



Learning and friendship go hand in hand

Ringway Primary
Guidepost
Choppington
Northumberland
NE62 5YP

September Opening

*****Term begins for all pupils on Wednesday 2nd September 2020****

Dear Parents / Carers,

I'm writing to you all to explain the steps school will be taking to open up to all children in September to minimise the risk from Covid-19 to pupils, parents and staff and to offer a full curriculum to the children.

Why is school open to all children in September?

The government guidance published on 2nd July explains clearly that all pupils in all year groups will return to school – full time from the beginning of the autumn term. It explains that:

- Returning to school is vital for children's education and for their wellbeing. Time out of school is detrimental for children's cognitive and academic development. This impact can affect both current levels of learning and children's future ability to learn, and therefore we need to ensure all pupils can return to school sooner rather than later.
- The risk to children themselves of becoming severely ill from coronavirus (COVID-19) is very low and there are negative health impacts of being out of school. We know that school is a vital point of contact for public health and safeguarding services that are critical to the wellbeing of children and families.
- Lower academic achievement also translates into long-term economic costs due to having a less well-qualified workforce. This affects the standard of living that today's pupils will have over the course of their entire life. For many households, school closures have also affected their ability to work. As the economy begins to recover, we need to remove this barrier so that parents and carers can return to work.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools>

Attendance

The government has relaxed the rules on attendance during lockdown. However, this will change in September. The government guidance says: *'Missing out on more time in the classroom risks pupils falling further behind. Those with higher overall absence tend to*

achieve less well in both primary and secondary school. School attendance will therefore be mandatory again from the beginning of the autumn term.” **Absences must be reported to the school office on each day of absence - please do not use Class Dojo for reporting this.** We've very much missed seeing the children and are really looking forward to seeing them come back in September. We are aware that parents will understandably have concerns about sending their children back to school and I want to outline the measures we'll be taking in school to reduce the risk from Covid-19.

Safety precautions

Class bubbles

We will be keeping children in class bubbles and minimising the contacts with other children and staff as much as possible. At break and lunch times we will have Key Stage bubbles (Year 1 and 2, Year 3 and 4 and Year 5 and 6) but classes will still be distanced from each other as much as possible. We will not be having assemblies in the traditional sense (but may have virtual assemblies). Each bubble will have their own playground to use and lunch time sittings will be staggered. Children (especially our younger pupils) find it very difficult to socially distance and so there won't be an expectation that children will maintain a social distance at all points within their class bubbles.

Please note that although we will endeavour to keep the children within their bubble, there may be times when they come into brief contact with other children. For example, there are shared toilets for children in Year 1 & 2 and for Key Stage 2. The government guidance makes clear that: “Endeavouring to keep these groups at least partially separate and minimising contacts between children will still offer public health benefits as it reduces the network of possible direct transmission.”

Washing hands

There will be regular opportunities where the children will wash their hands throughout the school day. The children will need to wash their hands at least:

- When they arrive at school
- When they return from breaks
- Before and after eating

Staff will also use their judgement to add in additional hand washing opportunities if necessary.

Hand sanitiser dispensers will be fitted into each classroom over the summer break and children will be encouraged to use these regularly throughout the day.

School cleaning

There will be an enhanced cleaning system put in place in school. All the children's tables and common touched surfaces will be cleaned regularly throughout the day. Additional tissue bins will be put in all teaching areas with tissues and we will follow a 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach.

Staggered opening and closing times

To support maintaining class bubbles, we have changed the school opening times for each class. We respectfully ask that everyone makes every effort to arrive, and collect children, during their time-slots. Siblings may arrive and be picked up at the family's earliest time slot:

Year group	School start time:	School finish time:
Year 1, Year 2	8.45am	3.05pm
Year 5, Year 6	8.50am	3.10pm
Reception	8.55am	3.15pm
Year 3, Year 4	9.00am	3.20pm

From September, each class will have their own external door and this is where the children will enter and leave school from. Parents will not be able to come into the school building. We ask that where possible, only one adult brings and collects children from school to reduce the amount of people on the school grounds and that families leave the school premises as quickly as possible. The one-way system around the school will be permanently in operation from September – please follow this.

Lunch time

We think it's very important that we are able to offer the children a hot meal at school.

