



# Deanery C.E. Primary School

Head Teacher: Mrs Jayne Lockett, BSc (Hons), PGCE, NPQH



21 May 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

Firstly, I would like to thank you for your continued support and encouragement that you are providing to both your children and to school through this very challenging time. Together we can gain strength in faith and we can hope for a better world.

Last Sunday, the Prime Minister laid out his ambition for a phased wider opening of schools no earlier than the 1<sup>st</sup> June. Like all schools the emerging details have taken us time to unpick and we are still consulting with other local schools, unions and governors in developing the right approach for Deanery. Our priority remains the health and safety of our children, staff and other members of the school community.

The Government asked schools to prepare a plan for the phased return of some children from the week commencing 1<sup>st</sup> June as long as it is safe to do so. This is as long as the national conditions are right at that time. Last week we received guidance on group sizes and social distancing as well as health and safety measures and guidance for staff.

Schools are being asked to open their doors for pupils in Nursery, Reception, Year 1, and Year 6, in addition to children of critical workers, but recognise that this may not be possible. Where this is the case, schools are being asked to give priority to the youngest children.

The final guidance is expected on 28<sup>th</sup> May when the Government will review the impact of its latest measures. Only then will they be able to allow schools to go beyond the planning stage and to start welcoming additional children into schools.

Our plan is based around the essential aim to ensure that children from the identified year groups are able to attend school safely in small group sizes (no more than 15). To achieve this we need to minimise levels of risk to all children, staff and families, considering the physical and human resources that we have available.

We have begun to look at a plan of a phased return to the wider opening of our school, this is based on a number of complex issues, but fundamentally, the safety of children, staff and parents is the overriding factor. As an Academy, the decision to move forward rests with the governing body however, through collaboration with Sutton Head teachers and talking to the Head teachers of the LTE (Learning Trust for Excellence), taking on board different approaches is helpful and brings about a shared understanding and a more robust response.

As you will appreciate, there is so much to consider and we feel it prudent to take a cautious and measured approach that carefully builds our capacity. This has to include careful consideration of

staffing available, given shielding requirements, and the availability of the supply of much needed resources to ensure we are able to maintain hygiene standards, as set out in the guidance, for the short, medium and longer term.

We are prepared to update and amend our arrangements as the situation changes. However, we feel it is important to take a careful, measured approach. Over the last week, we have surveyed both critical worker requirements and those children in the intended year groups; Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 in order to appreciate demand for a return to school. This has resulted in many questions, which I hope I have addressed below.

On Monday, I held a virtual meeting of the governing body and they have supported our phased approach to the prime minister's announcement.

### **Phase 1 Week beginning 1<sup>st</sup> June 2020.**

The current Foxes arrangement for key worker children will continue to operate in the usual way for those children of parents who have already booked.

Home learning will also continue to be set by teachers to provide the quality resources and learning opportunities as we have shared for the last 8 weeks. The contact email for children will also continue, along with phone calls home.

All staff will be in school to begin to implement the necessary arrangements to prepare the school environment for the wider return for some children. This includes removing soft furnishings, carpets, soft toys from the classrooms, removal of all resources that cannot be easily cleaned, the separating of desks and establishing learning stations. In addition, to undertaking statutory tests and checks to maintain the building and undertake the necessary refinements to prepare to receive staff and children.

During this week, we will continue to engage with you through our parent questionnaire to seek your views and feelings and how this period of separation has impacted on your family and children. We are extremely mindful, that children will have had different experiences and we will continue to endeavour to provide individual support and guidance. We will also provide an additional survey for critical workers in Years 6, Year 1, Reception and Nursery.

Senior leaders will review and risk assess the arrangements to safely accommodate the return of children in the identified year groups. This risk assessment will be shared with governors for consideration.

Once risk assessments have been approved, safety arrangements can be shared and letters sent out to formally invite children back to school.

### **Phase 2 Week beginning 8<sup>th</sup> June 2020**

If all health and safety protocols have been completed, resources are in place, health and safety measures applied and staffing ratios are sufficient, we can begin to introduce children of critical worker parents to attend school, following a staggered start.

Foxes will cease to operate for key worker children this week.

Children will be assigned to a 'bubble'; a small group of children with a designated member of staff. Bubbles will remain together all day in their specific classroom. Another adult may join them during

lunchtime. Children will continue to have playtime and exercise outside, weather permitting, in a designated zone to eliminate children coming into contact with staff or children from other bubbles.

There will be a staggered start and end of the school day to facilitate social distancing for parents and children.

All details of the school day relevant to each 'bubble' will be shared in the invitation letter, however, the school day will run from a drop off time between 9am and 9:15am, with collection between 3pm and 3:15, or drop off between 9:15am and 9:30am, with a collection between 3:15pm and 3:30pm. Specific one-way systems and waiting and drop off/collection zones will also be shared. Parents will be required to adhere to the allotted times to limit pinch points around school.

Children will attend school daily. Every Friday, school will be closed after lunch to enable a thorough clean of the school and teachers will continue to make phone calls to children not attending school. There will be a staggered collection of children after lunchtime.

Our catering staff will be providing school meals for all children who qualify for universal free school meals, and for children who would like to book a school dinner. This will be a sandwich and pudding, fruit and drink. Alternatively, children can select to bring in a healthy packed lunch and a drink.

