

Thursday 14th May, 2020.

Dear Parents and Carers,

We have all seen the Prime Minister's plans to begin to partially open primary schools from 1st June at the earliest. Since the 'roadmap' announcement made on Sunday, there have been very detailed documents produced by the government on Monday and Tuesday, explaining what schools must do to get ready for the first groups of children to return. I have studied them in great detail and held a meeting with the Leadership Team. The other staff are also meeting in groups and putting things in place ready to welcome our first children back. I can therefore give you some initial guidance about what our first steps will be. Obviously, the preparation and organisation of re-opening the school in a format which has never been done before and putting in place Health and Safety measures to protect children and staff is an enormous and time-consuming task. So, please understand that there will be further measures and guidance 'drip-fed' to you as we get further along this journey.

As you know, on June 1st, our school is still on half-term holiday. So, when you hear about a possible return to school on June 1st, please note that for our school, it would be June 8th. Every other announcement made by the government is also likely to be therefore, one week behind the dates announced on the news.

You will also receive a short electronic questionnaire to complete today. It is very brief and the results of the survey are essential for us to be able to plan which children will be returning to school and who will not. Without this information, we cannot provide the groupings of children or plan for school meals. Therefore, I ask that you think about your answers and discuss them with your family and then **return the survey to us by midnight on Sunday 17th May 2020**. We will initially allocate places to those who respond and consider our special needs provision from what you tell us you need.

Finally, the government have made it clear that there will be no penalty to any parent or carer who decides they do not wish their child to return to school. There is an understanding that many families are still shielding or are very concerned about their children being re-introduced to other children and adults. Therefore, should you wish your child to remain at home, there will be no fines or court action imposed upon you.

General Information

1. After risk assessing classrooms, we can only have groupings of 8 children with a teacher in the classroom (but no Teaching Assistant) to allow for social distancing. This means that we will need to timetable children to attend school on certain days and sessions. We are currently discussing how to manage this. However please note that your child is not guaranteed to be with friendship groups (unless we can organise this) and they are not guaranteed to have their usual teacher. Please can you discuss this with your child so they know?



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Mrs J.M. Goodfellow
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Raising Pupil Aspirations.

2. Lessons will be very different to what your child has experienced before. Please discuss this with them to prepare them. For example, there will be no paired or group work and no working in close proximity to the Teacher or Teaching Assistants. So, for example, reading to an adult is not likely to happen in school.
3. Children will be social distancing and will need to understand this concept before coming back to school.
4. Children cannot use public water fountains and school water bottles so please provide your child with one or two bottles of water each day.
5. Government guidance says children are not required to wear face masks and states that Early Years children are not able to manage face masks themselves. Taking them off and putting them on again causes further risk. If you wish your child to wear a face mask, we have no objection to that, but ask that you get them used to wearing one at home, in preparation for managing their own mask at school.
6. We expect all children to spend a lot of time outside of the classroom so ask that you send them to school in trainers and not school shoes. They also need a coat every day as the weather changes quickly and children will have to be ready for this.
7. Children must change their clothes every day after returning home and immediately shower or bath once home. Because of the need to wear fresh clothing each day, we understand that this will put pressure on families to continually wash, dry and iron school uniform. Therefore, until further notice, children can wear non- uniform, so that unnecessary stress on families can be avoided.
8. Free School Meal families will still receive their vouchers at home, as now, if their child does not attend school. But, please note that if you begin to send your child to school, they will have to be reassessed for their eligibility for their entitlement to vouchers. Any Free School Meal child attending school will receive a meal free of charge. A lot of discussion is taking place around this issue at the moment and it looks likely that the meals will be in the style of a packed lunch and we are uncertain (until we know how many children are likely to return to school), about whether the meals can take place in the hall or whether they might need to be delivered to classrooms.
9. I am currently assessing our staffing levels and who is available to work. There is union guidance to staff which opposes the advice of the government and I await the outcome of decisions that will be made by others, before I know how many staff are available and how many groups of children we can accommodate.
10. We ask that parents and carers do not enter the school yard areas and under no circumstances must they gather in groups at the school gates. It is looking likely that we are going to have to stagger entry and exit times to prevent large groups of people at the gates.

Year 6 and Year 1 Children

Please let your child know that they will be allocated a new desk, situated away from others and it might, unfortunately, not be in their usual classroom space. Lessons will take place with a Teacher or Teaching Assistant and will be organised in a way the adult can manage the social distancing expectation – so, please let them know, it might feel a bit different.

Children must bring a coat, one or two bottles of water and no bag. PE kits and reading bags are not allowed as they will not be essential. No lockers or pegs will be used at all so children will keep their belongings with them inside the classroom.



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If your child brings a packed lunch, it will remain with them in the classroom. No unnecessary items are allowed.

At break times, the children will not be able to sit or play in close proximity to their friends or classmates. They must social distance. Please talk to your child about this as we feel children might be distressed if we have to constantly remind them about this expectation. If they want to bring in their own playtime toy, such as a skipping rope or ball, they can do but they are responsible for it at all times. No valuable items please.

Children will be left at the gates by parents and carers and enter their own classroom through their own classroom door until told which classroom they will subsequently use.

We will do our best to ensure the environment is as child- friendly as possible whilst managing health and safety expectations at the same time.

Early Years (Nursery and Reception) Children

Early Years children will be handed over at the school gates rather than parents and carers coming to the school doors. Adults will be there to welcome you. This is going to be a significant change for all of our youngest children and I understand that this is going to be challenging for us all. Young children find separating from an adult difficult at the best of times and new measures will mean we are expecting this to be upsetting for some children and their parent/carer. If your child is not able to separate from an adult at the gates, I will unfortunately have to ask that you take your child home, as staff will not be allowed to cuddle and comfort your child in the same way as they have done previously. The Early Years staff and I offer our apologies for this, but we do have to adopt some difficult changes to make the environment safe for all.

Children in the Early Years are likely to find the new version of school more challenging than the older children because they will have little understanding of the consistent social distancing message we need to give. Please could you talk to them about how to social distance so they are familiar with the idea of staying away from others in their group?

Many of the play activities will take place outside, so please make sure your child is dressed appropriately for outdoor learning. Some resources, such as communal play activities, will not be available but staff will ensure there are plenty of activities to do.

Milk is distributed in cartons and will still be available to children.

We are considering group sizes for our youngest age group. We await the results of our questionnaire to finalise numbers of children who will attend, but, we are aiming for between 5 to 8 children in each group. We will operate a Key Worker system, which means your child will be allocated an adult to be in charge of their group. The adult might be a teacher or a teaching assistant and will be the person in charge of your child's group for the rest of this term. It might not be the teacher they have been used to but we will do everything we possibly can, to make sure your child feels safe and secure at all times.

To conclude, I would just like to say that our staff are working very hard and making plans so that we can welcome your child back to a safe but child- friendly environment. This all seems rather harsh and so unlike school but we have to maintain safety for all involved – children and staff. We are working in new territory and we don't have all the answers to the many questions that are being raised. But, I must say our staff are very supportive and have worked hard on trying to put some new measures into place, whilst feeling very vulnerable for themselves and their own families. It is a challenging time for us all and we do not know what the 'new norm' is going to look and feel like. So, I ask for your support and your patience whilst we try to work through this together.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs J. Goodfellow

Headteacher