

Friday 15 May 2020

Dear Parents

Phased reopening of schools

Further to my letter on Monday, the government has produced guidance regarding the phased reopening of schools. They have asked schools to welcome back children in Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 alongside critical worker parents and vulnerable children from the week commencing 1 June at the earliest, provided that the five key tests set by the government justify the changes at the time. The government has asked schools to plan on this basis, ahead of confirmation that these tests are met.

Since then, I have also received guidance from the local authority, have worked closely with the schools across our Trust, as well as having numerous virtual meetings with headteachers from schools across Enfield. Every school is unique and has its own set of complex issues to overcome in order to make sure that schools are ready for the phased reopening.

Schools will not be schools as we have known them up until this point.. At Grange Park, we are continuing to put the many jigsaw pieces together and will complete a more detailed risk assessment to ensure that the school can safely reopen through a phased approach. The risk assessment will directly address risks associated with the virus so that we can ensure sensible measures are put in place to control these risks for the children and staff. We will only reopen when we are fully prepared, as the safety of our children, their families and our staff is of the absolute paramount importance.

I have outlined below some key information of what the proposed plans may look like for us. I will be requesting that parents in Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 indicate whether they plan on sending their child into school week commencing 1 June to support us in the planning phase. A separate Parentmail form will be sent to those parents shortly.

Will Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 definitely be returning week commencing 1 June?

We are currently carrying out a thorough risk assessment to ensure the safety of our pupils and staff. Although the plan is to provide spaces for Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6, we will prioritise the opening of the school for the younger children first. It means that not all of those year groups will be starting on 1 June. When the year group does start, it will be full time, for every day of the week. For Nursery children this will be for their usual session: all day, morning and afternoon session for the whole week.

Will my child be in their classroom and with their class teacher?

Classes in Reception, Year 1, Year 6 will be split into two groups. There will be a maximum of 15 children in each. Each group will be known as a 'bubble' and we will aim for each bubble not to integrate with another bubble throughout the school day. Each bubble will have a member of the teaching staff allocated to it. This may not be their usual class teacher. It may be a class teacher from another year group. It could also be a member of support staff leading a bubble, under the direction of the teacher. This all depends on staffing availability. The staff member allocated to each bubble

will not be working with another bubble. Each bubble will have an allocated classroom in which they will be working throughout; this may not be their usual classroom.

What about the Nursery Children?

The children in nursery are likely to be split into an all day, morning and afternoon group, with no more than 15 children in each. Each group will be a 'bubble' and we will aim for each bubble not to integrate with another bubble throughout the school day. Each group will have at least one member of the teaching staff allocated to them. This may not be their usual class teacher. It may be a class teacher from another year group or a member of support staff. The staff member allocated to each bubble will not be working with another bubble. Each bubble will have an allocated classroom they will be working in throughout the day; this may not be their usual classroom.

What about playtimes and lunchtimes?

The children will have staggered break and lunch times. The use of the dining hall will be staggered and some bubbles may eat in their classroom. Children will only mix within their bubble. Each bubble will also be allocated an additional adult to cover lunch times and release time for teachers. This additional adult will not be working with another bubble.

Will the start and end of school timings be the same?

Currently we are looking at a potential model of staggered starts (e.g. 8:30, 9:00, 9:30am) and staggered end times (e.g. 2:30, 3:00 and 3:30pm). This is so that different year groups can further minimise contact between other groups of children and parents. We will also be insisting that only one adult brings the child into the school grounds. Each bubble will have an allocated route into and out of the classroom (using the outside classroom doors where possible). We will have a queuing system (with a 2-metre distance) into the school building from the different entrances.

Bubbles will also have their own route to getting to the dining hall and allocated playground to avoid unnecessary contact with other adults and children.

Will the usual school curriculum resume?

The school curriculum will not resume fully, as learning will be different. Our usual collaborative approach will no longer be possible however children will learn to be more independent. Children will be spread out across the classroom, with the older children seated at an individual seat at a table. Children will sit side by side with a gap, rather than face to face as they may have done in the past.

The priorities for young children at this time will be resocialisation into new style school routine; speaking and listening, and regaining momentum, particularly in relation to early reading. Year 6 teaching during this time will focus on readiness for secondary school, including academic readiness and will involve teaching of mathematics and English to make up for any losses to learning incurred while at home.

