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Head Teacher: Mr S Arnold

21st May 2020

Dear Parents/ Carers,

I write with information regarding schools' reopening from 1st June. You will undoubtedly be hearing continued speculation about their safe opening and information about minimum class sizes e.t.c. As a school, we continue to receive updates from both the Department for Education and Wolverhampton Local Authority and it is with these updates in mind, I write to share with you our school plans for the returning of the prioritised year groups: Reception, Year 1 and Year 6.

In reading the following information, I do ask you to be aware of the caveat that, **“Government will only confirm that schools can reopen when it is satisfied that it is safe to do so, and may not make a decision about this until Thursday 28th May.”**

However, following the LA's guidelines, we are planning ahead for the return of the prioritised groups, with an **incremental approach** that is recommended with the necessary caution required in order to maintain staff's and pupils' safety and well-being. I will outline our school's plans for planning and welcoming back Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 pupils in the first instance.

When will school open for pupils in Reception, Year 1 and Year 6?

School will close on Friday 22nd May for half-term for all children. Advised by the Local Authority, there will be an INSET Day on Monday 1st June for staff so that time is given for the sharing of operating purposes and associated risk assessments to ensure the health, safety and well-being of all staff and pupils. School will then begin its incremental approach to the return of year groups.

Steps to keep my child safe

In the planning of school's reopening, safety is paramount and a cautious, measured approach is necessary. Therefore, in order to fulfil health and safety obligations and to manage the risk of infection transmissions, each classroom will be used for fewer pupils with more members of staff within each class.

If you decide for your child/ren to return to school, they will be allocated a 'bubble' consisting of a maximum number of 10 children. Additional caution will be applied to children's wellbeing, with a 2m distance of one another established with their own resources and equipment to hand – provided by school. Children will remain in their designated classroom and 'bubble' and will not be allowed to mix or sit next to other children – either within their bubble, learning outdoors or during break and lunch times. As a staff, whilst encouraging a social distancing between one another, we appreciate this is extremely difficult for children in Reception and Year 1. It may also be distressing for our younger children - wondering why they are unable to play and work in close contact with their peers or friends. We will do our utmost to explain this if joining us when school opens. It would also help immensely if you could help us in explaining the rules and guidelines we are instructed to adhere to at this present time.

In addition to the above steps, we will continue to adhere to and promote the hierarchy of controls advocated by both the Government and Public Health England:

1. Minimising contact with individuals who are unwell by ensuring that those who have coronavirus symptoms, or who have someone in their household who does, do not attend childcare settings, schools or colleges;
2. Cleaning hands more often than usual – washing hands thoroughly for 20 seconds with running water and soap and dry them thoroughly or use alcohol hand rub or sanitise ensuring that all parts of the hands are covered;
3. Ensuring good respiratory hygiene – promote the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach;
4. Cleaning frequently touched surfaces using standard products, such as detergents and bleach;
5. Minimising contact and mixing by alternating, as much as possible, the environment (such as classroom layout) and timetables.

For health and safety information also, please be aware that staff in school will not be using personal protective equipment – other than if it is required when administering first aid whilst tending to a child's personal care need. Similarly, children will not require PPE. However, if a child or member of staff develop COVID-19 symptoms, they will be isolated from others and a supervising adult may use PPE as necessary.

Arrangements for Year 6 children to return

The Government has identified children in Year 6 as a priority group to return in order to prepare for and support their transition to secondary school. Therefore, adopting the recommended incremental approach, we have split both 6G and 6W into 'bubbles' with 10 children in each. As we are limited with the number of classrooms we have and given that one 'bubble' of children must have one classroom as their base and be deep cleaned after the 'bubble's' use, children will be invited to return as follows:

6G Thursday 4th – Friday 5th June
Wednesday 10th – Thursday 11th June
Wednesday 17th – Thursday 18th June

6W Tuesday 2nd – Wednesday 3rd June
Monday 8th – Tuesday 9th June
Monday 15th – Tuesday 16th June.

We are currently planning a 3-week reopening plan for all our returning children as further discussions will ensue as the Government intends all primary school children to be in school a month before the start of the summer holidays. We do not have any guidance regarding this at this time.

I would like to take this opportunity to advise Year 6 parents/ carers that your child's secondary school will be coordinating a limited transition and orienteering programme from week beginning Monday 29th June which may be similar in nature to our school's reopening plan with access on given days to avoid a mixing of children from different 'bubbles'. Plans for this have not been confirmed but will follow in due course.

