



Homefield Church of England Primary School

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Dear Parents/Carers,

13th May 2020

Re: Coronavirus Update – Re-Opening of School for Certain Year Groups

As always, I hope this finds you all safe and well. Following the announcement to re-open schools by Monday 1st June, my leadership team and chair of governors have thoroughly discussed, planned and organised how this needs to look for Homefield in order to maximise the safety and well-being for all involved. To make all the necessary preparations, we may not be able to meet this date, delaying opening until Monday 8th June. Thank you to all those parents of these certain year groups that completed the initial online survey. Another one will be needed, but your comments, concerns and reasons have all been read and I hope this letter answers the many questions you will have helping you to make a more concrete decision as to whether to send your child back to school or not. Please understand that the decisions we have made, are made following guidance and for the safety of all and they are decisions that best suit our setting.

My staff and I miss all our pupils greatly and we all wish to extend our appreciation for the hard work you, as parents, have been doing through your various key worker roles, through the effort you have made to educate with home learning and through keeping your children safe. Bravo!

If you do keep your child at home, please know it is your decision and I will fully understand and respect you for it. You will not receive any further action nor fines for non-attendance. I am a parent myself and I have already made the decision not to send my own children back to school. This is because no matter what lengths we go to, I am unsure whether we can truly implement all the safety measures to the level the Government are asking. Children learn best by touching, doing, being with others and sharing. All of which will be limited as far as is possible. **School will not be school; nothing will be normal. Children will not be playing with one another and never in close contact with others.**

Despite our best efforts, I must reiterate to all our parents and pupils to understand that a return to school is going to look and feel whole-heartedly different to the one that was left back in March. The increased level of health and safety required is going to intensely restrict the freedoms all of us took for granted prior to the closure. The main reason for this is to keep everyone safe. As a result, the rules we have put in place, explained in this letter, **MUST** be followed strictly without issue. If you or your child do not feel able to adhere to these rules, I must ask you to keep your child at home.

Classes:

As a school, we have decided that our Nursery pupils are simply too young to grasp social distancing safely and as a result, we will not be allowing any Nursery pupils into school, not even those Nursery children of key workers. Nursery pupils are not statutory school age and we are concerned the severity of restrictions will be too much for them to contend with emotionally; as I am sure, it will be for many older pupils. Home learning will still be accessible via Tapestry as normal for them. Transition information will be shared with parents in due course. Please see our main school website for further information on joining our Reception class as a new parent, as there is now a dedicated page for you.



This will mean Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 will be accommodated, alongside older key worker children. We are not taking siblings from other year groups.

No uniform is necessary, but fresh and clean clothing will be needed each day for hygiene reasons. Please do not send children in wearing the same clothing.

Key Workers:

We will remain open for the pupils of key workers, however to keep numbers manageable, we are now prioritising the children where both parents are key workers or have a parent in the NHS. Children who are deemed vulnerable or have social care involvement will also be admitted. If there is any dispute regarding key worker roles, evidence will be requested to prove this. Booking your child in on our online system will be essential. Pupils who are not booked in and simply turn up will not be admitted. Booking must be completed by lunchtime on the Sunday preceding the week you wish your children to be in. Please ensure you book the days you wish your child to be in for the whole week, because although places can be cancelled, spaces cannot be added through the week.

Please note that if key worker children, who are in Reception, Year 1 or Year 6 arrive, at 8:00am, they will not be able to be with their own year group bubble at any time during the day, because these pupils arrive later. As a key worker parent, you will need to decide whether your child is coming in at the time for the key worker bubble or the year group bubble and stick to it. You will not be able to have your child in both. **Bubbles cannot mix.**

Logistical Arrangements:

Our school site is small in comparison to many others. We have only eight classrooms and a Hall, which will be turned into a makeshift classroom. The Government have suggested the use of "bubbles," which, using social distancing measures, means we can only accommodate between seven and ten pupils in a classroom (ten in the bigger classrooms, but lower in the smaller classrooms). These have been measured out and chair spaces demarcated. I have attached a picture for you to see. These bubbles are designed this way so that any outbreak of the virus can be tracked and traced and those people who have been affected can then be isolated and tested.

We must cap the number for each year group to fifteen pupils, because we simply do not have the space to house a whole class safely. If we get requests for more, we may need to rotate who comes in weekly. They will be spread across two/three classrooms. To accommodate potentially 160 pupils, I would need in excess of twenty classrooms and all staff would need to be in school, leaving me requiring even more adults.

Key Worker Children (Not already in Years R, 1 or 6): Hall

Reception: Nursery Classroom, Reception Classroom (Outdoor Classroom may need to be used in an emergency)

Year 1: Year 1, Year 2 and Year 3 Classrooms

Year 6: Year 4, Year 5 and Year 6 Classrooms

Each bubble classroom will have staff teaching and supervising the children in their care. This staff team will be consistent for the children. At no point, will pupils from different bubbles be able to mix: no bubble can play or work together. Only one bubble will only be working with their normal class teacher and some will have work being delivered by teaching assistants.

