



Head of Federation
Sammy Crook BA Ed Hons

Head of School
Sarah Maude BA Ed Hons

Rackenford C of E (VA) Primary School
Rackenford, Devon, EX16 8DU

01884 881354
admin@rackenford-primary.devon.sch.uk
www.rackenford-primary.devon.sch.uk

20th July 2021

Dear Families,

I do hope you are well and have been enjoying the summer sunshine. This is the time of year when we are thinking about September and the new school year. I would like to share some of our thinking so you can get ready for the Autumn term. We are really looking forward to welcoming our new members of staff, new children and their families; and to our existing children moving into their new year group and classes. They have already had a chance to work with their new teacher on our "Move up Morning".

We are busy with preparations to ensure that school continues to be a safe and welcoming place for all our children and staff. We will continue to follow the government guidance for CoVid-19 and amend our practices to be in line with any new published guidance. Our risk assessment is regularly reviewed to be in line with current guidance.

Government guidance 19th July: *Education settings will continue to have an outbreak management plan and work with local health teams, as is standard practice. Local Directors of Public Health may advise a setting to temporarily reintroduce some control measures in the event of an outbreak.*

We are sad that for such a long time, we have not been able to operate in all our fullness and we know that this has sometimes been difficult for our school community. Following the Government announcement on 19th July we are looking forward to the easing of restrictions and we will be able to slowly build on our strong foundation and introduce more community opportunities, school visits and trips, drama, music, art and cultural events, etc as we move into the new academic year.

Education Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

"I am incredibly grateful to everyone working in education and childcare for their tireless work to make the best of what has been a very challenging situation.

While the pandemic is not over, we are moving into a new phase of managing Covid, from strict rules and towards personal responsibility. The measures we will have after summer, strike the right balance as we learn to live with the virus so children can get on with their lives and education in the best possible way."

Government guidance 19th July: *All school trips, drama, music and sporting activity will be able to resume in line with the relaxation of restrictions across society from Step 4.*

The first day back to school

There are two staff training days on Monday 6th and Tuesday 7th September. The first day back to school for children in **Classes 1, 2 and 3 is on Wednesday 8th September**. As is our usual practice, the first day for our **new reception children in Class R is a day later, on Thursday 9th September**. Mrs Sharon Hagley will be



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hosting welcome sessions for our new reception parents and carers on the **8th September** (without your children) You will have the opportunity to meet with staff, see the classroom, have a tour of our school, get to grips with how we teach reading and phonics and how you can support your child's reading at home. Sharon will be happy to answer all your questions. New reception parents should have already received an invitation with a time slot - if you have not done so already, please could you confirm if you are able to make the welcome session.

School Transport

Please see the latest government guidance regarding school transport.

On dedicated transport:

- we will no longer recommend maximising distancing and minimising mixing, but unnecessary risks such as overcrowding should be minimised.
- Children, young people and adults should follow public health advice on when to self isolate and what to do. They should not board dedicated transport or public transport if they have symptoms or other reasons requiring them to stay at home due to the risk of them passing on COVID-19 (for example, they are required to quarantine).

Organisation

Government guidance 19th July: *As part of Step 4, 'bubbles' will end for all children under 18, social distancing will no longer be necessary, and schools will not need to stagger start and finish times, though they can continue with existing arrangements until the end of term if they wish.*

All being well, from September children and staff will no longer need to be in bubbles, nor need to operate social distancing within school. This will mean that we will be able to move back to having whole school gatherings such as collective worship, assemblies, etc. Our aim is that by week three we will be able to open up to inviting families in for our celebration assemblies on a Monday, collective worship in church on a Wednesday afternoon and joining us on our daily walk. We will keep you updated. Children will be able to mix more freely, for example when shared reading, on the Daily Mile, during sports clubs, morning dancing and in Friday clubs, going on visits, trips and much more!

