

Methods of Communication

Communication is key to the successful operation of the school and to ensure the children's needs are met. As visits to the school are by appointment only, please make use of the communications systems we have in place. It is very important you do not come onto the school grounds without prior appointment.

Telephone: 01207 504431

Text: 07537 436638 – The primary carer will receive school texts messages, used when the app is not suitable, i.e. absences, reminders, events, payments and school closure emergencies. You cannot reply to school texts but you can send separate texts to this number. Please use school texts to inform of absences, appointments or if you have a general inquiry.

Email: consettjunior@durhamlearning.net

Address: Consett Junior School, Beechdale Road, Consett, Co. Durham DH8 6AY

Key Contacts:

Mr. P Dixon – Head teacher and Safeguarding Lead

Miss R Waters – Deputy Head teacher and Sendco

Mrs. D Raine – School Operations Manager and Safeguarding Officer

OurSchoolApp

For families new to our school, you may not be aware of our app. This is our main form of communication. It allows parents/ carers and even childminders to access information about the day to day operation of our school. Although we have a text message service, this is a cost to the school and only used for emergencies or to ensure pertinent/individual information is shared. If, like many of us, you find the 'pinging notifications' frustrating, you can disable these. For families new to our school you may not have been made aware of this function. You need to load the app - settings - notifications. You can disable any of the three types of notifications, but please remember that if you do this, you need to make sure you check the app regularly so that you are not missing important information, i.e. special events.

School Fund

School Fund is used for the benefit of all pupils at the school. Examples include: Supplementing library stock; Additional teaching resources; Hire of recreational facilities; Prize Day expenses; Subsidising travel expenses of pupils e.g.: field trips, sports fixtures; providing refreshments at parent's evenings and open nights; Improvement of the school environment. You can pay school fund weekly or termly and we hope for £1 per week, however, any small change is very beneficial. We have a 'Money Spinner' to make paying school fund fun for the children. We will move this into the main cloakroom area so children can continue to pay this into the spinner themselves. We are very grateful and enjoy using this to benefit your children.

Backpacks in school

To clarify, we would prefer, we possible backpacks are not brought into school until restrictions are lifted. However, if children have medical supplies or lunch boxes that cannot be carried in on their own, we would expect backpacks to be brought in for those children. Children on school meals do not need to bring in a backpack.

Flu Immunisation programme

The flu nasal immunisation team will be in school in December, further information will follow, as well as a link to giving permission for your child to receive this immunisation. Although not painful, the nasal spray can be tickly and cause irritation, this can unsettle children. If you opt to give permission can you also discuss the procedure with them prior to the day to reassure them.

Ford Castle 2021

For the year 6 families who have children going to Ford Castle in May 2021, at present this is still going ahead. The current guidance is that there should be no over night stays, however, cancelling the trip in May is not what we want to do just yet. Balances can still be paid into school. We are hopeful that measures can be put in place to allow this much awaited trip to go ahead.

Term dates

As we are limited to what we can plan and arrange in school over the first half term, there are very little dates to inform you about, other than term dates at present. Should there be any other significant events they will either be on the app/website or in future newsletters.

Currently there is no change to future term dates that have already been shared. A copy of all term dates can be found on the website 'Parents-School Holidays' or in the 'Info' section of the School App.

School breaks up to end the first half of the autumn term on Friday 23rd October 2020.

School reopens for the second half of the autumn terms on Monday 2nd November 2020.

School breaks up for Christmas on Friday 18th December 2020 and reopens on Tuesday 5th January 2021 (*Monday 4th is a staff training day and school is closed to pupils).



Consett Junior School September 2020 Newsletter

Welcome back everyone,

It has been such a long time since I have written to you all – thankfully we are all back safely and hopefully you and your families are all well.

Firstly, I would like to welcome Year 3 and their families to Consett Junior school, it has been lovely to meet all the new year children and their families over the past couple of days – I look forward to getting to know you all over the next few weeks and months.

We are also welcoming three new pupils into other year groups, we really hope they settle quickly.

It would also be remiss of me not to welcome two members of staff, Mrs Hannant has returned from maternity leave and Miss White joins our amazing staff team – we are so lucky to have them here at Consett Junior School.

