

18th May 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

We are writing to you with more details about our plans for after half-term (as they stand at this point in time).

I first want to thank you, our parents. We know for many of you it has been a challenging time: isolation, working from home, home schooling, redundancy, furlough and illness, but during this time you have shown resilience, you have offered your help to other members of the community, found teaching skills you never knew you had, stayed in contact with us and sent us some fantastic emails, videos, and we've had some great phone calls. You have also helped your children to complete some amazing work.

I also want to thank our staff. They have done the most amazing job transferring to virtual teachers. I am so, so proud of them. Every school day, week after week they have produced work for your children, set the continuation of learning tasks, replied to numerous emails, spoken to you and /or your child on the phone (which on some days has taken up to 3 or 4 hours a day), provided emotional support, run the Haven (our childcare for key worker children), continued with their professional development, revised planning for the summer and autumn terms, and supported me. You may say that is their job, and to an extent I agree, but the manner in which they've done it has been above and beyond. We also have to remember that many of our staff have been dealing with their own issues: home schooling their own children, postponing honeymoons, partners on furlough, reduced incomes or redundancy, isolation from partners or serious illness in their own family. However, from the positivity of the emotional support they have given to children and parents, you wouldn't know the personal challenges they have faced. I am very grateful to them.

So, to the future. The government announced that the plan is for Reception, Y1 and Y6 to return to school on Monday 1st June, aiming for other year groups to return for the last four weeks of school. I am not going to go into the Government's reasoning but I have put the links to the government documentation at the end of this newsletter for you to read through.

Our job is to plan for the possible reopening. If we follow the government's guidance and implement our own reopening plan, a plan we have developed with staff and governors, we believe we can reopen on the 1st June. We have had our own plan in place for a while; we have tweaked it using the latest government guidance and discussed with staff. All our staff who are able to return to work want to do everything they can to make this work in a safe, calm and sensible way. They are positive, in agreement with our reopening plans, and they want the children back. Our Deputy CEO has written a very robust risk assessment which all schools have completed and this has been quality assured by Trustees.

However, and here is the however, it won't be quite as it was prior to closing in March. Essentially, children will be in groups of 15 and, as far as possible, they will stay in this group (or 'bubble' as we're calling it) in classrooms, outside at break time, lunch time etc with a staff member from their year group.

In summary:

- Classes will have no more than 15 children, with each group of 15 being a 'bubble'

- They will stay as a bubble in class, outside at break time, lunch time etc
- Reception and Y1 classes will be split into small groups/bubbles and each groups/bubble, with a staggered start (between 8.30am and 9.15am) and end to the day (between 2.45pm and 3.15pm)
- Year 6 will be split into groups/bubbles and come to school everyday
- Y2/3/4/5 will continue to learn at home. Schools will continue to provide resources
- We are making enquiries to find out if Chartwells will be serving hot lunches.

Thank you for your continued support, stay safe and well everyone. Look after yourselves and your families.

Melanie Barrow,
CEO

We cannot cover every scenario in this letter but on the last page are the links to the government documents we are working from. For those year groups that are in school, the aim is to have as normal a school day as possible, but with only half the class in at any one time and classes/year groups will not mix as they usually do—e.g. in assemblies, break times, lunch times etc, similar to some of the things we implemented in March.

My child is in Reception, what else can you do to keep them safe?

As we said, social distancing between pupils will not be enforced in Reception (because it can't be achieved in a humane manner). Therefore, we are having smaller classes, removing some equipment, increasing hygiene practices, washing hands more frequently, washing what equipment we can and spending more time outdoors.

What is a bubble?

- 15 children in a bubble (half the usual class number) usually with their class teacher and teaching assistant
- Adults and children will stay in this bubble all day, in their specified area of the school
- Bubbles will be made up of a balance of boys and girls, additional needs etc. Bubbles are fixed
- Children will be spread out in class and there will be staggered playtimes/lunchtimes for year groups
- Children will be encouraged to stay in their bubbles at playtimes, through playing in designated parts of the playground/field
- Less sharing of equipment—children will have their own learning spaces with equipment and books
- Bags, coats etc. will be in classrooms not in cloakrooms
- Using outside spaces more, moving in the corridors less and one-way systems where possible

Government documents Coronavirus (COVID-19):

[Guidance for schools and other educational settings](#)

[What parents and carers need to know about schools and other education settings during the coronavirus outbreak](#)

[Actions for educational and childcare settings to prepare for wider opening from 1 June 2020](#)

[Overview of scientific advice and information on coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)

What will happen if my child is in the specified year group to attend school but I choose not send him/her in?