Government guidance July 19th: *Protective measures will remain in place for the autumn term in all education settings including practicing good hygiene, ventilation, and regular testing until the end of September to strike a balance between relaxing restrictions and minimising further disruption to children's education.*

Keeping the School Clean

The current guidance (19th July) states that schools must continue to put protective measures in school for example, to ensure that there is an enhanced cleaning regime in school. This ensures that all surfaces, bathrooms, equipment and resources, etc. are sanitized and cleaned on a regular basis. Currently we



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employ a full time cleaner, Mr. Richard Cliff, who is with us from 10.30 – 5.30 every day. This will continue in September.

Keeping ourselves clean

We have sanitizer points around school and in each classroom and bathroom. Children and staff will wash their hands at regular intervals during the day. We have purchased two additional outdoor sinks for children to use.

Entrance and exit to the school and classrooms

From September, we will be changing the timings of our school day, in an attempt to get back to our "usual school times". However, we remain cautious, moving slowly especially following the summer holidays when we will all have been mixing with lots of people and visiting various locations on staycations and abroad. So, I hope you will be supportive of our decision to continue to use the separate entrances from September and for the first half term, after which we will review. In this "*new phase of managing Covid, from strict rules and towards personal responsibility*", parents and families are politely asked to continue to line up outside the school when dropping off and picking up their children. Please drop them off at the gate where a member of staff will be there to greet them. Likewise, a member of staff will meet you at the gate at the end of the day. Again, this will be for the first half a term at which point we will review and make changes if appropriate. School is open from 8.50 (8.45 for bus children only). School finishes at 3.25 for bus children and children in Classes R and 1 and children in Classes 2 and 3 will finish at 3.30pm (This is not staggered due to covid but due to how the learning hours of the day are proportioned). Please be assured that children are not missing 5 minutes of their learning time.

Classrooms

On the 6th and 7th September, our staff will be busy with essential training and preparing your child's classroom. From the afternoon of the 7th September, we will upload images and videos of the classrooms onto Class Dojo. It will not be possible to give you images before this time. New parents will receive Class Dojo invites in the summer holidays.

What happens if..

Pupils should not come into school if they have symptoms, have had a positive test result or other reasons requiring them to stay at home due to the risk of them passing on COVID-19 (for example, they are required to quarantine).

If a pupil develops [COVID-19 symptoms](#) whilst in school, however mild, we will contact parents/carers to collect them as soon as possible. Whilst awaiting collection, pupils will wait in our sensory room off from class 1 – you will be asked to collect your child from the back gate (by the steps).

As of July 19th, close contacts will now be identified via NHS Test and Trace and education settings will no longer be expected to undertake contact tracing.



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As with positive cases in any other setting, NHS Test and Trace will work with the positive case to identify close contacts. Contacts from a school setting will only be traced by NHS Test and Trace where the positive case specifically identifies the individual as being a close contact. This is likely to be a small number of individuals who would be most at risk of contracting COVID-19 due to the nature of the close contact. You may be contacted in exceptional cases to help with identifying close contacts, as currently happens in managing other infectious diseases.

From 16 August 2021, children under the age of 18 years old will no longer be required to self-isolate if they are contacted by NHS Test and Trace as a close contact of a positive COVID-19 case. Instead, children will be contacted by NHS Test and Trace, informed they have been in close contact with a positive case and advised to take a PCR test. We would encourage all individuals to take a PCR test if advised to do so.

Class	Entrance to and from school	Times of start and finish
Bus arrivals	Back Gate	8.45 – children go straight to their classroom via their entrance.
Bus departures	Back gate	3.25
Little Angels	Front gate	8.55 and 3.30
Class R	Church gate Back door by class R	8.50 – 9.00 3.25
Class 1	Front Gate Main entrance	8.50 – 9.00 3.25
Class 3	Back Gate Into the MULA	8.50 – 9.00 3.30
Class 2	Back Gate Into Class 3	8.50 – 9.00 3.30

Attendance

School gates open at 8.50 - 9.00am, children are welcome to come to school and start their early morning activities in class. We ask that parents use the designated gate for each class. The registers are taken promptly at 9.00am to start the day. Registers are closed at 9.15. If your child arrives after this time it will be marked as a 'Late' mark which is the same as an unauthorized absence mark.

