

Thursday 28th May 2020

Dear Parents,

I would like to begin by thanking you all for your patience these past few weeks. Guidance from the Government has been updating and changing continuously and this evening, the Prime Minister confirmed that the government has decided that its five tests for lifting lockdown have been met and that children may start returning to school.

The Government has urged a '*cautious and phased return*' for pupils. We will be offering a carefully managed and phased return to school for the children in the identified year groups - Reception and Year 1 by following a 'Step Approach' which I have outlined below. The children of Keyworkers and those currently accessing school support, who have been coming into school since March 23rd will come in as usual on June 1st. There have been many changes to both the physical layout of the building and the procedures we follow in school. All of these are to minimise the risk to children and staff. These systems have been put in place to minimise the risk from the virus by keeping children in protected groups known as 'bubbles'. This is the method proposed by the government for social distancing in schools. The government does not expect us to keep the younger children 2m apart from each other but are asking us to limit their contact with others whilst also adopting rigorous hand and respiratory hygiene. We will be adopting the model proposed by the government and their medical advisors of keeping children in a 'family' group or 'bubble' of not more than 15.

Each group will:

- have at least one member of staff who will work with them and no other group of children;
- remain apart from children in other groups/bubbles during their time at school;
- have their own desk space and equipment where appropriate although this will be adapted with our younger children
- be allocated a single classroom space as their own which children and staff from other bubbles/groups will not enter and
- have an outdoor area allocated to them so they can have playtime outside without coming into contact with children in other bubbles.

This arrangement will allow us to minimise any spread of the virus between bubbles and allow children to socialise and learn with their peers within their bubble. In the event that a child or adult in a bubble shows symptoms of the virus, they will be sent home and asked to take the test for COVID-19. If the test is positive, all the children and staff in that child's bubble will be sent home and asked to isolate for 14 days.

When we are satisfied that Step 1 (see table) has been met, we will invite the first year group in. Following government guidance, this would be Year R (Early Years). The year group will be set up in 6 bubbles, with no more than 15 children in each. They will be using the Early Years and Year 1 classrooms. The Early Years children from the Keyworker Group will join their year group. The children and the adults will remain in the same bubble all day.

Once this routine is established safely with the first small group, we will welcome back Year 1 pupils when we consider it safe enough and they will follow the same routine.

I hope you understand that we wish to manage this return as carefully as possible and ensure that every child has a safe and appropriate experience, while minimising the spread of the virus in the school community. *Whilst I am unable to be specific regarding actual dates, I will keep you fully informed of each Step as we move through.*

All schools in the Academy Trust will be following this Step Approach to return – each Step will be reviewed before the next Step is actioned to ensure we are confident of safety.

Step 1	Complete deep cleaning and staff orientation, preparing for opening. Sensitive re-orientation for key worker groups developing routines and refining and testing the bubble delivery model with ongoing risk assessment
Step 2	Once the structure and routines are secure with key worker groups, we will welcome the first full year group (Reception) using government priorities and establish the model with them and continue dynamic risk assessment
Step 3	Once the structure and routines are secure with the first full year group we will welcome the second full year group, Year 1 using government priorities and establish the model with them developing routines and refining and developing the bubble delivery model with ongoing risk assessment
Step 4	Reflect on and revise strategies and consider possibilities for wider opening

Online learning and teacher phone calls to families will continue for Year 2 pupils. There will also be online learning for those children in Early Years and Year 1 who have been unable to return to school for health reasons or personal circumstances.

School will close for all year groups, except the Keyworker children at 1.00 every Wednesday to enable a thorough clean to take place.

There are some very clear rules and expectations for children returning:

- All children must be brought to and picked up from school by one adult only. Children should be taken to their own entrance and line up using the social distancing markers. Staff will be available to direct parents and children
- Children should not wear school uniform. Please ensure that children wear sensible footwear so they can play and work outside. We ask you to shower your child as soon as they get home and wash their clothes. To help prevent the spread of the virus, children should not wear the same clothes two days in a row.
- Parents will only be allowed in school by appointment. Please email or ring the school if you have any concerns and a member of staff will aim to contact you as soon as possible.
- Children should bring a packed lunch box and a coat, if required, but nothing else – no toys at all please.
- Parents will be texted to confirm the name of the allocated class bubble before the children return.
- Early Years children will have a staggered start between 8.45 and 9.15am and finish between 2.45 and 3.00pm
- Year 1 timings will be confirmed once the Early Years children have settled safely.

Any deliberate spitting, coughing or biting will not be tolerated. Any child who refuses to remain in their Class Bubble will be sent home in the interests of safety for everyone.

My thanks as ever to you all for your continued support. It has been such a challenging time and your kind comments and thoughtful emails have been tremendously encouraging. Our main priority is of course the safety of all our pupils, staff and community and I am grateful to you all for your cooperation and understanding at this time.

With best wishes,

Mrs J Cooper
Headteacher