

21 May 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

After the announcement from the Prime Minister regarding the conditional plans for schools to reopen to some children, I am writing to you to keep you updated of our response to this and our plans for re-opening. During this time it is important that we maintain regular contact with you which will hopefully inform your own planning at home.

Nothing is more important to us than the safety of your child and our staff and we will only open when we are assured that it is reasonably safe to do so.

This means that we will only open to more children if we can maintain the safety of all children and staff working to the guidance that the government has set. We are resolute in this view and as parents/carers above everything else we know that you want us to keep your child safe.

We need your help:

We are working very hard to plan for reopening and we are gathering information about our staffing levels as we need to know how many staff are available to work. This information will enable us to decide how many children can safely be in school. Other information that would aid our planning is to have some indication from you - parents/carers - as to whether or not you would send your child to school when we reopen. In order to gather this information we have produced a form for you to complete, the link is below:

<https://forms.gle/YNyPuG9QvyXup6B58>

A text will also be sent to you with this link. Please complete the form as soon as possible

Before you complete this form, please read below to see how we will keep your child and our staff as safe as possible.

ACTION: PLEASE COMPLETE THE FORM ON THE LINK TO LET US KNOW IF YOU WILL BE SENDING YOUR CHILD TO SCHOOL WHEN WE ARE ABLE TO OPEN.

PLEASE COMPLETE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AND BY MONDAY 25th MAY, 9am AT THE LATEST TO ENABLE US TO PLAN A SAFE RETURN TO SCHOOL

Our approach to reopening safely

Should the government confirm that it is still safe to start to reopen primary schools from 1 June 2020 we will take a phased approach. We will contact you again to confirm our arrangements once we have been told the government's intention.

Please note: the government will confirm whether it is safe to re-open schools as late as 28 May and this decision will be based on the most up-to-date scientific advice.

A phased return

Phase 1

As you will already know, we have been providing childcare for the children of critical workers and vulnerable children since schools closed on Friday 20 March 2020. This provision will continue until the end of the academic year (we are referring to this as Phase 1).

Phase 2

Since 11 May we have been encouraging all vulnerable children to attend unless there is a reason not to do so. This provision will continue until the end of the academic year (Phase 2).

Going forward... Phase 3

From 1 June at the earliest we are planning to introduce Phase 3 which involves Year 6. **Important: please note, we have not set the date for reopening, we will only open on or some time after the 1 June when it is safe for us to do so. We will confirm to you, with as much notice as possible, when the actual first day will commence.**

We will have a staff training day prior to welcoming back children in Year 6 to ensure that all staff are trained on how to keep your child, themselves and each other safe in school: everything we have planned is to ensure that we can meet the highest standards possible. The Trust is bringing lots of additional resources into school to help maintain exceptional standards of hygiene.

Bringing in more year groups throughout Phase 3

If your child is in **Year 6**, they will be the first year group to return to school. If the government confirms that it is safe to proceed then this will be during the week commencing 1 June at the earliest (Monday 1 June will be designated as an INSET day to support staff training for reopening procedures).

The Year 6 children will be invited back for a 4 week period where they will focus on transition to the high school. We will be splitting the Year 6 children into two groups: Group A & B. **Year 6 Group A** will be invited back first to begin this programme.

Once the children in Group A are settled and secure and we are confident in the new routines and procedures, we will contact parents of children in the **Year 6 Group B** to provide them with a date when we will be welcoming them back into school.

How will we make the decision to bring more children back to school?

Your child's safety is at the heart of all decisions we will make and our staffing levels will constantly be under review. Government strategy will also impact on the decision to move to the next phase through its monitoring of the R rate.

We will communicate with you as quickly as possible when we have made a decision to welcome back the next year group, giving you as much time to prepare for this as possible. Our decision making is based on 4 key questions:

1. Is there the physical space to introduce the additional cohort(s) whilst maintaining the government guidance on class sizes?
2. Is there staffing capacity to introduce an increase in cohorts based on government guidance on class sizes?
3. Are we happy with the current operations and logistics of the model as it stands before opening to additional numbers of children?
4. Can all controls and systems be maintained with expanding numbers?

