



## *Challenge, Equality & Opportunity*

**Friday 28<sup>th</sup> August 2020**

### **Full School Return and Information for September**

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope that you have all had an opportunity to enjoy some of the holiday time over the summer break and that you are all well.

As you know, all children are expected to return to school in September. We have been busy over the holidays drawing up a new risk assessment and planning how we can mitigate as much risk as possible while still managing to open to all children and staff. We are very excited to get school back up and running at its full capacity and we are really looking forward to seeing everyone again.

Please read the following information carefully as we are relying on your support to help us to make school as safe as possible and we need everyone to understand some of the changes we are making to our usual provision. The information about the staggered starts and finishes which we shared at the end of last term has not changed but most of the other information is new or has changed since the summer term. We have collated the information in the form of questions and answers which we hope that you will find helpful. All of our procedures and any changes which we have made are in response to guidance from the Government (Department for Education) and the NHS. If we need to make any further changes, we will contact you again. As always, if there is something which we have not covered and which you need to know or discuss, please get in touch.

#### **Why does school have to make changes to the way it works?**

While COVID-19 is in our communities, we need to make sure that we are doing all that we can to keep our children, staff, partners and communities safe. We have a detailed risk assessment which identifies how we can mitigate as many risks as possible and we need to be ready to take swift action if there are confirmed COVID-19 cases in school, if there is an outbreak of cases in school or if there is a peak of cases locally. We know that COVID-19 can be a serious illness for some people and the science tells us that it is very infectious.

It is impossible to distance children from each other in a class of 30. However, we will be doing our best to make sure that:

- physical contact is minimised
- good respiratory hygiene is followed
- children wash their hands frequently
- there is enhanced cleaning
- staff know how to use PPE safely if necessary
- everyone in the school community is using test and trace
- we can manage cases and contain an outbreak if necessary

All of the following information should help you to understand how we are addressing the above points and to prepare you for the changes which will be in place from the first day of the new term, Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> September.

#### **Will the children be kept in Class bubbles?**

When the children are learning in classrooms, and moving around school, they will remain in their class bubbles of 30 (23 and 24 for Reception). However, when they are outside they will play in KS groups. Being outdoors decreases risk of transmission and we will be encouraging non-contact play between the children. Reception will also play in their own yard as a group of 47 and then will return to their classes of 23 and 24 when indoors. When R and then KS1 have lunch in the hall, they will sit at tables with children from their own classes, but will be in the hall as two classes (for R) or three classes (for KS1). During this time, they will be as distanced as possible and the hall will be well ventilated. If we find that we cannot distance tables (once our hall is emptied of as much classroom furniture as possible), we will revisit these arrangements.

If we need to mix children from different classes for learning activities, these will be inside but distanced, or will be outside. There will be no whole school or KS assemblies but each class will still have a daily opportunity for a class assembly. These will be led by the class teacher or another member of staff.

### **Can staff go from class to class?**

The guidance states that staff can move across different classes in order to deliver the curriculum effectively and to meet school's logistical needs. We will be minimising movement as much as we can and so each class will have their usual teacher, an allocated Teaching Assistant and will have either Mrs Wingate or Mrs Mingoia teaching for half a day each week in order to release teachers for PPA (statutory non-contact time for planning, preparation and assessment). We will be asking children to distance themselves from staff as far as possible and adults in school will distance themselves from each other.

### **What will classrooms be like?**

Classrooms will look different to usual, and slightly different to the summer term. In KS1 and KS2 classes, children will be sitting in rows for several children or at separated tables for two children. All will be facing the front and there will be very limited movement around the classroom. Teachers will stay at the front of the class as much as possible. Each child has their own resources such as scissors, pencils, glue sticks and rulers. Soft furnishings have been removed as they are difficult to clean and some furniture has been removed in order to create more space. Windows and most internal doors will be open to increase ventilation.

Because the Early Years curriculum cannot be delivered in the classroom model described above, in Reception, children will still have opportunities to learn and play together, they will not be sitting in rows. We have made some changes to the kind of resources which are available, without having a negative impact on children's learning, development of social skills and general well-being. These resources will be easy to clean and will be cleaned at the end of each day or between children using them. Staff will still be distanced from children as much as possible.

### **Will my child still be taught a broad and balanced curriculum?**

Yes! We will continue to provide all subjects and we will make learning purposeful and fun as we always would. There might be less time for some subjects, but none will be dropped from the timetable. PE will take place outside and there will be no contact sports. PE resources will be cleaned between each class or quarantined for a minimum of 72 hours. Sadly, children are not able to sing in groups in school and so some elements of music and other curriculum areas will be taught differently, although we will sing outdoors and when children are distanced. There will be fewer opportunities for group activities but this will not affect the curriculum or learning. Your child might have fewer opportunities to read to adults in school so please continue to read at home as much as you can. We have purchased additional iPads and we will be making the most of technology to support the curriculum. All iPads will be cleaned before they are used by other classes.