Furniture will be removed, a one way system will be installed and resources will be highly restricted to reduce the quantity of items that must be cleaned at the end of each day. Children must remain at desks in class and keep their own equipment to themselves. The youngest children will find all these changes the hardest to cope with as they will not be able to do what they did before. They will not be able to sit on the carpets as they are used to, because these will need to be steam cleaned each day and may not be dry in time by the following day. The



days will seem long and as a result we will have to shorten them, in order to enable everyone to be collected in a safe and staggered fashion and to ensure sufficient staff is available.

Learning in School and at Home:

Please let me dispel the myth that children will be returning to school to be with their friends, because the bubbles cannot mix, children cannot get close to one another and friendship groups will be separated.

Year 6 will not be returning to take part in any leavers' events, which would have been the normal tradition. Plays, sports' days, residential and assemblies will not be taking place. We will support them to prepare for transition to their relevant High Schools and with their core subject learning. As yet, we are waiting to find out the transition arrangements from High Schools and we hope that they will be in contact soon to discuss them.

Year 1 will be supported with core subject learning and transition to Year 2.

Reception will be supported with core subject learning and transition to Year 1.

Out of fairness, the children in school will be given the same learning as those deciding to remain at home from Reception, Year 1 and Year 6. The other year groups not mentioned (N, 2, 3, 4 and 5) will still have home learning prepared for them to support their core subject learning. Home learning packs will be prepared only for those in most need at home and not for any pupils already in school. There will be no advantage to being in school, because school will not be the same.

Children in school will be given their own pen, pencil, scissors to use. Children are allowed to bring in their own pencil case of equipment from home. This equipment will be kept for them alone to use and there can be no sharing. Coats, lunchboxes, drinks bottles and outdoor shoes will be kept on the backs of their chairs and under their tables respectively. Please make sure all children have a water bottle.

PPE, Toilets and Hygiene:

All staff will be wearing face shields/visors as a barrier against the virus, particularly when in close proximity to pupils, such as when in class, for first aid or for other intimate care needs. Please show your children what this will look like so as to prepare them for seeing them.

Guidance states that face masks are not needed to be worn by children, therefore please do not send your children in with them. These could increase the anxiety of the pupils in school and will pose more of a hindrance than a help. Any child wearing one will be asked to remove them. If you strongly wish your child to wear a face mask, please keep them at home.

To reduce the number of pupils using the same set of toilets, bubbles will be allocated a set of toilets which they must use throughout the day. We will ensure children have accessed these regularly to avoid accidents. These will be cleaned during the day.

Nursery bubble uses Nursery toilets. (Outdoor classroom bubble, if used, will use the playground Nursery door to access the toilet in Nursery.)

Reception bubble uses Reception toilets.

Hall bubble uses narrow Corridor toilets.

Year 1 bubble uses Year 1 toilets.

Years 2 classroom bubble and Year 3 classroom bubble use the Boys' and Girls' changing room toilets.

Year 4 classroom bubble, Year 5 classroom bubble and Year 6 classroom bubble use the playground toilets.

Year 6 staff use the disabled toilet, Year 1 staff use the main corridor toilets and Reception staff use the Nursery staff toilet.



As always, regular handwashing for at least twenty seconds will be carried out throughout the day.

Regularly touched surfaces will be cleaned throughout the day and class doors will be propped open to reduce the frequency of touching door handles. Windows will be ajar for ventilation also. Bins will be emptied should they need to be through the day.

Staff will be using three separate staff room spaces, so as to limit the close contact they have with other staff. These will be the Nursery staff room, the main staff room and the little kitchen.

Social distancing will be respected at all times across the school. All fire regulations will still be adhered to.

Break Times

Break times will be staggered across the day. Different year groups will not be outside at the same time.

At the moment, we have divided up our playing field and playground into three sections. These sections will be for up to three bubbles per year group to play and exercise in each day. During these times, bubbles can see their friends and chat to one another from a distance. However, once again, separate bubbles cannot mix across the two-metre boundaries at any point during break time, as well as following the two-metre social distancing within their own play spaces.

10:00-10:15: Reception

10:15-10:30: Year 1

10:30-10:45: Key Worker Pupils

10:45-11:00: Year 6

The trim trail and climbing walls cannot be used and are out of bounds to all, due to the fact that these will need cleaning after each use and this is simply not feasible alongside the other increased cleaning we must do internally.

Behaviour:

As is always expected, behaviour must be exemplary. Any pupil who is unable to meet this expectation will be asked to stay at home. This is in order to maintain the safety and emotional calmness of all whilst in school.

Lunchtimes:

Our school will only be able to provide packed lunches practically and safely to those requiring one. Children will eat in their classrooms at staggered points during a 30-minute lunch break. Once again, pupils will be able to go outside, weather-permitting, to exercise but only within their allocated space.

Reception: 11:30-12:00

Year 1: 12:00-12:30

Year 6: 12:30-1:00

Key Worker Pupils: 1:00-1:30

Drop-Off in the Mornings:

Drop-offs and collections will be staggered to ensure we do not have too many people arriving at the same time for safety.