Phase 4 - welcoming everyone back

The government's intention is for all children to spend some time back at their primary school before the Summer break. Once we have completed phase 3, we hope to be able to welcome back Years 3, 4 & 5. Due to the number of rooms available on the site it is likely that this may involve spending 1 day per week in school on a rotation as we simply do not have enough spaces for all children to be on site at the same time in classes of 15 (Phase 4). This is subject to the government requirements on class sizes linked to scientific advice.

There will be some differences when children return

When children return they may be taught by a teacher who was not teaching them at the time when the school closed. Because we will be teaching in groups of no more than 15 it is not possible for them to return to the same class. All teachers and support staff will be designated a group to work with. This will also mean that they may not be in the same classroom as they were previously.

Once we are ready to welcome your child back into school, we will write to you to give you information about your child's grouping. These groups will be carefully thought out by the school and due to the complexity of the arrangements at this time they will be fixed and we will be unable to accommodate parental requests for movement between groups.

The majority of the school day will be spent in the classroom with the opportunity to work outdoors where the weather permits. Lunch will be served in the classroom in order to limit movement around school.

Staggered school days / weeks

Monday 1st June will be an INSET day to train staff in new ways of working to support the reopening. We aim to bring children back for as near to a full time offer as possible. We will use staggered start and finish times in order to help manage the number of people on site at any one time.

Depending on the number of children attending school and the number of classes operating, we may need to operate with some flexibility of our offer. This is to ensure that wherever possible we limit the movement of staff between the groups that they work with. From time to time this may involve a 4.5 day week (Mon - Fri lunchtime) in order to accommodate staff planning, preparation and assessment time; the management of online classes and to enable a weekly deep clean of the school. We will write to you again if we feel that we need to use any of this flexibility.

Online Learning - Outwood Virtual Primary Academy

During w/c 25th May we will not be adding work on your child's Google Classroom. This is due to the fact that it is half term. From Monday 1st June we will open up the Outwood Virtual Primary Academy which will replace your child's Google Classroom. When the school is closed to your child's year group we will be providing learning material on this site. You should expect that from 1st June, there will not be the facility for teachers and children to interact as frequently as they have done. This is due to the fact that all teachers will be involved in teaching the groups that are in school. We will be signposting you to the best resources on the Oak National Academy and BBC whilst also providing some content created by teachers across the trust.

Class groups

Children will work in groups of no more than 15. The children will be split into these groups based largely on their reading levels. This is to enable a focus on developing early language skills as set out in the government guidance. The children will work in these 'bubbles' throughout the day and will also socialise and have lunch together. This way of working supports the social distancing requirements that can be operated in primary schools.

Social distancing

To be clear, it is acknowledged that the 2m social distancing that we have all come to know is not something that can be easily achieved in primary schools. With our older children we will be separating chairs so that there is a 2m gap and will encourage all children to walk around the school (although this will be at extremely limited times) with 2m between themselves and others.

Parents and carers will be expected to spend only a brief amount of time dropping their child off at school and will need to adhere to normal social distancing practice.

Hygiene

Before the school closed we were already promoting regular hand washing and other hygiene practices such as 'catch it, bin it, kill it'. We will continue to focus on these teachings as part of the school day. We have ensured that all classrooms have appropriate equipment eg. lidded bins, soap, paper towels. Deep cleaning will take place more often throughout the school day.

School Meals

The school meal offer will be limited to a 'grab bag' style lunch so that these can be brought to classrooms rather than a counter service. These will continue to be provided free of charge to all children who qualify for free school meals. For all other children, the grab bag can be purchased at the usual school meal price. You can of course send your child with their own packed lunch if this is your preference.

Food vouchers will continue to be provided to parents of children who qualify for free school meals where the school is not yet open to your child.

Our intention is to provide you with as much information as we are able to at this point. We are in unprecedented times and we have worked hard to develop a plan which enables all children to return to school in some way before the end of the academic year.

We will, of course, provide more information to you a year group at a time which will contain much more detail about how school will operate from 1 June.

If you have any questions regarding the information in this letter then please contact us via the 'Contact Us' button on the school website.

Yours faithfully

Mr M Vickers
Principal