



Headteacher: Miss Rebecca Benjamins (BA.Ed)
Deputy Headteacher: Mr. Lorrain Black (MCCT)
Acting Deputy Headteacher: Miss. Farhana Sultana (B.Sc.)
School Business Manager: Mrs. Kim Edwards (MBA)

Webb Street, London, SE1 4RP
Tel: 020 7771 6121
Email : office@grange.southwark.sch.uk
Website : www.grange.southwark.sch.uk
Twitter: @growwithgrange

Tuesday, 17th May 2022

Dear Parents/ Carers,

As you know, COVID restrictions have been lifted and we have returned to most of the routines and procedures that were in place before the first lockdown in March 2020.

One of these routines has been to return to asking children to **bring their PE kit into school** and **change in class for PE**. This has been the procedure at Grange Primary School and at most primary schools for many years. Children from Nursery to Year 4 have previously changed together in their own class supervised appropriately by their class teacher or by the teacher who is leading their PE lesson. Children in Year 5 and Year 6 have been organised within the year group into boys and girls' groups and changed separately, again supervised appropriately by class teachers or teachers leading PE lessons; this has been because some children in these year groups are beginning to go through puberty and we have been sensitive to how they feel as they become more body conscious. **Moving forward all children will be separated to change for PE from Year 1 – 6.**

One of the reasons that children have been asked to change into their PE kit at school for PE has been for **reasons of hygiene**, i.e. the children learn that when they exercise, they sweat and it is not healthy to wear sweaty clothes or PE kit all day. Children can develop fungal and bacterial infections wearing sweaty clothes; there can also be problems with body odour, especially for older children, and staying in sweaty clothes can cause chills and make children susceptible to cold and body aches.

It has also been the case that changing for PE in school allows younger children to **develop their independence** from parents and learn how to dress themselves, e.g. putting jumpers on, buttoning up shirts, putting shoes on and tying up laces, etc.

When children began to return to school after the lockdown in June 2020, we followed advice from the Local Authority on how to minimise the risk of transmitting the COVID-19 virus between home and school. To help with this, children were discouraged from bringing bags, lunchboxes, books and PE bags to and from home. A decision was made that at Grange Primary School, as well as at other schools, **whilst COVID restrictions were in place, we would allow children to come into school on PE days in their PE kits** and this is what children did throughout the 2020-21 school year.

Whilst we had some concerns about children's hygiene, there were some benefits, the most important of which was the increased time available for teaching PE. Children can be quite slow at getting changed for PE at the start and end of lessons; being already changed for PE meant there was more time available for children to be learning in their PE lesson.

Belong

Believe

Achieve

Whilst these are positive benefits of coming into school already dressed for PE, there were **some drawbacks**. During the last year we have seen a slow and steady **drop off in standards of children wearing school uniform**. As the year went on, some children began coming to school in tracksuits, t-shirts, leggings and trainers every day. Even on PE days, some children weren't wearing our PE kit uniform. The lines between what is correct school uniform and what is correct PE kit uniform were being blurred.

Another issue was that if a PE lesson needed to be postponed at the last minute, it made it **difficult to move PE to another day** if children didn't have their PE kit in school, e.g. if PE is postponed outside because of bad weather.

With COVID restrictions lifted, we weighed up the pros and cons of asking children to either continue wearing PE kit on PE days or return to what was in place before March 2020 with children coming into school with their PE bag and getting changed in class. **We decided that due to the concerns about children's hygiene and also due to the impact that children coming in to school in PE kit was having on the standards of school uniform, we would return to asking children to bring PE kit in and change for PE in school.**

In terms of children changing for PE in school, these arrangements have been in place at Grange Primary School before I arrived in September 2021. **There has never previously been an issue brought to my attention by parents about these arrangements or a safeguarding concern raised around children changing together or staff supervising them whilst changing.** These arrangements were in place when Ofsted carried out their last inspection and inspectors would have observed these procedures in place. These arrangements happen in many schools across England.

- There are very **clear expectations about what children are expected to wear on PE days and on non-PE days** and all children are expected to wear correct school uniform and PE kit uniform
- **Children have the option of taking their PE kit home with them after the lesson to be washed before their next PE lesson.**
- Children in Years 4 and 5 who go **swimming will have to change together** (although in separate male/ female changing areas) and be appropriately supervised by school staff
- Children taking part in **clubs and sports teams may have to change together after school** – some children take part in lots of after-school activities but it will not be possible to wear sports kit to school every day, only on PE days
- **We will review any change to our routines and procedures and may alter them again with notice to parents.**

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely,



Rebecca Benjamins,
Headteacher
17/05/2022

Belong

Believe

Achieve