When a child is absent, please contact the school by 9.30am on each day of their absence.

If you do not call, then Michaela will telephone you to discuss why your child is not in school.

If you need to make dental or medical appointments, please try to do so for out of school hours. If you are unable to do so and the appointment is during school time, you will be asked to provide medical evidence such as an appointment record or letter, etc.



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If you plan on taking your child out of school for a term time holiday – even if just for a day, you will need to complete an absence request form. This can be found on our website <https://rackenfurd-primary.devon.sch.uk/attendance/> or you can contact Michaela for a form to be sent home. You will need to explain your reason for your child's absence to which Sarah Maude will either authorise/unauthorise the absence – depending on the reason and your child's current attendance.

If your child is absent for a prolonged period of time or frequent unauthorized absences, this may alert a “trigger point” with Devon County Council. They will want to know the reason for the absences. School will then be required to follow an absence procedure where you may receive letters followed by intervention and support by the Education Welfare Team at DCC. This could result in parents being fined. Our Education Welfare Officer (EWO) is called Rachel Bell rachel.bell@babcockinternational.com

Flexi School

As you may know, we are a Flexi School and as such are happy to discuss Flexi Schooling your child. Please see the attached link for further information about Flexi Schooling <https://rackenfurd-primary.devon.sch.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Flexi-Schooling-RPS-21.pdf>

Contact with teachers, HoS and Admin

We are a very busy school and staff are needed to be in their classrooms from 8.45am. If you need to get a message to your child's teacher then use Class Dojo or give Michaela a call/email. She will happily pass on a message. If you need to speak to a member of staff please can you make an appointment either by telephone, Class Dojo or email, or, with our admin assistant, Michaela. A member of staff will then phone you at the end of a school day. If you need to speak to Michaela in person in the reception area please do so after all the children across the school have been dropped off, this will be from 9.05 am. Please arrive by the front gate, buzz in as usual. We ask that you wait in the playground as there will be a 'one in one out' procedure in place at reception to avoid congestion.

Mrs. Maude's Availability

I am a teaching head of school with responsibilities to cover teachers while they have their planning, preparation and assessment time (PPA) For a full time member of staff this is 2.5 hours per week. I am very happy to meet with parents and carers or talk over the telephone or zoom/Teams, either contact Michaela or myself to make an appointment.

Safeguarding

If you have arranged for another person to collect your child, you must let school know in advance – please telephone the school to inform us who will be collecting. If you cannot get through on the phone, then please send a message to your class teacher on class Dojo. We will not be able to release a child without your permission.

Please note that Michaela works part time and is not in the office on a Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday afternoon from 2pm.



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Who is working with my child?

Class R (Reception): Mrs. Sharon Hagley, Miss. Mia Horrell, Mrs. Ashdown and Miss. Natasha Hagley

Class 1: (Yrs 1 & 2): Miss Mia Horrell and Mrs. Joss Chamberlain (Mornings only)

Class 2: (Yrs 3 & 4): Mrs. Ellie Denno, Mrs Rebecca Wilcox, (From 2nd half of Autumn term) Mrs. Tracey Taylor

Class 3: (Yrs 5 & 6): Mrs. Rachel James, Mrs. Hannah Wotton and Mrs. Jenny Rodgers

Mr. Alan Odell is our play leader. He is supported by Mrs. Penny Heard, Mrs. Taylor and Mrs. Rodgers who support the children at lunch times. Mrs. Heard also works across the school as a teaching assistant. Mrs. Maude teaches across the school

Mrs. Tracey Taylor also works across the school delivering PSHE, mindfulness and yoga. She is also our mental health and wellbeing champion and works with children across all year groups. She also delivers parent workshops and emotional coaching.

