

## Coming Back to Michael School- June 2020

Dear children and parents,

I am sure you appreciate that we have many different guidelines in education at the moment in order to ensure that the children and staff at Michael will be as safe as possible when we reopen. As a result, we have had to make some significant changes. Whilst lots of things will be very familiar to the children, we wanted to let you know about the differences so that you could make an informed decision about whether you choose for your child to return when they are allowed to. Please remember that the Minister has confirmed that you are able to keep your children safely at home until September. There is no expectation for them to attend school now.

Ultimately, we will do our best to keep the children happy! We want them to feel comfortable so they are able to learn whilst still following the rules that have enabled the Island to make such excellent progress through the Covid-19 pandemic. It is important that we continue to take great care for the foreseeable future and it is our duty of care to your children and our staff to put these procedures in place.

In this document, we will be sharing some photographs and information about what the school day will look like and we will also be doing online Teams meetings for groups with teachers during the day before the children start back so they can ask any questions. We will let you know when these will happen.

We have also increased our cleaning provision also to ensure that hygiene continues to be at a very high standard in school. We cannot use one way systems in our school due to the layout, however children will be only passing each other briefly.



## Things we know will be still be in place throughout June at least:

- 1) Children **must not** be brought in with any temperature or cough/ sneezing or other possible Covid symptoms. If your child has any symptoms then they will be isolated until someone can come and collect them. I am sure you understand the importance of this.
- 2) We have set the school up within the current guidelines of 2m social distancing. There are markers placed around the school to remind the children of what this looks like as this can be tricky to visualise! If they are waiting to wash hands etc, then they can use these as place markers.
- 3) Hand washing will be done on their way in and out of school. We will have a portable hand washing unit which can be used outside also. There are some one-way systems in place to help space the children out.



4) We must reduce the number of adults in the school building to essential only- teachers and staff. This will mean that, for now at least, parents, grandparents etc won't be allowed into the school building. You are more than welcome to telephone or email to arrange discussions with your child's teacher. It is crucial that we minimise the contact children make with others in school. Thank you for your understanding.

5) Due to the very large number of children returning soon after school opens, drop off times and areas will need to be carefully managed and changed. There will be more information about this in due course. The school grounds will only open and staffed ten minutes prior to the school day to ensure social distancing. The playground and grounds won't be available to play in after school until 4pm please so we can ensure everyone has been handed over safely, thank you.

6) Playtimes: These will be staggered to allow more space for the children to play. The play equipment and traversing wall won't be available during these times. We will have some play equipment for the

children to use which will be cleaned after each session. Please can you ensure that your children don't bring any toys of their own- we will provide some!

7) Classrooms: Whilst we have lovely classrooms here at Michael, the number of children which can be accommodated with the 2m rule really minimises our space. Children will be sat differently, moving from our usual group tables to individual ones which aren't facing each other. Some groups will need to use other spaces such as the sports hall and the community rooms due to the large number of children returning. Whilst this isn't our preferred option, we will work hard to make these spaces as friendly and warm as possible for them.



Should the 2m rule reduce to 1m, the layout will stay the same but with desks closer together. Your child should be with their usual teacher for most of the week, however this can't be guaranteed at the moment due to the large numbers and how we will need to sort groupings for everyone to fit in the available spaces. We won't be able to arrange groupings around friendships but we hope that these can naturally occur.

Children will need to put their coats and bags on the backs of their chairs to please ensure that contact is reduced. They are welcome to bring their own personal pencil case and we will also provide their with their own individual kits which they can use.

We will be using the outside areas at school as much as possible. Please ensure your child has a sun hat every day and they are wearing sun cream before they come to school, thank you.

8) 'Bubbles'- in school we will need to create 'bubbles', areas where your children are based. These will include their classroom, hand washing facilities and toilets. The children will stay in these areas all day so that we are able to limit who they come into contact with should any cases occur. The children are used to working all across the school site, so they may find this very different initially.

#### 9) Clothing/ uniform

We are going to say that- initially at least- there will be no uniform to be worn please. There are a few reasons for this...

- The recommendation is that children must wear clean clothes every day and this would be easier to facilitate if they wear their own clothes.
- We won't be able to use changing facilities for P.E. etc so please can all children wear clothes suitable for sports with pumps/ trainers every day.
- They will be outside as much as possible.

Please can you also help us by ensuring your child can tie their own shoelaces... if not can they please wear pumps/ velcro shoes so we can maintain the social distancing guidelines.

#### 10) Dinner times:

- Children who usually bring a packed lunch can continue to do so please.
- Those who have school dinners will be given a prepared packed lunch from school and not the usual hot meal/ choice/ salad bar etc. If you choose to send your child with a packed lunch from home instead, that's fine! They may prefer your choice for them.
- We will be eating outside as much as possible so we can be more spread out and enjoy the picnic feel! On wet days, the children will be eating their packed lunches at their desk in their class area.

### Things which may change soon should guidelines change:

- Arrangements for dropping off/ collection of children- to be confirmed. These will be based on the number of children returning.
- Parents entering school site.
- Uniform requirements- this may return before the end of the summer (not Year 6 if they don't have uniform which still fits!)
- Number of children in classrooms.

I appreciate that this may be a big difference for your child so please know that their pastoral care and wellbeing will be our primary concern during this period. Children are unable to learn if they are scared or worried so this will be the main area of support in school. There will be lots of familiar things for the children- their classmates, the teachers, the fun and laughter, but also there will be things they can't do anymore- games of tag, hugs and playing those games with physical contact. We will do our best to help them understand and continue the great work the Isle of Man has already done so we are able to return to normal sooner rather than later. As the Minister says, all the plans we have are subject to change depending on the numbers of Covid cases so let's all work together to keep them low.

I understand that you may be thinking that some of these new arrangements may be quite strict but as the health and safety of everyone in the Michael School family is our main consideration, then for now, they have to be. Please do be understanding if we are unable to return to normal for a while.

If you have any questions, please do email me and I will do my best to answer them. Things change almost daily so I will be in touch again soon. If, after reading this, you decide you don't want to send your child in yet- maybe wishing to wait until their whole year group returns instead- then please also let me know as our plans depend on exact numbers.

Below is a tick list for you to help organise your child returning to school.

Thank you for your continued support,  
K Riley

## Ticklist for things you need to remember when coming back into Michael School:

- 2 snacks per day- children have likely been used to eating more at home so may need more food in school!
- Water bottles - all children must bring their own bottles to refill.
- Suncream must be applied every day before school
- Waterproof, warm coat- we will be spending time outside as a priority
- Shoes that my child can manage independently
- Bag that can hang on the backs of their chair- their lunchbox and water bottle will need to fit in this.
- Can bring personal pencil cases if they wish- not to share them.
- Packet of tissues please- catch it, bin it, kill it.
- Clothing suitable for P.E. to be worn at all times.
- Clean clothing daily- no uniform to reduce washing stress!
- Sun hat- lots of time outdoors!
- No scooters or bikes to be brought to school please.
- No personal hand gel please- hand washing is the best method.