### **Will my child be able to catch up after missing so much school?**

We recognise that all children have missed a significant amount of time in school and we know that they will be returning with different needs and strengths. We will be listening to children, watching them learn, assessing their learning and working out what they need in order to support them to make the best possible progress and get back on track for meeting their targets. We are always ambitious about what the children can achieve and

teachers will differentiate activities, making sure that children have the support and challenge which they need. We have some extra 'catch up' funding from the government and we will use this to support the children as effectively as we can. We are planning on having Parent/Carer Evenings at the end of September so that we can discuss how well your child has settled back into school and share your child's targets with you. We are hoping to be able to do this face to face (with social distancing), if we are unable to meet in person, we will make telephone appointments with you. Further information will follow soon.

### How will school support my child's well-being?

Children's well-being is always at the heart of everything that we do in school. We know that some children will be nervous about returning to school and some will need some extra support. We will be doing all that we can in school to support every child and make sure that school continues to be a happy place where everyone feels safe and valued. Teachers are all planning how to use stories and class discussions/activities to help children to settle in quickly and to understand and manage the changes in school. If we have any concerns, we will talk to you and work together to make sure that the children are feeling happy and secure. Staff have already had many discussions about how the return to school might present additional challenges for some individuals and groups. However, we are all taking reassurance from how well children settled in on their visits to school in the summer term, they are often more resilient than we think!

### What are the times of the school day?

In line with the DfE guidance, there will be staggered start and finish times (without altering the length of the school day) so that there is less congestion on the way in and out of school for pupils and their parents/carers. This is particularly important for us as we share a site with Gosforth Park First School and we have very limited access to the site. We have devised the following plan so that it disadvantages the smallest number of people possible in terms of sibling links. Each arrival time has a window of 10 minutes, we have done this to make it easier for those of you with siblings in consecutive windows so that you do not have to wait, and to ease congestion for children in the same classes when washing their hands as they arrive. There is a very small number of families who will have a wait of more than 10 minutes between siblings. We do not want you to have to wait around in doorways so you are welcome to wait on the main yard, or in the Gazebo if you want to sit down (or to take shelter from the weather). If you would prefer, you can bring both of your children at the later allocated time slot. If you choose to do this, you must let us know in advance, so please get in touch. The same would apply for picking up.

Class	Start time (am)	Finish time (pm)	Door
Red	8.50 – 9.00	3.15 - 3.25	Double doors between Red and Blue Classes
Blue	8.40 – 8.50	3.05 - 3.15	Blue class door
Class 2	9.10- 9.20	3.35 – 3.45	C2
Class 3	9.00 – 9.10	3.25 – 3.35	C3
Class 4	8.40 – 8.50	3.05 – 3.15	KS2
Class 5	9.00 – 9.10	3.25 – 3.35	KS2
Class 6	9.10 – 9.20	3.35 – 3.45	KS2
Class 7	8.50 – 9.00	3.15 – 3.25	KS2

Please note that Reception Classes have different arrangements for the first two weeks of term, please see below.

Reception Classes (First Two Weeks):

Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> September

**Red Class 10.00am – 11.30am**

**Blue Class 1.30pm – 3.00pm**

Wed 9<sup>th</sup> September – Friday 11<sup>th</sup> September

**Red Class 9.15am – 12.00pm**

**Blue Class 1.00pm – 3.20pm**

Mon 14<sup>th</sup> September – Friday 18<sup>th</sup> September    **Blue Class 9.15am – 12.00pm**    **Red Class 1.00pm – 3.20pm**

### **What should children wear for school?**

Usual uniform should be worn for school each day, other than the days which your child's class has PE. On PE days children should come dressed in PE kits (joggers with or without shorts underneath, t shirts, trainers, hoodies or sweatshirts – these do not have to be uniform but the simpler the better). Teachers will let you know which days these are when they contact you with class specific information in the first week back at school. Children should not bring PE kits into school.

As we have lots of open windows in school in order to ventilate rooms, children should always have a school jumper/cardigan and can wear an additional layer (a hoodie or similar). We will be outside as much as possible too, so please make sure that your child always has a coat to wear.

The latest DfE guidance states that children do not need to wear freshly washed uniform every day, although we would encourage you to change your child into new clean clothes as often as you can manage.