Mrs. Rodgers is a qualified teacher and as such is our first call as cover supervisor, covering for teachers when they are not in school. If she is not available, we would contact a supply agency. We aim to use supply teachers who we already have a good relationship with.

Mrs. Michaela Bundy is our school administrator and also temporary SENdCo admin support. She makes sure that we are all in the right place at the right time doing the right thing!

Mrs Ruth Alpey is our new SENDCo and will be joining us in September. She works across the two primary schools within the Federation. She will be at RPS one or two days a week.

Trainee teachers

This year we have had two amazing trainee teachers working with us. They have both now successfully completed their course and are now fully fledged teachers. Congratulations! We hope to have trainee teachers joining us in September.

Safeguarding Team

Designated Safeguarding Lead: Mrs. Sarah Maude

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead: Mrs. Tracey Taylor

Safeguarding team: Mrs Sharon Hagley, Mrs Sammy Crook

Leadership

Executive Head of Federation: Mrs. Sammy Crook



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Head of school (RPS): Mrs. Sarah Maude
Head of School (HPS); Miss. Demelza Higginson
Lead SENDCo: Mrs. Tania Mayes
SENDCo: Mrs. Ruth Alphey

What does a week at school look like?

We offer a broad and balanced curriculum. On a Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday mornings we front load new learning in English and maths and in the afternoons, other curriculum subjects such as science, history, geography, art, etc are taught as 'projects'. Thursday and Fridays have more of a focus on consolidation, using and applying knowledge, skills and understanding and enrichment of the wider curriculum. PE lessons are on a Thursday and sports enrichment activities are on a Friday.

Wednesday afternoons will focus on aspects of community and worship. On rotation, classes will have 'Messy Church', PSHE and Ukulele lessons. Children will also have weekly French lessons to learn the French language with La Petit French School, with Cecile Jones, <https://www.lapetitefrenchschool.co.uk/> This will be organised as a weekly 30 minute lesson for all classes throughout the year. Cecile is also offering a French Club after school. We hope to be able to restart the "Big Band" with THS and weekly trombone sessions for children in years 4 and 5.

During the week, each class will have a session which will focus on a Nature Curriculum where the seasons, festivals, our environment and community, volunteering, bush craft/forest school and outdoor and adventurous education activities will inspire us in our learning across the curriculum, in particular Science, PSHE, Geography and History.

Friday afternoons will include whole school activities such as collective worship and shared reading. This is followed by our enrichment clubs; for example, yoga and sports activities such as archery, fencing, etc. Other clubs include Lego, chess, sewing, craft, small world, cooking, etc. Children will sign up to a club for half a term. We also run a walking club and take part in the Exmoor Challenge.

Out of school activities and the Blue Peter Badge Scheme

Many of our children are involved in Cubs, Scouts, Brownies, Beavers, Adventurers, many different sports and competing. Children are encouraged to use opportunities in school to achieve their goals, badges, etc. We also encourage children to take part in the Blue Peter Badge Scheme. We are also setting up links with the Children's University.



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Here is a break down of our school day

Class R and Class 1	
Start– 9.00	Registration, Daily Mile, dancing, exercise
9.20 – 10:30	Session 1 & snack time
10:30 – 10:45	Break time
10:45 – 12:00	Session 2
12:00 – 1.00	Lunch in hall/break time
1:00 – 1:10	Registration
1:10 – 1:40	Mindfulness/ Assembly/collective worship, etc
1:40 – 3:10	Session 3
3:25	home time

Class 2 and Class 3	
Start– 9.00	Registration, Daily Mile, dance, exercise
9:30 – 10.30	Session 1
10.30 – 10.45	Break time
10.45 – 12.00	Session 2
12.00 – 12.30	Assembly/mindfulness /collective worship etc.
12.30 – 1.30	Lunch in hall/break
1.30 – 1.40	Registration
1.45 – 3:15	Session 3
3:30	home time

