

6th July 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

The government has announced that all children will return to school in September. We can't express how pleased and relieved we are that this is happening.

Over the past few months since lockdown, the staff have been working in other schools to cater for key workers and vulnerable children. Since 22nd March, teaching for our children has continued remotely until the 1st June whereby the Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and 6 have been prioritised by the government to return to school. On the 22nd June, additional pupils from the four other classes returned to school on a half-day capacity. Two-thirds of our pupils are now attending school to be taught by teachers and staff, and for those who are unable to, home learning continues as before.

Despite the challenging and difficult circumstances caused by the COVID-19 crisis and school closure, we are pleased to observe the great success with home learning and the eventual return of teaching and learning on the school site. We would like to thank all parents who have been actively engaged with your home learning, providing some amazing help, time and teaching to support your children.

Under the latest government guidelines for the September 2020 school opening, the current restrictions on group sizes will be lifted. However, COVID-19 protective measures will remain in place to reduce the risk of transmission, with pupils kept within a class 'bubbles' and older pupils encouraged to keep their distance from each other and staff where possible. This is alongside protective measures such as regular cleaning and handwashing already implemented.

Where there is a positive case in school, the Public Health England local health protection team will advise the school and family on the appropriate action to take. In this instance, school will continue remote education for the pupil/s who is/are in isolation for 14 days.

We will be carrying out a thorough risk assessment, following local and national guidance, to reduce potential transmission of COVID-19 and minimise any risk to teachers and pupils. for children and staff.

A child's education is essential to their healthy development and we know that missing too much school can have a negative impact on children's mental and physical wellbeing. We will, therefore, work with parents to secure full attendance from the start of the new academic year, with the reintroduction of mandatory attendance.

To ensure pupils can catch up on lost learning, we will resume teaching a broad and balanced curriculum in all subjects, making use of existing flexibilities to create time to address gaps in knowledge.

In summary, here are the key changes that will come into force in September:

Year group bubbles

- Pupils will be made to stay within smaller groups, and not mix with those in other years. This will make it easier to identify who will need to self-isolate in the event of a positive Covid-19 test.
- We will take steps to limit interaction, sharing of rooms and social spaces between groups as much as possible.
- Groups should be kept apart at all times where possible, meaning schools assemblies and group worship should be temporarily removed.
- Schools are also being asked to consider staggered start and end times of the school day, as well as breaks.

Covid-19 testing

- If there is a positive Covid-19 case, the pupils and staff in the affected bubble will be required to self-isolate for up to 14 days. Where there are two or more confirmed cases in a two-week period, a larger number of other children may be asked to self-isolate as a precautionary measure.
- The Department for Education said that where a school outbreak is confirmed, a mobile testing unit may be dispatched for "specific detailed investigations"
- By the autumn term, all schools have also been promised "a small number of home testing kits" that they can directly give to parents whose child has developed symptoms at school, as well as staff.

Curriculum changes

- We will be teaching an ambitious and broad curriculum in all subjects from the start of the autumn term, but make use of existing flexibilities to create time to cover the most important missed content.
- Core subjects will be prioritised but other subjects will not be removed completely. The aim is to return to the school's normal curriculum in all subjects by summer term 2021.

Transport

- The guidance says the Government's "one metre plus" approach will not apply to dedicated pupil transport like school buses, but use of public transport "particularly in peak times, should be kept to an absolute minimum".

School Attendance

- The Government says that “ school attendance will be compulsory, and non-attendance will be punishable by fines in September”. We will aim to identify pupils who are reluctant or anxious about returning or who are at risk of disengagement and will develop plans to re-engage them.
- With the Government’s shielding advice “pausing” on 1 August, young people with serious underlying medical conditions will be asked to return to school, but “if rates of the disease rise in local areas” they will be advised to shield during that period. The guidance likewise says that its measures will allow “most staff to return to the workplace”.

Sport and music

- Schools will be able to run physically distanced music lessons, but “singing, wind and brass playing will not take place in larger groups such as school choirs and ensembles, or school assemblies”.
- Contact sports should be avoided, while outdoor sports should be prioritised where possible, and large indoor spaces used where it is not.

End of Term Closure

In preparation for the new school year, school will be closed on the **20th July (not 21st July as scheduled)** to allow a full-deep cleaning of the premises, organisation of protective measures, classroom furniture, resources and equipment for the 2nd September start.

We will keep you informed of any further developments in the coming week and how we will return on the first day. Thank you for your patience as we continue to finalise our plans for the whole school return in September.

In the meantime, please continue to keep safe and enjoy a wonderful summer with your families.

Yours sincerely

EChua

Evelyn Chua