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13.5.2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

Since the Prime Minister's announcement on Sunday night there has been some guidance released for schools and some for parents.

The link to the parent guidance is:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers/reopening-schools-and-other-educational-settings-from-1-june>

The new guidance may well change as some that was released on Monday had already changed by today, but I have summarised below some of the key information that has come out to schools and how it affects us. I think it is really important that you are aware of this and how school will be a very different place to the one the children left before Easter.

- From 1st June at the earliest, Nursery, Reception, Yr 1 and Yr 6 may be back. We still don't know if those children are expected back all day, 5 days a week or whether they can come back part-time. Other year groups may be back later in the term.
- Children can be in classes of up to 15 children but they still need to be approx. 2 m apart. Therefore, in our school most classes will need to be split into groups of approx. 10 children.
- Children need to stay in that group of 10 and with that teacher and/or teaching assistant all the time. There can be no swapping of staff during the day or across the week. This means if classes are in full time, with classes being split into groups many children will not have their own class teacher.
- It is likely that school dinners can be provided but children will have to eat lunch in their classrooms and be supervised by a designated MTA.
- Classroom surfaces have to be as clear as possible with no soft furnishings or toys which can't be regularly wiped down. Access to ICT will also be limited unless it can be easily cleaned between uses or kept just for that group.
- The playground and field will only be accessible on a rota. All outdoor play equipment has to be taped off as it cannot be cleaned between uses.
- Staff are being told not to wear PPE (unless a child is unwell) – however as a Headteacher, if any member of my staff (or a child) wishes to wear PPE I will not stop them.
- As children have to be kept within their groups of 10 we are unlikely to be able to reopen Breakfast or After School Club as children would then be mixing with other groups.
- The expectation for social distancing is that we do our best. Children will be sat at desks in class but for younger children and when children do get their time outside, even in a group of 10 it will be impossible.

- If a child or member of staff shows symptoms all the group are sent home and cannot return until the person with symptoms has been tested. If the test is positive then all the group need to self-isolate for 14 days or be tested.
- The government is encouraging parents to send their children in but there will be no fines or consequences for parents who choose to keep their child at home for the rest of this term.

Just a few of the many questions we are awaiting information on:

- With children needing to be split into groups of 10 this means the children in Nursery, Reception, Yr 1 and 6 and our key worker children may not all be able to return on 1st June as we do not physically have the required spaces in the building. We certainly wouldn't be able to take in further classes if these restrictions are still in place. The guidance says to prioritise key worker children and then certain classes and others can go to other schools – surely that is not satisfactory? Also from meetings with other local Headteachers they wouldn't have space either.
- Can classes be split into groups and each come back part-time e.g. if Yr 6 are split into 3 groups of 10 can they come in on separate days? If each group came in on a different day they could all have their own teacher. If children come back in on different days there is also more flexibility to have more children in school and to have more time outside.
- Children will still have to share toilets, we can clean them regularly but it is not feasible to clean them after every use – is this safe?
- What about children with SEND who cannot stay in a classroom all day but need sensory breaks outside or in other areas of the school?
- If a teacher cannot return to work as they fall into a particular category who can cover them? We can't use supply if they have come into contact with other schools. Currently we are being told that the class can be covered by a teaching assistant with planning provided for by another teacher and if that isn't possible maybe that class can't come back at all – is that really satisfactory?
- Workers at the local recycling centre are being told to wear visors, masks, gloves and stay at least 2m away from the public, yet children and staff can come back in and mix within a group of up to 15 without anything, is this safe?
- We are still being told to keep key worker children separate. How will this work if their class is in? How will they feel if they are kept separate?
- What will be the mental health impact on children coming in but not being with all their class and maybe not their teacher and having limited time away from their desks?
- How can home learning continue if teachers are back in working full time? Currently we are being told to direct parents to the government Oak Academy site or BBC bite size but that is not personalised in any way to our children.
- We need to look at staggered drop off and pick up times. What about if there are siblings? If all classes were back, that could create a huge variation in start in finish times.

I'm very aware this doesn't add all the clarity you need but it is what we have at the moment. Please know I am doing everything I can to get the answers we need to find out if a) it is safe enough for our children to be back and b) if it is safe enough with the changes that have to be made, is it ok for their mental health to send them back.

I really want the children back in school but it is more important that they are safe and that they remain mentally well.

I would like to clarify that after half term we will continue to be open five days a week for keyworker children, as at present.

I am also sending out a survey to gauge rough numbers of parents who plan to send their children back. This is not to hold people to their decision but to get a rough idea of numbers so we can plan. I would be grateful if as many people as possible complete it.

The link is: <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/B5FG3Q9>

I will send out more information as we have it.

Best wishes

Nicky Taylor-Bashford