School bags and coats

We have limited space in the classrooms and the hanging areas in corridors. Because of this, we ask that children limit what they bring in from home. They should only need to bring in a water bottle, healthy snack, a packed lunch (if not having school dinners) waterproof coat or hat and sunscreen (dependent on the weather). Some children may need to also bring in a change of clothes. Please bring these items into school in a **small bag or small backpack**. Children must bring a waterproof coat to school as they will be outside during break and lunch time, even in light rain.

Supporting your child with reading: 'home reading' books

Children will read daily in school from our large stock of school reading books and reading schemes. Children reading junior fiction /free reading can select from a wide range of fiction and non-fiction books in our school/class libraries, they may also bring a book in to school from home if they prefer. These books usually stay at school. We encourage children to read for pleasure outside of school so they should also have a book on the go at home! Reading to your children is encouraged at all ages.



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Lunches

Mrs. Jane Phillips, our amazing cook is with us every day to cook delicious hot meals in our own kitchen. She is supported by Sue, our catering assistant. We would love you to support this by signing up your child to have school lunches. These are free to all children in Reception, years 1 and 2. We cater for vegetarians, vegans and all food allergies. If you are in receipt of any benefits you may qualify for "Free School Meals". This means that school will receive the pupil premium grant for your child, which is a significant amount of money (in the thousands). Help us by applying for this top up funding if you think you may qualify. Even if your child is in Reception, years 1 and 2, your child's meal will not be affected as it is free anyway, but your child's education could be as school will have more money to spend on their education, this also includes free music tuition. If you think you may be entitled then please log in to [Devon Citizens Portal](#) which is the quickest and easiest way to apply and will result in you getting an instant decision. Alternatively, call the Education Helpline on 0345 155 1019.

Packed lunches

While we would encourage all children to have a delicious hot school lunch, especially when they are free for all children in years R, 1 and 2, we appreciate that you may prefer your child to have a packed lunch. Please ensure that the food is not in packaging which children are unable to open themselves, e.g. yoghurt tubes which children struggle to open and often put in their mouths before handing to an adult to open.

Classrooms, resources and playgrounds

All children can access the outdoors during the day; at playtimes, lunch times and for taking their learning outside. Classes R and 1 each have a designated outdoor learning area as well as a shared playground to the front of the school. They also have access to a wide range of 'loose parts' play and resources. Children in Classes 2 and 3 share the playground to the back of the school. They also have access to 'loose parts' resources and equipment. All children have access to the MUGA and the village common. Our play leader, Alan Odell and our mealtime assistants (MTAs) support and lead children's play at lunch time. Your child's teacher and teaching assistant (TA) will support them during their morning snack time and break.

All children will have access to continuous provision and also messy/sensory play both inside and out. This will be set out for individuals or in small groups at a time and replenished regularly.

Birthdays

We love to celebrate the birthdays of all our children and staff. We do this by lighting candles around a birthday garland, singing "happy birthday" and usually eating cake or something which children bring in to share. If this is something you would rather your child did not take part in, please let us know and we will be respectful of your wishes.

The Daily Mile

As a school we take part in the daily mile and the golden mile. The daily mile is a good walk around our lovely village. During the CoVid-19 years individual classes have staggered the timings of the Daily Mile. Hopefully from September we will be able to walk the mile as a school once again. Our Reception children



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join in with the Daily mile usually from January and until then they have daily morning exercise "Leap into Life" from 9.10 – 9.20 every morning.

Yoga, mindfulness and dance

We practice weekly yoga, daily mindfulness and dance once a week. If yoga is something that you would prefer your child not to take part in, please can you let us know and we will be respectful of your wishes.