During the week, additional 'bubbles' of children from the governments preferred year groups will be introduced.

Home learning will continue to be set for all children who are unable to return to school.

As a result of the number of parents who have expressed an interest for their child to return to school, it is with a heavy heart that I share with you that at this stage (Phase 2) we will not be able to offer a place for children in Year 6. On behalf of the governing body, I am committed to provide a fitting testament to their time at Deanery, within the current constraints. We will of course, continue to communicate and share our plans when we are able to do so. We have started this process already and will be sending a personal letter to our Year 6 children before we break up tomorrow to explore this further.

There is a great deal of uncertainty, which is challenging for children, parents and school. Whilst we appreciate the information that you have already provided which has guided our re-opening plans, it is important to know that we understand circumstances may change. We are here to support you and encourage you to communicate with us if you have questions or concerns; please email [enquiry@deanery.bham.sch.uk](mailto:enquiry@deanery.bham.sch.uk).

Thank you again for your support and we will continue to communicate with you in due course.  
Whilst we are very keen to welcome as many children back to school as soon as possible, we will do everything we can to make sure that Deanery is a safe place for our children, staff and all members of our school community.

Yours sincerely,

Jayne Lockett

Head Teacher



Joanne Bradbury

Chair of Governors



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## **Frequently asked question**

Guidance to Parents from the Department for education

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers/reopening-schools-and-other-educational-settings-from-1-june>

Guidance to schools from The Department for education

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covi-19-implementing-protective-measures-in-edcatio-and-childcare-settings/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-protective-measures-in-education-and-childcare-settings>

### **Will children lose their school place if they do not attend until September?**

Attendance at school at this time is a parental decision, all school places are secure and parents will not be fined for non attendance.

### **Will home learning continue for those year groups who are offered a school place? (N,R,1,6)**

Home learning will continue and will mirror the education in school, children who continue to home learn will not be at a disadvantage to those attending school.

### **Will home learning continue for all children in years 2,3,4,5?**

Home learning will continue for the year groups not attending school. Children of key workers in school will use the same learning materials set for home learning.

### **How will school handle drop off, pick up, class sizes, lunchtime and social distancing?**

There are allocated places and times for drop offs and collection of children, in order to maintain social distancing for parents and families. This is part of the school risk assessment, available to parents. Only one adult is requested to collect from the school grounds. Class sizes or bubbles will be determined by the size of the classrooms. Each child will eat lunch at their desk in the classroom, for those children who have a school lunch this will be a cold lunch, including a sandwich, snack and a drink. All other children will be required to bring a packed lunch. There will be some time allocated throughout the school day for outdoor play, this will be in their bubble.

### **Will we be able to reassess the decision to allow our children returning to school in the summer term?**

Each child returning week beginning 8<sup>th</sup> June will be in a group bubble, there may be some capacity during the term for your child to return to school but they will not be in the same classroom with the same teacher as their classmates. This will need to be assessed on an individual basis once the bubbles have been established.

### **What are the numbers of children proposed to be with each segregated classroom to allow 2m distance?**

The numbers of children in each bubble may differ depending on the room sizes in order for social distancing to be maintained as a far as possible.

**If my child struggles with social distancing can I stop bringing them?**

It is parental choice whether you decide for your child to return to school, if you make the decision not to bring them if they struggle with any aspect of returning we would fully support that decision.

**What are the procedures for advising parents should ANY child or member of staff be sent with symptoms?**

If any child or staff member develops symptoms of coronavirus they should be sent home and isolate for 7 days. Their household will need to isolate for 14 days. All staff and students will have access to a test if they display symptoms. If this is negative, they can return to school and the household do not need to continue to self-isolate. If the test is positive the rest of the bubble will be sent home and advised to isolate for 14 days. We would communicate this information to you via text message with a follow up phone call.

**Is there an option for children to attend part time or is there an assumption that children will attend every day? Is this the same for key workers and year groups who have returned?**

All children will be expected to attend all day Monday to Thursday 9.00 until 3.30 (with staggered times for drop off and collection) and Friday 9 to 1pm (with staggered times for drop off and collection depending on bubble.

There is no provision for extended care in Nursery or Foxes before and afterschool club, this is to ensure that all bubbles are maintained with the same group of children and the same adult.

**Will Teachers wear PPE?**

PPE is required in some cases for intimate care needs and for when pupils show symptoms. It is the personal choice of each Teacher whether they wish to wear masks or visors in the classroom. There will be therefore a number of staff who may opt to do so.

**Will the schools provide masks for children?**

The school will not provide any PPE including masks for pupils, this is in line with government guidance.

**Where there be an opportunity for children to play outside? What will this look like?**

Children will have set times to be outside in their bubble and take part in non-contact, social distancing will be maintained outdoors.

**The Government speech indicates that all primary children will be returning by the end of June. Have the Deanery heard any more about this?**

The guidance for this has not been released, at present we have capacity to take Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and keyworkers only, in bubbles of socially distanced groups. We will inform parents when this guidance is sent to schools and as soon as we are able.

**Can I see a copy of the risk assessment?**

Parents will have access to the risk assessment, we will make this available once this have been finalised. We will be following the Birmingham City Council risk assessment framework. We feel it is

important that parents read the risk assessment plus the linked documents in order to make an informed decision on the return of their child to school.