### **Will staff or children wear face coverings or other personal protective equipment (PPE)?**

The current guidance states that primary school staff only need PPE if they are unable to maintain distancing in a situation such as administering first aid. In the case of administering first aid, staff will wear gloves, face coverings, visors and aprons. There may be other occasions when staff feel the need to wear PPE, including in classrooms. Children do not need to wear face coverings. If you choose for your child to wear a face covering, please make sure that they understand how to do so safely. Staff will be able to wear face coverings in school if they choose to.

### **What is the best way to travel to school?**

We are encouraging everyone to walk, cycle or scoot to school if this is possible. We know that some of you can't manage this and so ask you to park considerately and leave the disabled/blue badge place free for those who need it. We always encourage as many people as possible to travel sustainably for lots of reasons. In the current context, leaving the car at home also improves social distancing and keeps everyone moving outside school. Cycle and scooter storage will be available on site as usual. Please follow social distancing principles when you are using the storage and please remember to dismount from bikes and scooters BEFORE entering the site.

### **Who can drop off and pick up my children?**

Only one adult can bring each child (or children from the same household) onto the site to drop off and pick up. If you have 'bubbled' with another household and are sharing picking us and dropping off, please let school know. If you have to bring younger siblings then you must hold their hand, carry them or have them in a pushchair for the whole time that you are on site.

### **What can children bring to school?**

Children should bring a labelled water bottle each day and this will be taken home each evening for you to wash it in preparation for the following day.

Because we want to make sure that children continue to read, to progress with their reading and to enjoy reading at home, we will continue to use book bags and for books to be brought in and out of school. Staff will continue to read individually with children in school when they are able to, but will sanitise their hands before and after handling each child's books and reading records. We advise you to do the same at home. When children return books to school, we will quarantine them for 72 hours before putting them back into book boxes and staff will be the only people with access to the boxes. Staff might ask children to record a comment and the page number in the reading record, but they will always read your comments so please continue to use the reading record to keep us up to date with how your children are getting on at home with their reading.

Children can bring packed lunches to school in their own bags/boxes but these should be washable and we ask that you keep them as clean as possible. Packed lunches will be stored in classrooms rather than on the communal shelves in the hall.

Children should not bring any pencil cases or stationery to school as we're providing individual sets for each child. Please avoid sending bulky bags and backpacks as these will be difficult to store and will reduce space in corridors.

### **How will school provide meals and are there any changes to school meals and packed lunches?**

To begin with, for those who purchase a school meal or are entitled to a free school meal (FSM), we will be providing sandwich lunches which will be made on site by our kitchen team. These will consist of a sandwich and other items such as fruit, cake, crisps and a drink. All children in Reception and KS1 are entitled to a FSM, but you can provide your own packed lunch if this is preferable. In KS2, children can bring their own packed lunch or purchase a school meal unless you are entitled to a FSM. We are not applying our usual packed lunch policy at this time so you can include items which we would usually ask you to avoid (eg crisps and cake) but please continue to avoid nuts and confectionery and please continue to cut grapes into halves to minimise the risk of choking. We would also be grateful if you could ensure that your child can unwrap/open all items in their lunch independently. We will work with the kitchen team and our school cook to begin hot cooked meals as soon as we are able to.

We are currently planning for Reception to eat in the hall, then KS1 classes will follow them after all of the surfaces are cleaned. KS2 classes will eat in classrooms.

### **Will children get homework?**

Yes, we will continue to give children homework, but there won't be homework books or spelling books. Instead, we will be using Seesaw (and Tapestry for Reception) to set homework and to give children feedback on their homework activities.

### **Who is allowed in school and what do I do if I need to talk to a member of staff?**

Only staff, children and essential visitors are allowed in school. To begin with, we are only allowing sports coaches, professionals associated with safeguarding/health and professionals who support learning (eg SEN support and IT technicians) to enter the building. The guidance states that volunteers are allowed in school if they are able to follow our measures as set out in our risk assessment. However, as we have a relatively small building with such limited space, we are limiting the number of adults who are able to come into school.

Unfortunately, parents and carers are not allowed in school at the current time. If you need to speak to your child's class teacher, please telephone or email the school office and a message will be passed on to teaching staff who will then contact you later. There will be staff presence in the mornings and afternoons so you can also pass messages on when you drop off and pick up. Mrs Lancaster and Mrs Whatnell will be happy to answer questions by telephone or email too. Please don't use Seesaw for communicating with teaching staff as they will not have the time to check it and respond. Thank you for your support.

### **Will there be after-school and morning clubs?**

To begin with, we will be offering a very limited number of clubs. This is because we are limiting the number of occasions where children mix across classes indoors to mix indoors where distancing is not possible and also because we will have to allow Gosforth out of School Club access to our hall for wrap around care in order for them to operate safely and within their guidance. We will contact you via Parent Mail if there are any opportunities which are relevant to your child and as soon as we can, we will introduce more opportunities.

