

**Coronavirus (COVID-19): School reopening arrangements letter to parents**

**RE: Arrangements for school reopening**

Dear Parents and Carers,

I would like to begin by offering a huge ‘thank you’ for supporting the school over recent weeks and for supporting your child with their home learning.

As you will be aware, the government has announced that, so long as they are satisfied that it will be safe enough to do so, schools will begin to reopen for some children from 1st June 2020 for Reception children and Years 1 and 6 children.

We are very much looking forward to seeing many of our children once again, but I would like to reassure you that the safety of our school community is our priority. We recognise that some of you may have concerns about your child returning to school and that for some children another change will be unsettling for them. We also understand that the past weeks will have been challenging for many families. If you would like to talk to us about your child and any concerns you have about their return to school, please – in the first instance – contact Mrs Smith.

I am writing to share with you the arrangements we have implemented and planned for the safety of all staff, pupils and parents.  These arrangements have been put into place following a full risk assessment process and are in line with guidance from the Department for Education. We will, of course, continue to review the arrangements we have implemented and update you with any changes as and when we make them.

I would be grateful if you would read the accompanying pages which should provide you with the information you need to support your child to return to school. I know that a lot of people have expressed their thoughts to me already but, now once you have read our attached proposals, could you please send me an email stating either:

**I will be sending \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to school on Monday 8th June**

**I will not be sending \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to school on Monday 8th June.**

If you decide not to send your child, we will still do our best to support them with home learning as much as possible. If you then change your mind and would like to send them, please get in touch and we will do our best to make the correct arrangements.

Please be assured that the safety measures we are putting in place have been recommended by both our own academy trust and the Department for Education. Implementation of these measures have received the widest possible input from both TPAT and our own school community, including all staff and governors.

We are very excited to be welcoming our children back into school and are absolutely committed to ensuring this transition to a new learning environment is easy as possible and enjoyable for all.

Yours Sincerely

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Nichola Smith

**Introduction**

As we prepare to welcome children back into our school, we are aware that it is not possible to socially distance pupils in school – government guidance states: *“We know that, unlike older children and adults, early years and primary age children cannot be expected to remain 2 metres apart from each other and staff.”* DfE Planning guide for primary schools 14/5/20

However, in our school we are doing all that we can to mitigate risks, and as such we are placing a strong emphasis on measures to reduce mixing between year groups. Each year group will be less than the government guideline of 15 pupils and will form a separate unit (or ‘social bubble’). Drop off/collection arrangements, movement around the school site and all other everyday procedures have been adapted to this end.

**Date for Children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 to return to School:**

**Monday 8th June 2020**

Only staff will be in school for the first week for training and to allow us to make preparations to ensure all arrangements to keep children safe are properly finalised.

**The School Week**

Children will be in school for the **whole day** on each Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday

Children will be in school on **each Friday morning until 12.00**

We have decided that **the school will be shut from 12 each Friday** to allow for a thorough deep clean and to allow teachers their planning and preparation time.

**Classes**

The children will be taught in their year groups in the classroom shown in the table below.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Pupil grouping** | **Allocated room** |
| Children of critical workers/vulnerable pupils in Years 2,3,4,5 | Longships |
| Reception / Year 1 (1st group) | Aire classroom |
| Reception / Year 1 (2nd group) | Brisons classroom |
| Year 6 | Cowloe Classroom |

Please note – depending on numbers attending, we may choose to combine the children based in Longships and Cowloe together, we will be able to confirm this once we know full numbers.

**The School Day**

**Arrangements for the start and end of the school day**

The beginning and end of the school day are the busiest times for children and adults congregating together in one place and maintaining safe distances within normal arrangements can be a challenge. We will therefore stagger the times for drop off and pick up and welcome each year group through their own dedicated entrance. We will also make sure that all the gates are unlocked so that there are plenty of exit points for accompanying adults.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Year group** | **Start time** | **End time** | **Dedicated Entrance / Exit Door** |
| Reception / Year 1 1st group | 9.00 | 2.45 | Aire classroom door (by the adventure playground) |
| Reception year 1 (2nd group) | 8.55 | 2.50 | Brisons fire door in the main playground. |
| 6 | 8.45 | 3.00 | Main entrance |
| Key worker / vulnerable pupils | 8.50 | 2.55 | Main entrance |

**Support requested from Parents:**

In order to maintain good hygiene standards and to minimise the risk of any spread of infection:

- Please ensure your child washes their hands before leaving home for school

- We would like the children to come in wearing clean clothes every day. We do not expect uniform to be worn, just sensible clothes suitable for going outside.

