



**FOSIS**  
Friends of Shirley Infant  
School  
**Charity Number**  
**1081056**



**Shirley Junior  
School PTFA**  
Parents, Teachers & Friends  
Association  
**Charity Number 1108417**

16 July 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

## **RETURNING TO SCHOOL - GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

With the whole world trying to work out how we return to some sort of normality, and our little community trying to work out how we return our kids to schools; emotions are running high, our capacity to cope with challenges is running low and uncertainty about the future is making us all anxious. As a Parent Forum, our role is to work with the school and be the voice of the parents. We wanted to make a statement of support for the schools and all the individuals within our parent/carer community. With this in mind we have created the following “guiding principles” which we would encourage everyone within our community to do their best to uphold; this includes parents, carers, teachers, school leadership and children.

In particular, as we receive and digest all the information about returning to school in September; please consider these guiding principles before you make comments on parent led social media channels or write strongly worded emails to your class representative.

### **Trust the intent**

Our teachers always have and always will have the best interests of our children at heart. Whilst school decisions may sometimes conflict with what you think is best for your child, please remember that they are trying to balance the needs of approximately 630 children across the two schools, each with individual needs. Decisions have been carefully considered by dedicated professionals who are committed to the education and welfare of our children. We should trust that everything they do they do with the best of intentions.

### **Seek to understand**

Given the above, the school is not making decisions on a whim; there is a rationale behind every decision that is being made. If you don't agree with a decision then please stop and ask yourself if you understand why that decision has been made. If you don't understand the rationale then ask the school or your class representative; you're probably not alone and the school will be happy to provide clarification to everyone.

### **Don't shoot the messenger**

Whilst the school is making some decisions, there are a significant number of requirements being placed on them by the Department of Education; it is probable that these requirements are as frustrating for them as they are for you but they can't tell you that!

### **Be kind - always**

Some of our teachers have literally not had a day off since lockdown began, working all hours and reading all available guidance for the benefit of our children. They are people too and each has taken their turn on the emotional rollercoaster that is Covid19 whilst also trying to juggle working, parenting and potentially caring for vulnerable and shielding members of their own family.

Be kind to yourself too, this is an anxious time for everyone and it's totally OK not to feel OK. The school understands how hard this is going to be for children and parents alike, we ask that you try and understand how hard it is for the school staff too.

### **School Community Support**

We're all in this together, so if you have questions or concerns then please do raise them with your class rep who will collate them and feed them back to the school regularly to save the school having to answer the same question 630 times.

Never have we felt such a strong sense of community and our schools are the heart of that community – by working together, guided by these principles, our children will thrive in the safety, security and comfort of the community that is our schools.

We hope you all, and especially our school staff, have a restful summer.

Yours faithfully

*Jen*

*Nicola*

*Jo*

*Sue*

Jen Bleek  
SJS PTFA Chair

Nicola Howarth  
SJS PTFA Chair

Jo James  
FOSIS Chair

Sue Kinch  
FOSIS Chair

On behalf of all Class Representatives