

Dear Parents,

Reception class reopening: please read this information carefully.

I hope you are well and enjoying the sunshine. I am writing to you to provide more information about the return to school for our Reception children. This will allow you to make an informed decision about whether to send your child back to school on Monday 8th June.

I am asking parents to let me know (via the return to school form link below) whether their child is returning to school by 3.30pm on Friday 29th May. Children will not be able to join the provision later in the term, unless there are exceptional circumstances. If I have not heard from parents by that deadline, I will assume that your child is not coming back to school at this time.

We have to ensure that our planning is robust and ratios guaranteed, and can only do that if we know which children will be in school. Please use the following link to our [return to school form](#) to record your decision. The usual attendance protocols will not be in effect over the summer term, so please make the decision based on what is best for your child, which I know you will do!

We have been very busy planning how we can welcome children back to the school as safely as possible. Guidance from the Government, teaching unions, and sharing best practice with other schools, has supported us in preparing for children to return.

As you can imagine, it has been a new challenge with a great many aspects to consider. We have been completing our own risk assessments and action plan, based on the professional advice that we have been given. The details outlined in this letter should be received cautiously; the new systems being introduced will be reviewed daily, and our plans are dependent on a constantly changing local and national picture and may need to be altered due to circumstances outside of our control.

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. Please be reassured that the emotional wellbeing of our children remains our utmost priority. We have provided training for staff and researched a broad collection of resources to help support children both at home and as they return to school, but the school will seem very different and it is important that the changes are shared with children before they come back.

Thank you in advance for your understanding, as ever, in this uncertain situation, which we know has also been incredibly challenging for families to manage at home.

Changes that families need to know:

Smaller Class Sizes

The children will be split into groups or 'bubbles'. We have planned for four groups, or 'bubbles', but may need fewer depending on how many children come back to school. There will be a maximum of 15 children in each bubble. The children will be allocated to their teacher when we know the numbers of children returning. We will consider friendships and children's particular needs as well as academic abilities, so we have a balanced mix of children within each bubble.

The children will stay in their groups at all times. They will have playtime and lunchtime in the same groups. All lessons will be delivered in the classrooms or the playground, apart from PE lessons which will take place in the hall or outside if the weather is nice. The groups have been timetabled to spend time in the Reception outdoor areas and in the playgrounds.

Each group / bubble will have a new temporary name.

School Timings

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 have implemented the following measures for when pupils return to school. Staggered entry for the start of the school day, which means children will be invited to come in at different times. Each group will be given a start time to come to school and a time to be collected. Some children would have 9.15am – 2.30pm as their school day and the others would have 9.30am – 2.45pm. We will confirm timings when we have the numbers of children returning.

School will open to Reception children from Monday to Thursday. On Fridays, teachers will have their planning, preparation and assessment time and children will not come in.

Location

The children will be in their groups in the classrooms on the ground floor. We will use the two Reception classrooms and initially the two Year 1 classrooms, so all children are on the same level. We will have access to the bottom hall, the Reception outdoor area, the Nursery outdoor area and the main playground.

Outline of the Day

The curriculum may not be fully implemented as normal, but we will endeavour to ensure that lessons are age-appropriate, engaging and purposeful.

Reception classes will have a maximum of 15 children and 2 adults per class (one teacher and one teaching assistant). In line with Government guidance we will remove soft toys, toys that are difficult to clean, rugs and any shared resources (construction equipment, maths resources, book corner books, home corner toys, cushions, outdoor play equipment etc.) from our setting. We will not have carpet time.

We have planned a Reception timetable that allows for regular use of our outside space for all children, as we know how important this is for children's wellbeing. Each class will have a designated time to be outside and they will remain with the children in their group; they will not mix with other Reception children. Outside activities will also be organised to minimise physical contact between children. We will organise games, circuits, races etc. Groups / bubbles will have their own hoops, cones and balls to play with, but they will not be able to play with construction resources, in the sandpit, water play area or in the sand kitchen.

The day will be structured to allow time for plenty of stories and poems to be read and discussed, and will include many other activities such as literacy, maths, whole class RWI, handwriting, yoga, singing, PE and games to promote PSED. In addition to these more formal activities, children will be able to use their resource pack, when inside the classroom to draw, write, build and construct.

Reception children will continue to be allocated their RWI book using Google Classroom as we cannot send RWI books home.

Google Classroom Home Learning Support

As teachers will be working in school from the 8th June, they will no longer provide literacy, maths and creative activities on Google Classroom from that date. If you decide not to send your child to school, we will provide you with a list of resources and websites to help you support your child. As mentioned above, RWI books will continue to be allocated via Google Classroom.

Resources and Equipment

The classrooms will be reorganised so that the children are spread out, 2 metres apart. Classrooms have been measured. Children will be sitting one per table. Spare tables and furniture have been removed (wherever possible). Certain resources will be covered or removed so children do not touch or share resources. Individual plastic zip wallets of resources will be prepared and given to each child. Activities and tasks have been planned that do not require sharing of equipment. Any equipment that has to be shared will be first sanitised before another child uses it.

