

Start as we mean to go on

Dear Parents and Carers

I am aware that, with all the discussion in the media at present, some of you may be wondering what will be happening when school reopens. The good news is that basically we already had our plans in place before the summer break. The bad news is I don't think I actually wrote it all down and formally told you!

We are working on the following principles:

- Every child needs to be in school
- We want to do everything we can to ensure that every child can have continuous education on site for the full academic year

If we start with this aim then there are 3 major risks to achieving this:

1. We get an infection on site which means that we need to close all or part of the site
2. The staff get sick and can't teach
3. There is a local or national lockdown

The scientists seem confident that for primary age children the risks either of contracting or passing on the virus are very small – and that they are potentially at much greater harm by missing out on the richness of academic and social learning that school provides. Those children who returned to school in the summer term showed us that they were hungry to be back in school, and very, very sensible about needing to have some new routines to make this possible. I'm not worried about all the children being in school.

I am however worried about getting them in and getting them home again! The scientists have been consistent in the message that the biggest risks come from adult to adult transmission. Unfortunately, whereas the children are in the habit of doing exactly what I say as soon as I say it, the same cannot be said for the adults! Where adults congregate together the virus and spreads – and our problems could start. Our biggest 'pinch-points' are

- Pick-up and drop-off times
- Breaks and lunchtimes where staff congregate in staffrooms

Deciding what to do about this has been tricky – and involves us all working together to change our behaviours (even when it means doing things we don't want to do) so that we can, hopefully, succeed in keeping the school open and the children learning happily together as they should be.

Below is a brief summary of what we will actually be doing – most of which we fully road-tested in the summer term.

Principles for safe running of the school

Everyone

- Not coming to site if unwell
- Washing hands regularly
- Doing 'catch it, bin it, kill it'
- Keeping the 'bubble' of people that you are in close physical contact with to a minimum
- Engaging fully with test and trace and quarantine expectations
- Following COVID guidance when not in school!!!!

These are the '**big hitters**' – if we did nothing else we would still have a good chance of keeping the virus out

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Keeping the site safe:

- Controlling adult access to the site rigorously
- Strict hygiene measures
- Infection management controls
- Additional cleaning

More details about this can be found on our website in the 'support during school closure/policies section

Keeping children safe: limiting the numbers of people that children come into CLOSE contact with

- Children kept in year group bubbles (years 1 and 2 are counted as 1 bubble) of 120 children
- They will be taught in their own classrooms with their own class
- Not sharing equipment
- Assemblies mainly in the classroom OR as a single year group in the hall
- Staggered break and lunchtimes so that children from different year groups do not mix
- Year groups to have their own sets of PE and other physical resources which are cleaned regularly

Keeping adults safe

- Staggered drop off and pick up times, and use of additional entrances and exits. *I will be honest with you – this is the part I am most worried about! Please, please, please read the letter about it and return your form to the class teacher on the first day each child returns to school!*
- **All adults (staff and parents) are requested to wear face coverings at drop-off and pick-up times**
- Parents requested to keep 1m+ distance when dropping off and picking up and to vacate the school site swiftly to minimise the time that adults congregate in large numbers
- Creation of additional staff refreshment and break spaces
- Restricting the number of adults within these spaces
- **During any time when there are lots of adults gathered, or where adults regularly work across 'bubbles' face coverings will be worn when social distancing is compromised**

I know that the 'face coverings' issue is a political hot-potato at the moment. I've got a really good analogy about why adults needs to do some things that children don't but they don't need to worry about that. I'm going to be sharing it with my staff on Tuesday on our INSET day – but if I tell you now it will be a massive 'spoiler alert'! I will share it with you on Tuesday afternoon so you can talk it through with your children before they start school.

In the meantime:

- If you and your children are well we look forward to seeing you back in school
- If you and your children are in quarantine (either because you are unwell OR because you have returned from holiday in a place that requires it) please let the office know and we look forward to seeing you back when the quarantine has ended
- If you haven't yet filled in our home online devices survey please do so
https://www.surveymonkey.com/collect/?sm=O2L3S8OXgjYzthI9wRR1_2B0cgT8Xt2kjN2fcOHWDiWWfdzP_2FTVDkuPPy3ITv31IY

And enjoy the last few days of the holiday – it's going to be a busy year!

Best wishes

Sarah Lewis

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