



**The Federation of
Hackbridge Primary School and Spencer Nursery School**

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Dear Parents/Carers

Planning for a full reopening in September 2020

Last week, the government issued their guidance to schools for full opening from the beginning of the autumn term.

Having read this, we are now in the process of updating our risk assessment with a view to our whole school community, including our new Nursery and Reception intakes, coming to school in September.

The government guidance is absolutely clear about the public health advice that schools must follow to minimise the risks of coronavirus (COVID-19) transmission. It clearly details the set of actions that schools must take in terms of prevention and response to infection and all members of our school community will be required to adhere to these. This includes pupil, parent and staff engagement with the NHS Test and Trace process in every case where they are relevant.

How to group children

Throughout the last 16 weeks, we have worked on the principle of 'bubbles' to minimise contacts and mixing between people. The new government advice acknowledges that the use of small groups restricts the normal operation of schools and presents both educational and logistical challenges. They are therefore recommending that in order to get all pupils back to school in September, in primary schools we should mostly implement groups the size of a full class. i.e. 30 children.

They do, however, advise that 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 or wraparound care. 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.

The guidance continues to recognise that younger children will not be able to maintain social distancing, and that it is acceptable for them not to distance within their group. All teachers and other staff can operate across different classes and year groups in order to facilitate the delivery of the school timetable.

Measures within the classroom and around the school

For children old enough, they will be supported to maintain distance and not touch staff and their peers where possible. This will not be possible for the youngest children and some children with complex needs, but we will do this where we can.

The guidance advises us to make small adaptations to the classroom to support distancing where possible. This will include seating pupils side by side and facing forwards, rather than face to face or side on.

The government advise that groups should be kept apart – this means that we will not have assemblies and classes will have staggered playtimes in marked out areas of the playground.

Movement around the school will be kept to a minimum. While passing briefly in the corridor or playground is low risk, schools should avoid creating busy corridors, entrances and exits.

Lunchtime – including School Dinners/Packed Lunches

We will implement staggered break times and lunch times for the autumn term.

The logistics of ensuring that 700+ pupils are able to receive their lunchtime meal within a suitable lunchtime timescale means that we are currently considering whether to continue only offering packed lunches through our catering service for the autumn term, with classes eating in their classrooms as those groups attending this term have done so.

If your child is usually a school dinner, you can therefore choose to credit your ParentPay account so that a packed lunch is made for them in school daily, or you can opt to send them with a packed lunch from home.

Children who are in receipt of free school meals from Nursery (where attending full-time) to Year 6, as well as all pupils in Reception to Year 2 who are entitled to a universal infant free school meals, can have a school packed lunch daily. Parents cannot send in any additional lunch items in this instance.

Measures for arriving at and leaving school

The government guidance advises schools to consider staggered starts or adjusting start and finish times to keep groups apart as they arrive and leave school. Staggered start and finish times will not reduce the amount of overall teaching time.

It is likely that we will bring children into school, and dismiss them at the end of the day, over a half hour period, with three arrival/leaving times. You will be advised what time your child(ren) can arrive at school and what time they must be collected. We intend to do this by alphabetical groups as opposed to year groups so that all children in a family can arrive/leave together and to ensure that no parent has to wait in the driveway at drop off/collection time. It is essential that all parents/carers adhere to these times, for the safety of our whole community.

We understand that many of you will not have seen each other, or school staff, for a number of months when we do return. However, gathering at the school gates, group conversations and otherwise coming onto the site without an appointment is not allowed.

Face coverings

Pupils and staff who need to wear face coverings to travel on public transport must remove them themselves before entering the school gates. Children must be instructed not to touch the front of their face covering during use or when removing them. They must wash their hands immediately on arrival (as is the case for all pupils), 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 again before heading to their classroom.

Other considerations

During the summer term, the equipment and resources that we were allowed to use was minimised. The government have now changed that position for the autumn term, because prevalence of coronavirus (COVID-19) has decreased and because they are so important for the delivery of education. As usual, our pupils do not need to bring their own pencil cases or writing equipment. Classroom based resources, such as books and games, can be used and shared within the bubble; these will be cleaned regularly, along with all frequently touched surfaces. Resources that are shared between classes or bubbles, such as sports, art and science equipment will be cleaned frequently and always between bubbles, or rotated to allow them to be left unused and out of reach for a period of 48 hours (72 hours for plastics) between use by different bubbles.

Children must limit what they bring into school each day – only lunch boxes, hats, coats and books will be permitted. Children bringing a school bag must only bring a SMALL bag – not a large style rucksack.

Travelling to school

Due to government advice about using public transport, we would encourage parents, staff and pupils to walk or cycle to school if at all possible.

