



22 May 2020

YEAR 6 CHILDREN RETURNING TO SCHOOL AFTER MAY HALF TERM

Dear Parents & Families

Firstly, I would like to thank all our families for your on-going support and kind words during this period of unprecedented and ever-changing actions required in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. I do hope that my letter finds you and your loved ones safe and well. If you have not yet watched my video, please look [here](#).

At the end of my last letter to you on 12th May, I promised that I would write again to share our plans for re-opening after the half term holiday once I had a better idea of the potential number of Year 6 children who would be attending from Monday 1st June. I thank you for your patience in the meantime. I am very thankful to Bev Bessey and Robin Hayes, who shared the task of contacting every parent, and I hope you agree that the personal touch of a conversation was extremely worthwhile. I have certainly received lots of positive feedback regarding how we have communicated since school closed towards the end of March, which really does feel like a long time ago now.

Since the government announced the partial return a couple of weekends ago, we have been busy discussing and formulating our plans, and assessing all possible risks to keep the children and staff safe, when we move from providing the care for the children of critical workers to welcoming a larger number of our oldest children back to school. We have completed a mammoth assessment of risks, which I have shared with all the staff and now is being reviewed by the governing body.

I must stress that we are will continually review and adapt our provision in light of ongoing changes, making the plan set out below **subject to change** if required.

Our plan is based on the **first two weeks** of the school being reopened. During this time, we will carefully assess all aspects of the provision, adapting as necessary with a relentless focus on safety for our children, parents, staff and wider community. I will keep you informed of any changes that are needed.

It is important to note that parents and carers will need to follow the school's procedures with absolute commitment should you choose to bring your child to school.

Due to the vital need to safeguard everyone's health and well-being as much as possible, parents and carers who do not adhere to the requirements will be immediately banned from the site. This could result in the child needing to access

home learning instead. I am sure that you understand the need for such stringent health and safety expectations.

I will also need to carefully assess the potential threat to the health of others should we receive information that indicates families are not adhering to the government's social distancing requirements. If we believe that children and their families are interacting with other households in an unsafe way, the place within the school's provision will be removed. We will do all we can to limit the potential spread of infection but we need our parents and families to do the same beyond the school gates. All of us need to make a firm commitment to making this next step as safe as it can be for ALL of our children, staff, families and wider community. I hope that you all fully support this approach and understand the need for such restrictions. All of the school's actions, risk assessments and decisions have been carried out in line with the government guidance, the union advice and with the agreement of the school's governing body. The school is working in partnership with the Local Authority in communicating the needs of the school and the responses we have planned.

I need to let you know that the children who have been attending school that fall within the Critical Worker group will be based away from Year 6 within two separate groups. We will contact parents of this group to advise them of their entrance/exit point.

Timings and Groupings

In the video I made earlier this week, I mentioned that the government guidance states that children should be in groups of no more than 15. Taking into account the size of our classrooms, as well as the geography of our school building, I have decided that groups should not normally contain any more than 10 children. Each group will occupy one of the downstairs classrooms and will, therefore, have their own entrance and exit directly from the playground. Each group will play and eat separately and there will be no mixing of the groups during the school day, including at break and lunchtimes, which will be staggered in order to keep the groups apart. Internal doors are all held open electronically so the children do not have to touch the doors and classroom windows are also kept open throughout the day.

The children should arrive at school anytime between 8.40am and 9.10am but **must** walk directly from home to school. The classroom doors will be open for them to go straight into the building. I will contact parents individually next week to let you know exactly which classroom your child will use. The children should wear clean uniform every day. This means a polo shirt and school trousers or black PE shorts. I do realise that cleaning clothes every day may mean that this is not always possible; it may also be that your child has grown considerably since March and what fitted well back then may be a little more snug now! The children may wear shoes or dark trainers and will then not need to change them for PE.

City Catering Southampton are planning to re-open our school kitchen to provide a hot lunch for children who require a school dinner. If your child usually has a packed lunch, I would recommend you send it in a bag that can be disposed of, so that there is less to worry about for your child. The children may bring a bottle of **water** which they can refill in school and throw away at the end of the day.

During the day, we will ensure that the children either wash their hands regularly or use an anti-viral hand sanitiser on arrival at school, before and after



break and lunch and before they go home, as well as each time they use the toilet. I know that some of the children were suffering with quite sore hands before we closed for the lockdown and so I have ensured each classroom has a hands-free sanitising facility, or you may want to send your child with a tube of barrier cream **for their personal use only** to prevent their hands from drying and cracking.