In order to minimise risk of spreading the virus, the timetable for all will place emphasis on outdoor learning where possible. Physical education lessons will continue to take place and activities will be

strictly non-contact. At Grange Park, mental health and well-being will be at the forefront of what we do, with time devoted to this each day

Will online learning continue?

Larger numbers of staff will be needed to provide face-to-face teaching at school. This means that it may be more difficult to maintain the same level of online learning through Google Classroom for children in the year groups who are not eligible to attend, or for those children in year groups who are eligible to attend but who themselves cannot. We will, however, endeavour to continue doing our absolute best, as we want to do everything we can to continue to keep learning going, and continue to support and motivate those children who are at home.

What about the provision for families of critical workers?

The children of critical workers who are in Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 will join the rest of their year group and will be in a bubble with up to 15 children from their class. The children of critical workers who are in Year 2, Year 3, Year 4 and Year 5 will form a bubble. The number of bubbles they form is dependent on the number of children we will have, but there will be up to 15 children in each. Every bubble will be allocated a member of the teaching staff and an allocated classroom to use like the other bubbles.

Will my child be expected to social distance and what hygiene measures will be in place?

The Government has stated that 'early years and primary age children cannot be expected to remain 2 metres apart from each other and staff'. In deciding to bring more children back to early years and schools, we are taking this into account.

As previously mentioned, children will remain in their bubble throughout the school day. Tables will be spaced out and side-by-side, rather than facing each other and children will be provided with their own stationery packs. Equipment that cannot be easily cleaned will be removed from classrooms including the removal of all soft toys, soft furnishing etc. This will also be the case for playground equipment. Outdoor learning will be encouraged where possible and classrooms will be naturally ventilated at all times.

Good hygiene practice will be in place: cleaning hands more often than usual; washing hands thoroughly for 20 seconds with running water and soap; promoting the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach and frequent cleaning of touched surfaces and resources. Each bubble will be allocated specific toilets to use to minimise contact further.

If my child / a family member is considered to be clinically extremely vulnerable, should I still send my child to school?

The government advises children who have been classed as clinically extremely vulnerable due to pre-existing medical to shield, therefore, we do not expect these children to be attending school. Parents of children in the clinically vulnerable (but not clinically extremely vulnerable) category should follow medical advice. We recommend before making any decision that you seek and follow advice from your doctor. This is true also to any children who live in a household of people who fall into these categories.

Can siblings attend school if one of them is in Nursery, Reception, Year 1 or Year 6?

The government guidelines state that unless children are in Nursery, Reception, Year 1, Year 6 or are children of critical workers they will not be allowed into school at this stage.

Will school uniform be required?

Uniforms should be worn although we will be flexible and lenient. I am aware that children will have grown and you may not have been able to purchase appropriate clothing or shoes. At this stage, uniform is not something we want parents to worry about!

What will happen if I choose not to send my child to school?

This decision is **YOUR** choice and the Government has stated that there will be **NO** penalties for non-attendance.

What happens if there is a confirmed case of coronavirus?

If a child or staff member develops symptoms compatible with coronavirus, they will be sent home and advised to self-isolate for 7 days. Their fellow household members should self-isolate for 14 days. All staff and children in the bubble will have access to a test if they display symptoms of coronavirus, and are encouraged to get tested in this scenario.

Where the child or staff member tests negative, they can return to school and the fellow household members can end their self-isolation.

Where the child or staff member tests positive, the rest of the bubble will be sent home and advised to self-isolate for 14 days. The other household members of that bubble do not need to self-isolate unless the child or staff member they live with subsequently develops symptoms. This is a vital action to ensure the risks are reduced to all staff and children in the school and help prevent the spread of the virus.

Next steps

I will be sending out more information next week once we have had responses back from the parents in Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6, regarding whether they are sending their children back to school. This will outline further details, as I'm sure many of you will have more questions.

In the meantime, please continue to look after yourselves and your loved ones and know that all staff here at Grange Park are committed to supporting our children and families through this difficult time.

With my very best wishes

Tijen Hassan
Headteacher