Attendance

During the summer term, school attendance was not mandatory. This will change from the beginning of September 2020. The government states that it is vital for all children to return to school to minimise as far as possible the longer-term impact of the pandemic on children's education, wellbeing and wider development. School attendance will therefore be mandatory again from the beginning of the autumn term.

Pupils who are shielding or self-isolating

Government guidance on shielding currently ends on 1st August 2020 and therefore all pupils are expected back in school in September, unless there is any change to this. Any pupil who generally remains under the care of a specialist health professional may need to discuss their care with their health professional before returning to school and put in writing any recommendations about their attendance if they deem this necessary.

Pupils and families who are anxious about return to school

We are very aware of the potential concerns of pupils, parents and households who may be reluctant or anxious about returning to school in September. We very much hope that those members of our school community who have returned to us this term can appreciate that we have thought very carefully about the measures that we have put in place and about providing as 'normal' a school experience as we can for children at this time. The reality is that some things will have changed and we cannot yet go back to how things once were – however, it is our priority to ensure happy children who enjoy coming to school, just as it has always been.

Catch up funding

It has been widely reported in the media that the government have announced a catch-up package for schools. We do not currently have any further details as to what the package for our school will look like, but once we do, we will determine how this will be used to support all our pupils in the best way possible.

School uniform

Our uniform policy will be applicable in full from the start of the autumn term. 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.

Extra-curricular provision and wraparound care

The government have advised schools to consider resuming breakfast and after-school provision, where possible, from the start of the autumn term. At the same time, they recognise that this will be logistically challenging for schools, particularly for clubs that would normally offer support across year groups, where parents are using multiple providers, or where childminders are picking up/dropping off pupils.

In order to make our own Breakfast Club provision work alongside our wider protective measures, we will keep children who have agreed places in our Breakfast Club within their year groups where possible; whilst these will be different to their class bubbles, they will be small, consistent groups.

We will be liaising with Jancett Playsafe Clubs who run our After School Club on site to ascertain what measures they are proposing to put in place to re-open their provision in the autumn also.

The government ask us to advise parents/carers to limit the number of different wraparound providers they access, as far as possible. Where parents use childcare providers or out of school activities for their children, we would ask you to seek assurance that the providers are carefully considering their own protective measures, and only use those providers that can demonstrate this. As with physical activity during the school day, contact sports should not take place.

Curriculum and Pupil Wellbeing

Our staff have already been working on the curriculum that we will deliver when we return in September. Teachers are planning on the basis of the educational needs of pupils – curriculum planning will be informed by an assessment of pupils' starting points and addressing the gaps in their knowledge and skills.

The children's current class teachers have undertaken a review of the year group curriculum in order to let the new teachers for 2020/2021 know what areas will need covering, or additional focus, when we return fully.

We will also have a significant focus on PSHE and wellbeing when we first return in September. We recognise that many of our children will not have attended an education setting for almost six months by the time the start of the autumn term arrives. The return to school will allow social interaction with peers and staff, which benefits wellbeing. We are specifically planning activities and sessions to:

- support the rebuilding of friendships and social engagement
- address and equip pupils to respond to issues linked to coronavirus (COVID-19)
- support pupils with approaches to improving their physical and mental wellbeing

In the latest guidance, there are some specific restrictions around music lessons – further guidance is due and will form part of our risk assessment.

PE, largely in the form of outdoor sports, will be prioritised where possible, with indoor hall spaces used where it is not feasible (for example, weather permitting). Contact sports are not permitted in any form.

We will consider at the beginning of the term what capacity we have for any of our own extra-curricular activities, as well as those external coaches/clubs that we would ordinarily work with. This again requires us to be confident about the protective measures in place and we will only use those providers that can demonstrate this.

Contingency planning for outbreaks

If a local area sees a spike in infection rates that is resulting in localised community spread, appropriate authorities will decide which measures to implement to help contain the spread. The Department for Education will be involved in decisions at a local and national level affecting a geographical area, and will support appropriate authorities and individual settings to follow the health advice. We will provide more information on this process in due course.

In the event of a local outbreak, the PHE health protection team or local authority may advise a school or number of schools to close temporarily to help control transmission. We are building a contingency plan for this eventuality.



We do appreciate this is a lot of information, and that there will be more to follow in order to ensure that our school community is fully prepared for full school re-opening in September.

Please trust that our priority remains putting the right measures in place to ensure the safety of our school community as well as opening our school back up to welcome back all of you that we have missed seeing since the enforced closure in March. We will share our full risk assessment for the full reopening in due course.

Yours sincerely

Emma Walford
Headteacher