Hygiene

Washing hands will be timetabled throughout the day. Children will be taught the new rules and routines as soon as they are back to school. Children will wash hands first thing in the morning, before they start their

first lesson, and throughout the day. Plenty of cleaning and sanitising products have been purchased which are available in every classroom, in the halls, office etc. Each classroom will have a hygiene station and a wall-mounted hand sanitiser gel dispenser.

Classrooms and toilets will be cleaned in the morning, at lunchtime and after school. The cleaning rotas have been amended to enable this to happen.

Bringing Things to and From School

To minimise cross contamination, we are looking to minimise the number of items brought to and from school. Children should only bring their water bottle and a packed lunch. All water bottles and packed lunches must be clearly labelled with your child's name. No other items must be brought in, so no bookbags, toys or books etc.

Bikes and scooters

Children are not allowed to bring bikes and scooters into school.

Lunch

Please provide a packed lunch for your child with a bottle of water. Please make sure the bottle is labelled with your child's name. Please ensure that any food is in easy to open containers, so that your child can do it themselves (but of course we will help them if they are totally stuck).

Fruit snack

We will continue to have fruit snack time, but the fruit will be satsumas or bananas. It will be washed before being given to the children.

Clothing

Children need to wear clean clothes each day and children must not wear shoes with laces

Playtimes and Lunchtimes

These will be staggered throughout the day with children staying within their own group / bubble and allocated to a specific area within the playground. There will be a rota for zones in the playground so children can take advantage of all parts of the playgrounds during the course of the week. Games that allow social distancing (such as leaping from spot to spot, drawing with chalk, use of big skipping ropes with staff holding the rope and children jumping) will be promoted. Any equipment will be for an individual's use only (for example, each child will have their own, named bean bag which they can keep in their zip wallet.)

Individual equipment, e.g. hula hoops, will be sanitised after each group (10 hula hoops per group so children do not have to share equipment within one group.)

Protective Measures we are Taking in Light of Coronavirus (COVID-19)

First and foremost, it goes without saying that the safety of your child and of our staff is our top priority. We are working hard, following the latest Government guidance, to develop and implement a number of new ways of operating. This will allow us to open as safely as possible, focusing on measures that will help limit the risk of coronavirus transmitting within our setting.

Some of the steps we are taking in readiness for reopening include:

- Asking that anyone who is displaying coronavirus symptoms, or who lives with someone who does, not to attend the setting. That includes children and staff who work here.
- Keeping our children in small groups with as much consistent staffing as possible, and minimising contact with other groups around the setting.
- Cleaning our hands more often than usual. We have developed routines to ensure children understand when and how to wash their hands, making sure they wash them thoroughly for at least 20 seconds using running water and soap and dry them thoroughly, or use alcohol hand rub or sanitiser ensuring that all parts of the hands are covered.
- Wall-mounted hand sanitiser dispensers at each gate and in each classroom and room in the school.
- Ensuring our children understand good respiratory hygiene by promoting the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach and ensuring a good supply of tissues and bins throughout the setting.
- Implementing an enhanced cleaning schedule, ensuring surfaces touched by children and staff are cleaned regularly and throughout the day, including table tops, door handles and play equipment.
- Asking parents and carers to physically distance from each other and from staff when dropping off and collecting their children and to limit drop off and collection to one parent or carer per household.

- Asking children not to bring toys or other items from home to the setting, unless this is essential to their health and wellbeing
- Displaying posters around the school on infection control measures: hand-washing technique and timetable, hand sanitising, respiratory hygiene (how we sneeze and cough), individual packs of equipment and regular cleaning around the school etc.

As an important part of our school community, I would ask that you continue to encourage good infection control practices, such as thorough handwashing, at home and keeping your child informed about the things they can do to discourage the spread of infection.

Please also prepare your child for their return to school by explaining the changes described in this letter. This is particularly relevant for young children, so that they can be prepared for social distancing at school.

As per 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 new, continuous cough
- a high temperature
- loss of smell or taste

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, please contact the school at the earliest opportunity. Please remember that any children who display symptoms of Covid-19 will be isolated and sent home as soon as is possible. Parents and carers must be available throughout the day in case you are needed immediately to collect your child.

What can Parents and Carers do to help?

Parents will not be able to come into the school building. We would ask that only one parent brings their child to school and with no other siblings. If you need to talk to the teacher about anything in the morning, please call the school or email. Please leave the school grounds as soon as possible and do not hold conversations with other parents and carers at these times. Please prepare your child for their return to school by explaining the changes described in this letter.

Conclusion

I hope that this letter has given you the information you need to understand what arrangements we have made to enable children to return to us on 8th June. We are looking forward to welcoming the children back and I hope that you are assured that we have taken all possible steps to ensure safety for all in our setting.

I will send confirmation details to families who have said their child will be returning, on Monday 1st June.

If you have any questions, please let me know.

Best wishes
Karen



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