RE, Collective Worship, Assemblies, Church and Messy Church

As a C of E primary school we are a community school inclusive of all religions and non. We teach 'World religious Education (RE) following the Devon RE syllabus, common to all schools in Devon. We attend church on a Wednesday in a collective worship led by Reverend Steph Jeffs. Our collective worship and assemblies run throughout the rest of the week where we look at: values, character, what's happening in the world, how children can get involved (service) and much more. Steph also works with each class (on a weekly rota) with "Messy Church" this is a session exploring bible stories through drama, art and craft activities. Steph used to be a drama teacher so we really welcome her time here at school. We are so pleased that this will continue from September.

Active citizen, school council, social justice groups and community living

Community actions groups will continue to meet monthly and children will also be encouraged to work towards gaining Blue Peter badges. We are also delighted that our year 6 children will be able to resume volunteering in our community shop. We are also excited to be opening up for our legendary Big Breakfasts, community lunches including family lunches and for Little Angels rising 4s. It will be so good to see and eat with you once again.

Home/remote learning (homework)

As we continue in our pledge to cut down on using paper, we will continue to use digital platforms such as Class Dojo, Oak National Academy and BBC bitesize, for home learning. Reading, Spellings and times table/number facts are set as weekly home learning. Older children may also have further subject specific tasks.

Educational visits and visitors

We believe that offering children diverse and culturally enriching opportunities is an important aspect of school life. These also deepen a child's knowledge and understanding about a curriculum subject, wider theme or art form. This has been stifled due to the restrictions of CoVid-19. We are excited and hopeful that as restrictions ease, these wonderful rich experiences will be made available once again to schools. We cannot wait to get back to Exeter museum, RHS Rosemoor Gardens or the Anglo Saxon experience at Escot, etc.

Music Tuition

Mondays and Tuesdays: drumming and Guitar with Ella

Wednesdays: Piano or keyboard with Mandy

Wednesdays: Ukulele lessons with Ella for all children in KS2 and drumming tasters



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All children for whom we are in receipt of the pupil premium funding are eligible for music tuition at no cost. This also applies for a reduction on educational visits and residentials where reductions are available. Another good reason to apply for free school meals if you are eligible.

Reporting to Parents

Sharing your child's progress with you is important. We do this in several ways, throughout the year. Early on in the first term we have a "Meet the Teacher" event, which gives you the opportunity to discuss how the first couple of weeks are going. Once a term you will receive a "Snap Shot" outlining your children's progress. In the Spring Term we host our formal 'parent/teacher event', which can be in person or over the telephone/zoom. In the Summer term you will receive your child's annual report, this is followed by a "Drop-in" session afterschool, an opportunity to talk to your child's teacher about any aspects of your child's learning journey. This may also happen on the telephone or zoom. If your child is in years 2 or 6 you will also receive information regarding SATS in the summer term.

Wrap Around Care

Little Angels are open from 7am to 6pm providing early years nursery care, before, afterschool and holiday care for children in our local community and wider afield. If your child is attending Little Angels before school they will be chaperoned over to school at 8.55am. If they attend after school, your child will be escorted by a staff member at 3.30.

As we get back to our "normal", how can you be involved?

- Your support in school is always welcomed – any time
- Attending celebration assemblies and collective worship (see newsletter for dates and times)
- Reading with children specifically on a Friday afternoon or at another time to suit you.
- Organizing and running an activity or club on a Friday afternoon between 1.45 - 3.15 or any day if Friday is not suitable.
- Join us for the daily mile
- Being involved in PTFA/ organising or supporting fundraising events.
- Donating second hand uniform
- Leading an assembly or talking to children about your work, your culture, your faith, a charity, an achievement, hobby or interest
- Helping with trips and visits
- Offering an afterschool club or one-off activity/workshop/talk/presentation, etc

I think that that is enough for now! We hope you have a splendid summer

With kind regards and best wishes

Sarah and all the team