### **Will there still be access to wrap around care?**

Yes, Gosforth out of School Club is still operating and has its own set of guidance to implement. You can contact the club in the usual way: <https://www.gosforthparkoutofschoolclub.co.uk/>

## **What happens if a child or a member of staff has symptoms of COVID-19?**

It is essential that you do not send to children to school if they have any symptoms of COVID-19. You can check what the symptoms are here: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/symptoms/> If your child has symptoms, you must inform school and you will need to arrange a test in order to establish whether or not your child has COVID-19: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing-and-tracing/get-a-test-to-check-if-you-have-coronavirus/> We can help you with this if you are unsure of what to do or you do not have internet access – please ring us if you need any support at all. After a negative test and if well enough, children can return to school. If a test result is positive, you must inform us immediately so that we can take any additional actions to protect others in the school community.

If a child becomes unwell at school with any symptoms of COVID-19, we will contact you immediately and will isolate your child from the rest of the school in the medical room (previously the suite). A member of staff will stay with your child at a safe distance, if possible, while we wait for you to arrive. As we are coming into the season of cold and flu viruses in school, we expect to have to follow this procedure many times as we will not be able to distinguish between the cause of any symptoms. Please make sure that your contact details are up to date so that we can contact you easily.

Once a child is taken from school, we will clean the area where they have waited and their area of the classroom thoroughly and we will wait to hear from you regarding the test result.

Staff will also stay absent from school and take a test if they have any symptoms. We will use other staff and supply staff to cover any absences, as usual.

## **What happens if there is one or more confirmed cases of COVID-19 in school?**

If we become aware of one or more confirmed cases, we will contact the PHE Public Health Protection Team who will discuss the context of the case/s and will seek to establish what kind of contact there has been between the person/people with the positive test result and other members of the school community. It is important to try and establish where transmission has happened and who else might be at risk. We will then inform other parents and carers if there are any further actions to take. This could result in one or more classes having to begin a period of self-isolation and/or the building might need to be deep cleaned but this will be decided by the Public Health Protection Team once they have spoken to school and parents/carers.

If a member of your family has a test with a positive result, then you will need to inform us that your child/ren will be absent for the period of self-isolation.

In the unlikely event of a whole class, KS or the school having to self-isolate or 'lock down' again, we will revert to using Seesaw for learning as we did in the Summer term.

## **How will school be cleaned?**

We will continue with the same cleaning regime which we had in the summer term. This means that there will be an emphasis on cleaning surfaces and touch points (door handles, light switches etc). These will be cleaned thoroughly at the end of each day and some will be cleaned by school staff during the day. Toilets will be cleaned thoroughly at the end of each day and once during the day.

## **What is school doing to ensure good hand washing and respiratory hygiene?**

Children will sanitise on the way into school and then will wash their hands when they enter classrooms. Every time children re-enter the building they will sanitise their hands and we have also built in lots of opportunities for washing hands during the day. We would be grateful if you could reinforce good handwashing at home and make sure that children wash their hands as they leave home in the mornings and as soon as they return in the evenings.

Each classroom has a special bin for disposal of tissues and we will be teaching children the 'Catch it - Bin it - Kill it!' procedure for coughs and sneezes.

### **Do all children have to return to school?**

If you have been following the media, you will be aware that the expectation is that all children should return unless they have been told by a medical professional that they should stay at home. We support this view and we want to see as many children as possible getting the benefits of full time school provision. If you have any questions about your child's return to school or you are concerned, please contact us by telephone on Monday 7<sup>th</sup> September so that we can discuss your concerns and agree on the best course of action.

### **Is school safe?**

School is as safe as it can be in the current context. We are doing all that we can in order to mitigate risk and to make school as safe as possible for children, staff and the whole school community. We have followed all of the guidance available to us and will continue to work with partners in the Local Authority, Public Health England and the local Public Health England Health Protection Team as well as keeping up to date with Government Guidance.

I hope that the above information has answered questions which you might have had and will help you to and your children to prepare for returning to school. We know that everyone has different feelings and opinions about the risks of COVID-19, especially with relation to schools and if you have concerns which we have not addressed in the above, please get in touch. We hope to see you all on Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> September and are really looking forward to getting our school family back together. We will do all in our powers to make school feel happy and safe for everyone in the school community and we know that you will support us in doing so.

Your child's new class teacher will be in contact soon (if they haven't already) via Seesaw regarding transition activities for the children in readiness for the new year. Miss Bommel and Miss Storey have already contacted parents/carers of children in Reception and will continue to keep in touch with you via Tapestry to make sure that our new starters make the best possible start!

Thank you for your time and support. We look forward to seeing you all very soon and will contact you again if there are any changes to any of the above information in the next week.

Best wishes

Helen McKenna

Headteacher