In order to minimise social contact:

- Only one adult should accompany children to and from school and children should be handed over to their teacher at their dedicated entrance.

- Please don’t bring your child or let them attend before their start time

**Arrangements for break times and lunchtimes**

It will be really important for all pupils to have a break from learning and enjoy time outside during the school day. Reconnecting with friends will be an important aspect of pupils settling back into school life. However, to minimise mixing between year groups, we will stagger break and lunch times.

All children will eat in their classrooms, before playing in dedicated areas outside. All tables will be cleaned before and after use. Whenever weather permits, we will eat outside.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Year group** | **Break time / location** | **Lunchtime / location** |
| Reception / Year 1 1st group | When and as necessary using the yard & garden | 12.00 - Classroom then yard / garden |
| Reception / Year 1 2nd group | 10.30 - using the field and playground | 12.00 - Classroom then field and playground |
| 6 | 10.45 - using the field and playground | 12.30 - Classroom then field and playground |

**Support requested from Parents:**

Please provide your child with a named water bottle each day – we will not be using the water fountain and will not be able to provide cups.

Please provide your child with a packed lunch each day (Monday – Thursday).   
We are not able to begin using our caterers yet as the numbers will be too low. If your child is entitled to FSM they will still be eligible for the vouchers.

**Curriculum content**

We understand that what children need at this time is support for their physical and mental health and we intend to take the children out as much as possible – daily walks, trips to the local area (only if quiet enough) and tree planting are just some of the lovely activities that we would like the children to take part in, as well as supporting them in their curriculum subjects.

For the children who return, we would also spend time focusing on all important core skills that they may have found challenging at home. We would assess their current stage and support them in any areas that are needed. We would still do English (reading, writing & spelling) and Maths each day as well as cover topic work in the afternoons. All next term’s topics are based around water so getting outside would enrich this work. The content would broadly match that of the children at home so that we can share ideas and work between those at home and those at school, as well as enabling staff to keep the sense of ‘class community’.

**The Class and Teaching Environment**

I would like to take this opportunity to reassure you that we are doing all we can to ensure that our school remains a positive and stimulating environment in which children can learn and be nurtured. I know that there have been lots of pictures in the press of solitary tables marked out with hazard tape and bare walls. We have not taken that approach.

Whilst we have removed items that can’t be easily cleaned, we have tried to maintain the ‘feel’ of our school as we don’t want children to feel anxious about being in school. Most of our displays will stay up but will be fully wipeable and we hope our school will look much as it did last term.

Tables have been set up to be more socially distanced for the older class, but to soften this effect, we aim to make these inviting by giving the children their own little stationary pack so that they can personalise their ‘desk’ (I wonder if it will be tidier than mine?!).

In the early years we have removed the toys that aren’t easy to clean and put down colourful PE mats to encourage space when playing. We will also be creative with resources (e.g. giving children their very own playdough pack, scissors etc).

We know that in the beginning we will need to do a lot of reminding, but we feel the children can adapt to this new way. We are very proud of the positive relationships that we have with our children and all of our staff want to make sure that stays exactly the same.

After half term, I will post some videos of the school onto our website so that you can see what it looks like and hopefully reassure you in this area.

**Adjustments to the school day**

To minimise the number of pupils and staff assembling for periods of time, we will also make these other changes to the school day:

* Rather than whole school assemblies, teachers will hold in-class assemblies
* Regular toilet breaks will be ‘scheduled’ so that we can clean in between – don’t worry though, they will still be able to go if they need to, we have designated an adult toilet for this and it will be cleaned after each use.
* PE lessons will be sensitively adapted to ensure social distancing.
* We are taking advice from Sport England on adapting our playtimes. Including some socially distanced games.

**Transition from Year 6 to Year 7**

We know this is a really important time for our Year 6 pupils as they are preparing to move to secondary school in September.  Whilst we can’t conduct any on-site visits to secondary schools we will still be doing everything that we can to support all the children to be ready.  We will:

* Liaise closely with our secondary schools to make sure they know all of the important information about each child.
* Provide special lessons and guidance for year 6 about transferring to secondary school.