Lunch sittings will need to be staggered to keep bubbles separate and we need to allow time for cleaning to be carried out between each sitting. Children will have 20 minutes in the hall to eat their lunch. We understand that some children can take a while to eat their lunch and therefore we are redesigning our meals so that the desert/pudding can be something the children can carry to eat outside if they've only finished their main meal (e.g. Biscuit/flapjack/fruit). Each bubble will have its own lunchtime supervisor and the children will be taken to their own playground area during lunchtime.

Uniform

Government guidance states that “uniforms do not need to be cleaned any more often than usual, nor do they need to be cleaned using methods which are different from normal.” School uniform helps children to prepare for when they leave school and may have to dress smartly or wear a uniform. Most importantly, it means children don't have to worry about peer pressure when it comes to their clothes. School uniform with logos can be ordered via the tots to teams website <https://totstoteams.com/schools/ringway-primary-school>. We are aware that parents may be experiencing financial pressures at the moment. It is worth noting that there are non-branded cheaper alternatives available at supermarkets such as Asda.

Facemasks

Public health England does not recommend the use of face coverings in schools. If children arrive to school with face coverings, the guidance states that children must “dispose of temporary face coverings in a covered bin or place reusable face coverings in a plastic bag they can take home with them and then wash their hands after removal”.

What can children bring to school?

We're aiming to reduce the amount of things that children will need to bring to school. Children will be able to bring in:

- Coat / Hat
- Plastic school bag (issued by school)
- Packed lunch
- Water bottles

Children must not bring toys or pencil cases into school. We will still be sending home school reading books as usual.

Breakfast and After School club

Breakfast and After School Club will return in September. New Government guidance for Autumn term allows schools to provide wrap around care but to minimise mixing of groups as much as possible, “Some schools may keep children in their class groups for the majority of the classroom time, but also allow mixing into wider groups for specialist teaching, wraparound care and transport.”

Where possible, we will split each of these clubs into smaller groups whilst still operating in the school hall.

While using these groups, parents need to understand that children will mix with others from different classes but we will encourage distancing and minimal contact as much as possible as well as not sharing resources. By booking these clubs, parents consent to agreeing to this.

There will be 30 places available for Breakfast club and 20 places available for After School

Club each day. The clubs are now only bookable through Parent Pay and sessions will need to be booked and paid for at least 48 hours in advance.

Charges:

Breakfast club: £3 from 8am until 8.50am

After-school club: £3.50 (3.30pm-4.30pm) or £7 (3.30pm-5.30pm).

Prevention of Coronavirus

Any pupils or staff must not come into school if they have coronavirus symptoms:

- a high temperature
- a new, continuous cough
- a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste

or if they have tested positive in the last 7 days. If anyone in the school becomes unwell with symptoms, they will be sent home and advised to follow 'stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus infection' which sets out that they must self-isolate for at least 7 days and should arrange to have a test.

School will fully engage with the NHS test and trace process and the government guidance sets out that staff members and parents/carers need to be ready and willing to:

- Book a test if they are displaying symptoms. (either online or by telephone via NHS 119) All children can be tested including children under 5)
- Provide details of anyone they have been in close contact with if they were to test positive
- Self-isolate

Parents should inform school immediately of the results of a test.

If a child tests negative, if they feel well and no longer have symptoms similar to coronavirus, they can stop self-isolating and return to school.

If a child tests positive, they must continue to self-isolate for at least 7 days from the onset of their symptoms and return to school only if they do not have symptoms other than a cough or loss of sense of smell/taste (this can last for several weeks once the infection has gone.) If they still have a high temperature, they should keep self-isolating until their temperature returns to normal.

Summary

The international pandemic has caused enormous distress and disruption. It's something we've never previously experienced and it will take time for the children to readjust to school. We understand that some of you and your children will be anxious about returning in September, after some months out of school. We will be providing additional emotional and wellbeing support for all pupils, and will also be providing additional opportunities to

support learning where this is required. The first few weeks back at school will be focusing on supporting the children's well-being and adjusting back into school life after a long period of absence while also trying to balance and assess where the children are with their learning to help them move forward academically.

We are very much looking forward to welcoming the children back and staff are working hard to ensure that they all have a range of exciting learning activities upon their return. We look forward to welcoming you back on Wednesday 2nd September.

See you in September!

Mrs Robson