school.

Vulnerable children and children of health workers, social workers and those working in our schools will be allocated places before children of other critical workers. The number of places available will be determined by the head teacher of each school and is likely to vary from week to week. All decisions will be made based on the school risk assessment, staffing availability and the capacity needed to provide high quality remote education.

To reduce community transmission, we need to ensure that the number of children and young people accessing the offer of provision in a school or college is kept to the lowest number possible. Therefore, in line with updated government guidance issued on Friday (8th January), even if you are a critical worker, if your child(ren) can remain at home rather than attend school, on some or all days, then they should. Please only use the offer of provision when it is crucial for you to undertake your critical role. Whether or not your child's education setting is putting in place the rapid testing programme right away, it is very important that we reassure you that all settings will be continuing to regularly review and put in place all the protective measures recommended by Public Health England and the Department for Education to reduce the risk of transmission. These will include social distancing, hand washing, good ventilation, use of face coverings as appropriate, and ensuring people with symptoms do not attend. These remain the most effective ways to reduce the spread of the virus, even with rapid testing in place.

We ask that you continue to show the same patience and compassion to leaders and staff that you have demonstrated throughout this pandemic. We have learned from the first two waves that if we pull together as a borough, with everybody playing their part, we can help to slow the spread of the virus.

*Julie Webster, Director of Public Health.
Paul Boyce OBE, Director for Children, Families and Education*

Stay at Home.

Following on from this message please ensure that you **stay at home** if you do not need to go out of your household and if your children do not need to attend school especially if another adult is in the house who can look after them whilst you are at work. We have had our first bubble closure this week due to a positive case in Year 1 and as the message above from Public Health more of our school staff may be affected in coming weeks as our community COVID infection rate increases.

Places at the Primary School are now extremely limited to ensure the safety of those children in school, the staff and everyone's family. We have offered all places to those children of parents who are critical workers.

Home continues to be the safest place for everyone at the moment.

Contacting the school.

We continue to check answer phone messages daily and any emails sent to the schooloffice@somerville.wirral.sch.uk will receive a response as soon as we can. If your query relates to the nursery school please email 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, just replace year1 with your child's year group. F2year@somerville.wirral.sch.uk is the only one that differs slightly in format.

Critical Worker and Vulnerable children provision.

Children in school have all settled into a routine and most have also been able to meet up online in the classroom with their classmates working from home. Thank you to staff and parents for enabling this to happen and keeping our school community together and still being able to see each other.

Remote learning, devices and working from home.

I am hearing from staff so many positives about the online lessons and work taking place with our children and would like to thank everyone involved both in school and at home for your hard work.

“Aiming High Together”

Thank you for bearing with us as we prepared the Chromebooks and iPads. We have now given out just over 50 Chromebooks and 20 iPads. Everyone who had requested a device on the google form has now been allocated one and should have now collected the device from school.

If you were late to fill in a google form and have requested a device either through the school office or via the class teacher we have your name on a list. Everyone who asked for a Chromebook has now been given one. Everyone who asked for an iPad has been placed on the iPad waiting list and you will be contacted early next week by text as soon as we have these ready. If you still need a device please let us know by emailing or phoning the school office or year group email.

Free School Meal Hampers

Thanks to the staff who worked like Trojans on Wednesday to put together the 220 hampers for our FSM children and a shout out to Tesco for supplying the bags at such short notice. We managed to get our Free School Meal Hampers out to parents and carers on Thursday and Friday. The 220 hampers have now been collected by families or have been delivered. Thank you also to those who informed the school that they did not require a hamper and would wait for the vouchers to be released. Recognising that the vouchers could not be backdated, we want to thank you for your understanding.

Free School Meal Vouchers

We have now had further information relating to the vouchers at long last! I sent a text to you on Wednesday evening to inform you that the government had updated their information and guidance on FSM vouchers (which was long awaited) to let the school know that we could order vouchers from Monday.

I have been on the ordering site today and it states that no orders can be placed until Monday and that any schools accessing their website will be placed in a queue. Memories of the first lockdown came into mind when I was either staying up until 2am or setting an alarm for 5am to order the vouchers but hopefully this will not be the case. With the ordering process opening for all schools in the country on Monday I know that they will be inundated but you should expect to receive your voucher by the end of that week at the latest, but I will keep you updated by text whatever.

I have sent you all a text and email today to ensure that we have the correct email address for your vouchers to be sent to. Please do not email the school office if your email address has received this message. If you do not receive an email it may be worth checking your SPAM or JUNK email first and if you still have not been receiving emails from school then please get in touch with the school.

Free school meal vouchers will be issued to all benefits related free school meal eligible children. If you received the email, this means you will be eligible.

Free School Meals for those children in school

If your child currently attends school your child is eligible for a free school meal if your child is in Foundation 2, Year 1 and Year 2 or if they are eligible to benefits related free school meals. Therefore they should already be having free school meals made by the kitchen and therefore will not be receiving a voucher. If your child attends only some days we will do our best to calculate a fair solution to this. We know that some children who would be eligible may only be in school 2 days per week. We intend to use the previous week's attendance to calculate the vouchers required for the current week depending on the restrictions on ordering amounts etc. from the voucher company.

Food items

If anyone is in desperate need for any food items 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, we do not want any of our children or their families to go hungry during this lockdown. With this in mind, a special thank you to the Dempsey Majilton Family for providing an array of food items to support our two schools community.

Please remember that if your circumstances have recently changed or you did not realise that your child was not registered for benefits related 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 your application is confirmed from the local authority. Since sending out the text to all those who were not registered on Thursday evening 7 children from the Primary School have been confirmed as eligible. **Don't miss out on vouchers that you would be entitled to!**

We are coming to the end of our second week of this lockdown. Please keep your spirits up. If you need any support at home with anything please contact the school and we will do our best to support you. Thanks to the staff, children and you at home for supporting your child with home learning.

I continue to praise all of our critical workers for their commitment and personal sacrifice during this pandemic.

Keep safe everyone!



Mr M J Forber
Executive Headteacher