For Reception, Year 1 children and Key Worker children younger than Year 6, only one parent will be allowed to accompany the children on our site. If more than one parent/adult is with a child, they will be asked politely to leave the premises and reminded to adhere to the rule. If pre-school age children are brought to school, we stress that these young children must be kept alongside you and are not permitted to wander around. Where possible, it is advisable to not



bring them into school. Year 6 children do not need an adult with them and can walk into school from the gate. They are not to walk in together with friends, but to respect social distancing at all times.

Social distancing markings will be visible for those arriving and picking up. These are sprayed on to the ground. All visitors to the site must respect the social distancing and wait patiently if a queue forms. If social distancing is not being respected, you will be reminded politely of the rule. Failure to adhere to it will result in you being asked to leave the premises.

Only the Homefield Avenue gates will be open and the car park is not to be used by any parents at any time to ensure pedestrian safety.

If any parent needs to speak to a teacher, a telephone appointment must be made through email. There will be no face-to-face meetings. Email addresses have already been distributed and can be found on the letter on our website dated 19.3.20.

On arrival, children will have their temperatures taken to ensure these are all below 37.8 degrees Celsius.

8:00: Key Worker children, not in Reception, Year 1 or Year 6, need to arrive at the Hall double doors using the footpath and leave via the main car park gate.

8:30: Reception children need to arrive at the Reception classroom outside door using the footpath clearly demarcated with signs and cones. Keep left on arrival and departure. Please wait at the flag-poles if you were at the front of the queue to be called forward by staff.

9:00: Year 1 children need to follow the footpath around the school to the playground and entrance will be at the playground door into school. Parents can leave via the main car park gate.

9:30: Year 6 using the footpath go around to the Year 6 steps.

Collection in the Afternoons:

Departing school, children will need to be collected at staggered times again. However, we ask that you are prompt and ready for collecting your child.

2:00: Reception children collected from the Reception classroom outside door. Children will be brought to the exit area socially distanced and each parent in turn will have their child handed over one at a time. Once again, please queue and wait patiently and safely arriving through the footpath gate and departing via the main car park gate. Nursery bubble will be brought at the same time to queue up by new pedestrian gateway, so parents can be seen. When leaving, return back past others queuing near the bike sheds, keeping left and exit on to the car park through the open gate next to the minibus. Please leave the school premises via the main car park gate.

2:30: Year 1 to be collected from the playground doorway. The Year 1 bubbles in other classrooms will use their outside doors to see who is queuing to collect in turn. Please arrive via the footpath following it round to the playground socially distancing safely. Please leave via the main car park gate.

3:00: Key Worker children need to be collected from the Hall doorway queuing along the footpath on arrival and leaving through main car park gate.

Year 6 children also need to depart at this time from the Year 6 exit steps and depart using the main school gate. Any parents arriving to collect Year 6 enter through the main school gate and socially distance on the field not on the path. Children will be handed over in turn. Those children expected to walk home by themselves, must do so respecting the social distancing measures. Please leave through the main car park gate.

We will be closed from 1:00pm on Fridays allowing for deeper cleaning and full time teaching staff contractual non-contact entitlement. We will remain open only for the key worker children



bubble until 3:00pm. As a result, departure locations and procedures will be the same as on any other day, but at the following times:

Reception: 12:00

Year 1: 12:30

Year 6: 1:00

Key Worker Pupils: 3:00

Medical and Illness:

If your child has a serious underlying health condition, please do not send them into school, particularly if the condition increases their vulnerability and susceptibility to this virus. Please seek further medical advice if you are unsure.

If you or any other member of your household presents with symptoms of the virus, do not come into school. Contact the national medical helpline.

If any person becomes symptomatic within school, they will be isolated and parents will be called to collect and self-isolate at home.

Final Word:

I apologise for sounding so blunt, but I must inform you of the harsh facts as they are so that you can make the correct decision for you and your child. This information is needed so that your decisions are not solely based on the concerns that the children need routine, miss their friends or are missing out on work. Of course, we will endeavour to make the experience positive for all those who do come into school, but it will not be what they are expecting and they will find it hard to adapt. The Government aim is to get all classes back in a month before we break for the Summer. This is simply not feasible. The best we could aim for is a rotation system for each year group, but this is yet to be discussed and risk assessed.

Nevertheless, please understand this is the most challenging issue I have ever been confronted with in my professional career and I hope you now understand the reasoning behind the decisions that have been made. Some may not be happy with them, but I can assure you many other permutations have been deliberated over. The lack of clarity from the Government has not helped and general, sweeping statements cannot be applied in every setting.

I will now need you to complete another survey, but only after you have read this letter giving us a definitive answer, Yes or No, as to whether you are sending your child back into school so that we can plan properly with accurate numbers. Sadly, we are unable to manage part-time pupils in Reception, Year 1 and Year 6, so if pupils are in, they will be in every day.

If you have any concerns, please feel free to contact me or Chair of Governors via the school office.

Stay safe everyone!

Yours faithfully,



Mr. B. Young
Headteacher



Mr. J. Earle
Chair of Governors