Secondly, I just wanted to reassure you that our focus this half term is to ensure that we look after the well-being of your child, ensuring they settle back well into school life. I'm sure we will have teething problems over the next couple of days and possibly weeks; we have had to change lunch routines and the start and end of the day. We are reviewing these processes daily, we will keep you up to date with any changes.

Could I also ask, if you could stick closely to the times at the start and end of the day, we are trying to minimise the number of people around the school gates, whilst I recognise that we will have a number of adults around the gates, please be aware of others. Also, be mindful of where you park, the school carpark is not open to parents, as is the parking opposite the school, which does not belong to us.

If you have any concerns please contact the school, we will try and help in any way we can.

Hopefully this term will be a little smoother than the last and we hope the children settle well.

I look forward to catching up with you all, please stay safe.

Mr Dixon

Head Teacher

Contact Details

Following the return to school after such a long period, your circumstances may have changed. You must ensure you have made us aware of any changes. It is vital we have the correct contact information on file for your child. This could include a change of address, contact numbers, your listed emergency contacts, or a separation of parents/change to children's living arrangements. If your child does not live with you and you require additional information posted/emailed to you, this can also be arranged i.e. newsletter or school reports.

Appointments

Where possible can you ensure any medical appointments are made outside of the school day. We completely understand that some appointments can only be made during school time. Where this is the case can you ensure copies of appointments are provided.

[Updated Attendance Information September 2020](#)

Schools have been working hard over the summer period to prepare and welcome back all pupils in the new academic year. A range of protective measures have been put in place in order that parents and children feel confident of their safe return to settings.

As a school, we understand that, as parents, you may have anxieties or concerns about your child's return and we encourage you to contact us if you have any specific concerns that you would like to talk through or any help and support that you or your child may require.

As echoed by the Government, it is vital for all children who can be at school to return, given that the sooner children can return to school, the better it is for their health and mental wellbeing, wider development and their educational prospects.

The Government have made clear the expectation that all children will return to school in September 2020 when school attendance will, again, be mandatory and the school's attendance policy clearly mirrors this.

The Government have planned for a range of potential scenarios detailing the actions that parents and schools should take in the event of one of the issues arising and this is attached in the summary attendance policy leaflet. I would be grateful if parents could familiarise themselves with this. The updated policies can be found on our website (link below)

<http://www.consett-jun.durham.sch.uk/about-us/school-attendance/>

At Consett Junior School attendance has always been a focus for us and we strive to go above 96% attendance each month. This is now more important than ever as we need to ensure our children do not suffer anymore from the amount of school they have already missed. We will continue to offer the rewards we previously did, where it is safe to do so. For families new to our school this includes class and year group rewards every month (non-uniform and delicious treats), as well as termly rewards. Due to social distancing some of these will need to be reviewed. We will update our incentives as the lifting of restrictions allow.

[Uniform](#)

Many of you had already bought uniforms for the start of the autumn term, however, we were mindful that many of our families have had to endure some serious financial conditions over these past few months. Therefore, for the start of the new academic year uniform is a 'preferred expectation', but not compulsory UNTIL we return following the October half-term from Monday 2nd November. Current guidance is that clothing does not need to be changed on a daily basis. Although we have relaxed uniform policies, the wearing of earrings and nail varnish **is not permitted**.

[Challenge Time...2020 year book challenge!](#)

When school closed for the summer we set all children a special challenge

"We'd love to see what you have all been up to since March and what you get up to this Summer, so we are setting you a challenge! Design your own 2020 year book using photographs, diary entries, newspaper cuttings etc. to bring in to school on our first day back. The year book can be done electronically or on paper and it is totally up to you how much or how little you do. All entries will receive a dip in the box and the best two year books from each class will receive a prize!"

If your child took part in this can it be sent to school for Miss Waters by Monday 7th September.

[After School Clubs](#)

Usually we promote a wealth of after school clubs that are available to children in different year groups and for children of various interests and hobbies. Due to Covid we are unable to reintroduce any after school clubs until we know it is safe to do so. We understand this is disappointing for many of you as they were a more cost effective option for extended childcare, but also that the children thrived from attending them. This will be reconsidered after this half term, once we are sure that the reopening of schools has been achieved safely and the at the rate of infection in our local area has not risen. One option is to offer 'year group' clubs with the initially focus being on building self-esteem and peer relationships.

