



15th May, 2017

Dear Parents,

DROP OFF ARRANGEMENTS

You will all be aware that changes were made to the drop off arrangements at the School from last Monday. Most parents have welcomed these changes and I understand that the new arrangements are now running smoothly. But I am also aware that the change caused concern and distress for some parents. I want to thank all parents for their support and understanding as we have made these changes, and to thank those who have given us their views and suggestions, including those who I met at the school last Tuesday.

Every school needs to have rules and arrangements in place for dropping off children. This a busy part of the school day when children pass from the care and responsibility of their parents or carers to the care and responsibility of the school and its staff. We need the process to run smoothly so that the children are settled in their classes and ready to learn and teachers are able to teach, and to ensure the safety of all concerned.

The official policy at Comins Coch for some years has been that parents should leave their children at the reception area at the school entrance. The policy, which covers all aspects of the security and safety of the school site and premises, is reviewed and approved every year by the Governing Body and is available from the school on request.

Many parents and children at the school already left their children at the school entrance. However, a significant number of parents have been accompanying their children into the corridor and/or into their classrooms every day. The school has had concerns about these arrangements, which the changes made from last Monday were intended to address.

Parents are now asked to leave their children at the reception area because:

1. The school is responsible for the wellbeing of all children on the premises from 8.45 am, (except for those children in breakfast club where responsibility starts at 8.00am). Current best practice in all schools is that no child is left unsupervised with an adult who has not been subject to appropriate safeguarding checks. Procedures already ensure that this does not happen when adults visit the school during the rest of the school day, but we could not ensure this when we had large numbers of adults in the premises dropping off their children.
2. As school numbers have grown, the corridor had become very congested with both adults and children. This made it difficult for children to reach their pegs and classrooms quickly and for staff to move around the building. It also represents a significant risk in the event of a fire.
3. Staff have sometimes experienced difficulties in starting classes on time because some adults remain in the classrooms or are slow to leave. Even when adults leave the classroom, they were sometimes found unsupervised in the corridor. Staff also need to be able to prepare properly before lessons start.

Many parents have told us that they share these concerns and the majority have welcomed the changes that have been made. The school's experience is that, after some difficulties on Monday (mainly as a result of the lack of advance notice to parents about the changes, for which the school has apologised), the new arrangements have been working very well. The corridor is no longer crowded and the children are all settled and ready to learn at 9am.

Some parents of children in Dosbarth Derbyn raised concerns about the changes and were worried that their children may be unable to walk down the long and crowded corridor, find their pegs and settle down without supervision. However, with the class teacher greeting children at the reception and support staff assisting pupils along the corridor and with their coats and bags, we are delighted that the younger children have adapted quickly and are managing very well. Some parents also expressed concerns that they might lose contact with teachers and other staff, and with a general sense of what is happening in the classroom, if they are unable to enter the school in the morning.

We have considered these concerns very carefully as we also assess how the new arrangements have worked across the week as a whole. We have concluded that they are working well and that they should therefore continue as outlined below:

1. **All children will be dropped off at the main school reception.** In the coming weeks, we will be making some changes to the physical layout of the reception area by removing the glass partition to make better use of space and relocating the television screen. Foundation phase pupils will be greeted by their teachers. Children in years 3-6 are expected to go from reception to their pegs and classes without assistance.
2. **Parents will continue to be able to meet teachers or the headteacher during the drop off period to discuss any urgent matters relating to their child.** Mrs Ellyw Jenkins will be available at the reception area during the dropping off period to assist parents with messages and arrange appointments with teachers. Parents can of course also telephone or email the school with messages and these will always be forwarded to the relevant member of staff.
3. **We will seek to create new opportunities, outside of the drop off period, for parents to visit classrooms, talk with staff and understand the life of the school.** The school already has regular parents' evenings, and any parent is, of course, always welcome to make an arrangement with the Headteacher or Class teacher to discuss their child's progress. However, we recognise that parents would like more opportunities to engage with the school and we will be writing to you again to explain how we plan to offer this in the coming months.

We believe that the changes we have made or will be making will ensure that the school day starts smoothly, that our children are safe, and that parents can engage with the school when it is appropriate to do so. That was already the case for much of last week and we are very grateful for your support in helping us to achieve this. I hope this letter serves to explain why the changes are necessary and to address some of the concerns which arose. I am always very happy to meet with parents to discuss any aspect of the school's management.

Yours sincerely



Richard Feasey (Chair of Governors)