All areas that children and adults use are subject to a very rigorous cleaning routine, starting early in the morning. All surfaces, as well as anything the children might have contact with, are cleaned and supplies of tissues are replenished throughout the day in each room. The toilets are also cleaned during the day and we will explain to the children that there are tissues in the toilets for the children to use to pull the door open after use.

To help keep everyone as safe as possible, we need to restrict movement around School. We must do all we can to safeguard our children's emotional, social and physical development and the health and safety of every member of our school community during this unfamiliar period.

Social Distancing within School

This is a significant part of our plan in order to reduce risk of transmitting the virus. Getting this right is vital for everyone. As you will no doubt understand, this is an extremely difficult task within schools. Staff will be robust in supporting children to learn and remember that they cannot sit, stand or play within 2 metres of their peers or the adults.

Children are wonderfully sociable and will naturally find this very hard to understand or follow especially when they are so excited to see everyone again. The change in our social interactions is something that some of our children will struggle to adapt to. Staff will try their hardest to safeguard children's emotional well-being when adhering to the social distancing requirements but realise that for some, this may be incredibly upsetting and confusing. If a child is finding this too difficult to manage, then a risk assessment will need to be carried out in order to plan the safest option for the child and others. This may result in the child needing to return to remote learning at home until a later date.

Staff will not be able to sit alongside children to help them or to offer them physical comfort if upset or hurt. Some children may find this aspect of distancing difficult to comprehend. First aid will still be administered if needed but with increased safety measures including PPE where appropriate (personal protective equipment - gloves and face mask).

It is important for parents and carers to understand that although the school will do all it can to implement social distancing, we cannot guarantee that children will follow this at all times. Parents need to carefully consider this when deciding upon their child's return to school.

Dropping off and picking up

If your child is dropped off by an adult in the morning, I would ask that only **one** adult drops off or collects the child, and this should take place on the far side of the playground near the red picnic benches. For children who walk or cycle/scoot to school by themselves, they **must** come straight to school and not congregate, hang around or meet friends on the way.

Bikes and scooters should not be left on top of each other and children must leave their bike and come straight into the building.

Parent contact with the school office should be made via phone or email. If parents need to talk to a teacher, please phone or email and we will get back to you. I know you will understand that teachers will be focused on the safe admission and dismissal of children at the start and end of sessions.

Adults are reminded that the journey to and from school should **avoid** the use of public transport as this increases the risk of spreading the virus. Parents and children are not to walk to school with groups of individuals from other households. When approaching the site or waiting for drop off and collection, please ensure you keep a distance of at least 2m with people from other households. Your child needs to be kept by your side at all times.

Responding to illness

Anyone displaying symptoms of coronavirus are **not permitted on site** and should follow the government guidance around self-isolation and testing.

When a child or a member of staff develops symptoms compatible with coronavirus, they will be sent home and advised to self-isolate for 7 days. Their fellow household members will need to self-isolate for 14 days. All children and staff who are attending will have access to a test if they are displaying symptoms and are strongly encouraged to get tested.

- If the child or staff member **tests negative**, then they **can return** to school and their fellow household members can end their self-isolation.
- Where the child or staff member **tests positive**, the rest of their group will be sent home and advised to self-isolate for 14 days. The other household members of that wider group do not need to self-isolate unless the child or staff member they live with in that group subsequently develops symptoms.

Upon symptoms being identified within the setting, PPE would be used immediately to support that individual and clean where they have been. If it is a staff member, they will be immediately sent home. If it is a child, the child (and their siblings) will immediately be taken to my office where they will be monitored from outside. Parents will be called to collect their child/ren. Children are not permitted in school if parents cannot guarantee the immediate collection of their child.

As part of the national test and trace programme, if other cases are detected within the group or the wider school population, Public Health England's local health protection teams will conduct a rapid investigation and will advise the school on the most appropriate action to take.

I would just like to thank everyone once again for your overwhelming support and help, as well as the many supportive emails and Tweets I have received during what is the most challenging time of my 30+ year teaching career. I feel incredibly privileged to work in our community and with such determined colleagues.

Very best wishes and stay safe



Peter Howard