[Face masks](#)

It is understandable that children may feel more comfortable wearing face masks for school. We have considered all of the guidance and would ask children remove face coverings as they enter school and place safely in a sealed bag until they leave for home. Primary schools do not require children to wear face coverings. We have put many changes in place following risk assessments to ensure the safety of your child while in school.

[Lockdown Time Capsule](#)

Before the end of term, we asked children to write letters to be included in the lockdown capsule – organised by Mark Wilkinson Photography. Photographs Mark has received will be printed and placed in the time capsule which will be buried for ten years. To accompany the photographs, we asked the children to write a letter and place it in a sealed envelope. The letter could be about time in lock down, things children did, how they felt, anything they felt relevant. We asked that the children included the date, their age, their class teacher and their first name. But they must not include surnames, phone numbers or their address. We have been in touch with MP Richard Holden and have arranged for him to come to our school on the 11th September to bury the capsule in the school grounds. We will select two children from each bubble to be part of this. If your child is new to our school, or simply forgot, they can still write their letter as long as we have it before the 11th September.

In 2030 we will dig up the capsule and all contents will form part of a history event for our future CJS children.

[School Photographs - Friday 18th September](#)

Local photographer, Mark Wilkinson, will be in school on the morning of Friday 18th September to take 'individual' photographs of all the children in school. There will be a cleaner on duty all morning to clean the areas between bubble sessions.

In previous years this would have included sibling photographs as well as well an earlier session for family photographs prior to school starting. Unfortunately, due to Covid we are unable to offer these sessions. As an alternative for families who would like sibling/family photographs taken, Mark is happy to do this in his shop (Middle Street, Consett) by prior appointment. All proofs, whether taken in school or at his shop will be returned to Consett Junior School for ordering.

Children will receive a proof order at a later date. All bulk orders can be made through school by a set deadline, alternatively, please make your order direct with the local shop (Middle Street).

Ordering details will follow after the 18th September.

[Swimming](#)

Despite swimming facilities being open, the decision has been made by County to postpone curriculum swimming lessons until there is further guidance as to how children's safety will be maintained. We hope this will be in place for the start of the spring term

[ParentPay and Payments to School](#)

We have now added more services to ParentPay. Previously only dinners and breakfast club were paid in this way. But due to moving towards a cashless school and keeping items in school to a minimum, other services have now been added. Therefore, the payment of dinners, breakfast club, end of term non-uniform fines, clubs (when on) and trips must be paid through ParentPay. However, school fund and those going to Ford Castle in 2021 (so far this is still planned) will be through cash payments in school. Future residential trips will be added to ParentPay. If we raise money for any charity now, where possible a 'Just Giving Page' will be set up.

School fund can still be paid in the same way or dropped into our 'money spinner'. School fund is £1 per week (or a donation if you prefer) and is used for resources for the children. We do rely on school fund.

Please can we also request that you keep on top of your ParentPay balances. At the start of the autumn term there were 24 families in arrears on ParentPay, we have contacted these families to make them aware of this, however some remain in arrears. Some families who have now left the school have arrears on their account. This will be raised with the finance committee before referring to the finance team at DCC for further action.

If you are new to our school, you should have already received your activation code. If you need any help with this, please contact Mrs. Raine.

[Covid – 19](#)

I am sure many of our families are anxious about their children returning to school, after spending six months protecting them from Covid, following the governments guidance. As part of our updated attendance policies, it details the steps you should take if you, your child or member of your family has Covid or been in contact with anyone who has tested positive. Please read this information and ensure you keep us informed.

If we suspect that your child or staff member has symptoms of Covid while in school, we will isolate them and arrange for them to be sent home immediately and to be tested. We will request that the outcome is shared with us and we will also contact Public Health England who will advise us on what we should do next. The advice from PHE will depend on the test and number of confirmed cases. There is no requirement to close the school due to one pupil with symptoms, action will depend on PHE advice and their risk assessments. However, we can confirm that this will be a swift process.