We will answer any questions that the children have and support them with any anxieties so that they can make the best possible start.

**School Premises: Creating and maintaining a safe school environment**

For everyone’s safety, these changes add to the preventative measures we previously put in place to minimise the spread of infection as per the advice from the government. The measures in school are:

* Displaying coronavirus infection control measures information posters around the school.
* Encouraging good hygiene by promoting the importance of handwashing for at least 20 seconds with warm water and soap in the following circumstances:
  + Before leaving home
  + On arrival at school
  + After using the toilet
  + After breaks and sporting activities
  + Before food preparation
  + Before eating any food, including snacks
  + Before leaving school
  + At regular intervals throughout the day
* Installing alcohol-based hand sanitiser dispensers that contain at least 60 percent alcohol throughout the school
* Ensuring pupils and staff understand that they must cover their cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue away
* Placing the children in ‘bubbles’ whereby they remain in the same location with the same children and the same staff (as much as possible) to avoid mixing with too many children.
* Ensuring frequently touched objects and surfaces are cleaned and disinfected more regularly than usual
* Reducing the resources in class – we will be introducing the toys on a rota system so that they can be continually cleaned after use.
* Adapting the corridor with floor markings (like a road) so that children can be supported in social distancing.
* Adapting our early years environment with wipeable mats to encourage children to play in an appropriate space.
* Staggering arrival, break, lunch and home times to support social distancing outside the school
* Taking children outside regularly
* Providing children with their own stationary pack that will contain everything they need through the day
* Calling NHS 111 if someone becomes unwell, isolating any unwell people in a separate room (the library) and providing a separate toilet, where possible.

**Support requested from parents:**

To help us I would ask that you continue to encourage good infection control practices at home, such as thorough handwashing, and that you continue to talk to your child about the things they can do to discourage the spread of infection.

Should your child feel unwell during the school day, they will wait (accompanied) in the library until they can be collected from school. Please ensure that we have correct contact information for you if you are needed to collect your child at short notice.

In line with the current NHS and government advice, you should keep your child at home if they develop coronavirus symptoms for a period of seven days.  Symptoms include a high temperature, or a new, continuous cough and a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste – this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal.  Where symptoms continue after seven days, or begin to worsen, you should call 111.

If someone in your child’s household has symptoms, your child must self-isolate for 14 days from the day the other person’s symptoms started. This is because it can take 14 days for symptoms to appear. More information regarding symptoms and actions can be found on the NHS website (<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>).

If you think your child may have been exposed to or has coronavirus, or if your child receives a positive test result for coronavirus, please contact the school on 01736 871392 at the earliest opportunity.

**Support for pupils and families**

We do not underestimate how difficult the recent weeks have been for us all and we all will have been touched in some way by the coronavirus pandemic. We recognise the need to focus on pupils’ emotional wellbeing as well as their return to learning. With this in mind, we will provide the following support for children once they return to school.

* Mrs Hawkins and Mrs Long are available to support with special activities from our Trauma Informed Schools Programme.
* Mrs Smith & Mrs Garbutt are available as safeguarding leads to discuss any concerns you may have.
* Mrs Thomas is available as our SENDCO to support you any concerns you may have with either your child’s academic, physical or emotional well being
* Mrs Pickard is able to support some of our SEN pupils with social stories or anything else they might need to reintegrate back into school.

**Support for Children at Home**

Our school staff have been placed on a rota to ensure that we have adequate teaching cover for children returning to school and those who are still home learning. There will always be a safeguarding lead available both on and off site and a point of call identified for anyone who needs help and support either online or on the phone.

Please remember, if you need support during this time, the following agencies are available:

**Samaritans** – call free 24 hours a day on 116 123

**National Domestic Abuse Helpline** – call for free and confidential advice, 24 hours a day on 0808 2000 247

**Shelter** provide free confidential information, support and legal advice on all housing and homelessness issues if you call 0330 0536 083 (please note, this is not a free phone number and your call will be charged). A free webchat is available at <https://england.shelter.org.uk/get_help/webchat>

Please also note that there are lots of other resources and agencies signposted on our website