Arrangements for Reception children to return

Again, our Reception children will be split into 'bubbles' of 10 children if returning to school. The dates for each class are as follows:

RT Monday 8th, Tuesday 9th, Wednesday 10th and Thursday 11th June
RH Monday 15th, Tuesday 16th, Wednesday 17th and Thursday 18th June.

Arrangements for Year 1 children to return

1T Tuesday 2nd, Wednesday 3rd, Wednesday 10th Thursday 11th and Friday 12th June
1O Friday 5th, Monday 8th, Tuesday 16th, Wednesday 17th and Thursday 18th June.

To confirm, all children will work within their designated bubble, accessing incremental days to enable a shared use of classrooms following a deep clean between use.

I must also advise you that given our group formation, we cannot guarantee that your child/ren will have their own class teachers. However, we will endeavour to ensure your child has a member of staff familiar to them.

Teaching and Learning

As the Government have advised, as much learning as possible will take place outdoors – again to reduce the risk of infection transmission. Teachers will plan a creative series of lessons encompassing and reinforcing the basic skills within the core areas of reading, writing and mathematics.

Keyworker children

The Government's list of keyworkers remains the same as when lockdown occurred and I thank all staff for their commitment to the planning of learning and activities for our key workers' children. Key workers' children in Year 2, 3, 4 and 5 will still be able to access school and the key worker provision to support the roles they hold. **Please note it is not possible due to infection transmission to access both the key worker provision and your child's year group reopening days.**

The school day

As we are not permitted to allow children to mix with others outside of their bubble, only keyworker children in Years 2,3,4 and 5 will be able to access Breakfast Club. Unfortunately, we hope you will understand this as we cannot allow a mixing of children from different groups. Because of this, there will also be no after-school provision.

Limits have been applied within the guidelines for 'social distancing' and for eliminating too many adults being on the school site at any one time. Therefore, a staggered start and end of the day will be applied:

Year 6 8:45am – 3:15 pm

Year 1 9:05am – 2:55pm

Rec 9:30am – 2:40pm

In addition to all the guidelines I have detailed, I write further to seek your assistance with specific walkways and directions for dropping off and collecting your child/ren whilst on school premises. Pathways have been marked with 2m distances designed to maintain the respect for social distancing and a specific route has been planned, creating a circuit so that upon dropping or collecting your child in Reception and Year 1, contact with other parents/ carers is reduced, thus supporting your safety. We ask that Year 6 children access school independently and adhere to the markings also. Members of staff will be out on duty to welcome and provide guidance if needed.

Break and Lunchtimes

Year 6 children can continue to bring in snacks for their mid-morning break. We also invite Reception and Year 1 children to bring a healthy snack in too such as a piece of fruit or a healthy snack bar.

If you are eligible for free school meals or a universal free meal for Reception and Year 1 children, your child will be asked to indicate this during registration time. All lunchtime meals will consist of a picnic bag comprising of sandwiches, crisps, fruit, cookie or cake and a drink carton. Lunches will be eaten within classrooms supervised by the teacher leading their bubble prior to being supervised by a lunchtime supervisory assistant in a designated space either on the playground, field, trim trail or forest. Please ensure that your child brings with them a bottle of water – school drinking fountains will be disabled to minimise risk. During break and lunchtimes, children again must remain within their bubble group. Play equipment will be washed with soapy water after each group's use.

School Uniform

Given that it is advised that much learning takes place in a well-ventilated room or outdoor area, we ask children to wear suitable sportswear clothing. The Government state, "there is no need for anything other than normal personal hygiene and washing of clothes following a day in an education or childcare setting". We hope this decision will help you as we are aware that we would normally be asking children to wear summer uniform and are aware of the limitations for obtaining items of clothing as many children will have had a growth spurt with uniforms becoming outgrown.

Behaviour and Rewards

Upon school's reopening to each 'bubble', we will resume our behaviour and rewards policy and in particular, our expectations – working and learning within a very different environment and manner. To support this, we have reviewed our Home School Agreement and I detail it here for your information and acceptance of it:

HOME SCHOOL AGREEMENT

At this challenging time, our school aims can be achieved most effectively when all staff, parents and children understand their responsibilities for staying safe and working together towards the same goals, as detailed in the following:

As a parent/carer,

- I will send my child to school on the designated days for their class.
- I will ensure my child arrives at school punctually and is collected promptly at their designated start time and finish times.
- My child will be wearing washed and clean sportswear for the day and will be able to fasten clothing independently.