Parents can choose not to send their children in to school at this time and there will no fines for non-attendance. Please do let the school know if you choose not to send your child in so we can discuss how best to support you.

Our teachers work very hard but they cannot run a full time physical and full time virtual classroom. It must be understood that they will do their best to set learning for home schooling but they will have less capacity to do so moving forward.

How can I communicate with the school office?

- For the safety of our office staff, we ask you to communicate with the office via email and phone, even if you are on the premises.
- All items required for the day should enter school with the child. Forgotten items **should not** be brought in and will not be accepted.
- If you do have to come to the office, only one person in the lobby at a time and please stand at least two metres from the office window.

What will we do if there is a suspected COVID-19 case?

- We have a separate, allocated isolation room which will only be used for suspected cases
- The child will be supervised by an adult who will wear PPE equipment
- The parent will be called to come and collect the child

What happens if there is a confirmed case?

The child/staff member would self isolate for 7 days, with rest of household isolating for 14 days.

Any child or member of staff who displays symptoms will be encouraged to be tested for COVID-19.

Where the child/staff member tests negative, they can return to school.

Where the test is positive, the rest of the 'bubble' will be sent home and advised to self-isolate for 14 days. Household members of the bubble do not need to self-isolate unless the child/staff member subsequently develops symptoms.

What should I do if my family are shielding or extremely clinically vulnerable?

Children classed as extremely clinically vulnerable due to pre-existing medical conditions are not expected to return to school. Those classed as clinically vulnerable should follow medical advice as to whether a return to school at this time is advisable. If your child lives with an extremely clinically vulnerable adult then they should only attend 'if stringent social distancing can be adhered to'. As a school we cannot guarantee that, therefore your child will need to stay at home.

Will my child be socially distanced 100% of the time?

The government has been clear: the focus is on bubbles of up to 15. Primary-aged children cannot be expected to remain 2 metres apart from each other and staff. In Reception, social distancing is impossible and we will not even try to implement it as it could have greater emotional harm if implemented. In other year groups, children will be socially-distanced in the classroom. If your child needs medical attention that will be dealt with in the usual way, i.e. not socially distanced. The focus is on:

- Minimising contact and not mixing between bubbles
- Avoiding contact with anyone with symptoms
- Frequent hand washing and good respiratory practices
- Regular cleaning of settings

As a parent how can I help?

- Take your child's temperature before you come to school;
- If your child is at all unwell, or has a temperature above 37.8o c keep them at home.
- Ensure your child has washed their hands
- Be on time and stick to your time for the staggered start to the day
- School adults will not be routinely wearing face coverings so please socially distance from the teacher, and other adults
- Drop and go, please keep moving and do not stop and chat in the playground or outside the gates. At pick up time please be prompt but socially distance while waiting
- Send any messages for teachers via the school office phone number/email rather than on the playground
- Use allocated entrance and exit routes

When will my Reception/Y1/Y6 child come to school?

Reception/Y1 parents/carers will next week receive further communication about timings of the school day. Drop of and pick up times will be staggered.

Siblings will be able to be collected at the same time. Each school will have different arrangements and they will write to parents directly.

What about if I am a critical worker?

From 1st June each school will provide a base for their own critical worker children. The Haven at Laxfield will close for everyone but Laxfield's pupils. Please let your school know if you want to take up critical worker's children places.

What about Y2/3/4/5?

At the moment these year groups will stay at home with the intention of returning for the last four weeks of term. If Y2/3/4/5 do return, then the plan at the moment will be a similar format to Y1, i.e. bubbles of 15 and possibly attending on alternate days.

- Y2/3/4/5 will continue to learn virtually.
- You can continue to contact school if you need to.
- Phone contact will be reduced as teachers will be covering, preparing lessons and covering other year groups as needed.

Safeguarding and Domestic Violence

Our key priority is always the care and safeguarding of children. We are in regular contact with many families and pupils but, if you have a non-urgent safeguarding issue you can contact MASH (multi-agency safeguarding hub) on 0808 800 400 or the police on 999.

The freephone, 24-hour National Domestic Abuse Helpline [0808 2000 247](tel:08082000247)