- I will send my child to school with their own named water bottle, a snack they can independently open and a packed lunch containing items they can independently open unless you request a free school meal or pre-paid lunch which will consist of a picnic bag.
- I will not send any other items into school. Resources for lessons will be provided by school and cleaned regularly by school staff.
- I will follow the social distancing markings and signage around the school site when dropping off/collecting my child.
- I will follow the clearly marked pathways around the school when arriving/leaving the site respecting distances from other children and their parent/carer.
- I will not send my child to school if they or any person in the household develops any symptoms relating to Covid-19 and inform school immediately.
- I will collect my child immediately from school if contacted for collection because they have shown any symptoms relating to Covid-19.
- I will support the school in promoting positive hygiene strategies such as regular hand washing for at least 20 seconds and the 'Catch it, Bin it, Kill it' approach.
- Wherever possible, I will administer my child's medication before the start of the school day.
- I will support the school behaviour policy and the expectations at Oak Meadow:
 - *We are kind and helpful, i.e. we do not hurt other people's feelings.*
 - *We are gentle, i.e. we do not hurt anyone.*
 - *We listen to other people, i.e. we do not interrupt.*
 - *We work hard, i.e. we do not waste our own or others' time.*
 - *We are honest, i.e. we do not cover up the truth.*
 - *We look after our school property, i.e. we do not waste or damage things.*
- I will continue to support my child's learning on the days they are not in school by completing home learning packs/website work with them.

As a school, we will:

- Care for your child's safety and well-being, ensuring stringent safeguarding and hygiene practices are in place.
- Clean rooms, equipment and resources thoroughly each day.
- Initiate a creative curriculum encompassing basic skills for reading, writing and maths.
- Provide resources that children can use independently and discourage the sharing of equipment.
- Ensure your child will be in a safe group size as advised by the Department for Education.
- Minimise possible contact between different groups of children and adults by allocating your child to a specific bubble.
- Provide a specific room and designated outdoor area for your child's bubble (this bubble may not be with your child's usual class teacher or usual classroom).
- Arrange playtimes to ensure family bubbles of children remain within a designated outdoor area at any one time.
- Encourage opportunities for exercise using non-contact sports such as athletics.
- Contact you immediately and ensure your child is taken out of their bubble to a secure place until they are collected if they show any symptoms relating to Covid-19.
- Endeavour to maintain social distancing wherever possible within your child's bubble and around the school grounds.
- Organise rooms and plan an appropriate curriculum to maintain social distancing wherever possible.
- Ensure there are no mass gatherings of children and events such as whole school assemblies will not take place.
- Soap and hand sanitizer will be provided by school to encourage safe hand washing.
- Administer basic first aid where needed. The adult who is administering the first aid will wear the appropriate personal protective equipment.
- Ensure your child eats their lunch within their designated classroom and bubble.
- Work with the Local Authority and other providers to confirm the specialist provision that can be provided and when services will be available for children with SEND needs and Educational Healthcare plans.
- Not send home any additional materials such as reading books and paper homework.
- Ensure your child washes their hands at regular intervals throughout the school day and always before eating.
- Make sure that we limit external visitors to the school during the working day. Only one parent/ carer will be allowed in the school office at any one time and meetings with parents/ carers will take place at a safe distance adhering to social distancing.
- Continue to update home learning on our school website and provide home learning packs every two weeks.

If your child returns to school and accesses learning, it is our expectation that the above agreement is understood and adhered to. We thank you for your support.

I am aware of the lengthy details of this letter and guidance but feel that it is important you are aware of our school's safety measures and plans for our reopening for Reception, Year 1 and Year 6.

Furthermore, I fully appreciate the difficult decisions you will make as parents/carers and families for your child to either remain at home undertaking home learning and collection of work packs or to access school with its new safety measures. Please rest assured that whilst attendance registers will be taken, no fines or sanctions will be applied for non-attendance. We will fully respect the decision you make.

For parents and carers of children in year groups other than the prioritised ones, I will write again as we near the 22nd June when further groups may be asked to return. However, we do not have any information about this at the moment.

Finally, if your child is in Reception, Year 1 or Year 6 and you intend for them to return to school, we respectfully ask you to indicate this by Wednesday 27th May to support us in our safety planning. A return to school form has been set up on ParentPay in the 'trips' section of your account to complete. If you intend to delay your child's return to school for the second or third week of re-opening then we would appreciate a phone call informing us of this prior to their return. Thank you.

We continue to live with uncertainty and concerns for our family's safety but I hope you will all continue to keep safe and well. As a staff, we miss everyone and look forward to the time, when it is right to do so, to welcome everyone back to Oak Meadow.

Yours sincerely,

S Arnold

Mr S Arnold
Headteacher

From tiny acorns **mighty oaks** grow...

