



Birchwood Primary School

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'Rich opportunities and memorable experiences'

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Friday 22nd May 2020

Dear Parents,

Continued preparation for the reopening of school

Over the last week we have continued to work at pace to prepare for a possible reopening of school on 1st June, for children in YR, Y1 and Y6. We will also continue to provide provision in school for children of key workers and priority children. Birchwood will continue to open for this group of children during half term, including Bank Holiday Monday.

Guidance and updates from the government and our own Trust continue to be shared regularly with our schools. We have submitted our plan for reopening and have had our Risk Assessment approved. As a result we are now in a position to share more details regarding actions we are taking to enable us to open school as safely as we can.

Below are some broad measures being taken by school to enable us to open safely from 1st June. Comprehensive details and information will be shared individually with all our parents of YR, Y1, Y6 and parents of key workers and priority children in Y2, Y3, Y4 and Y5.

School measures to reopening

- **Site preparation** – During next week a full inspection of our school building and site will be undertaken to ensure that it is safe for staff and children to return. The school has had a full deep clean and further provisions have been arranged with our cleaning contractors to increase the level of daily cleaning. Hygiene resources are readily available across school. Classrooms have been prepared to support social distancing and to minimise contact of shared resources and furniture. New school signage and markings have been applied to support social distancing.
- **Staff availability** – I am very pleased to share with you that the majority of our staff are able to return to school when we reopen. For the few staff who are unable to return, they will continue to work from home. This ensures that we have a full complement of staff required to be on our school site including office staff, caretaker, first aiders, designated safeguarding leads, SENDCO and cleaning and catering staff. Staffing arrangements will be kept as consistent as possible to limit contacts and minimise mixing.
- **Maximum safe group size** – Class groups with no more than 15 children per small group with a Teacher and a TA. Staff and children will only mix in small consistent groups, reducing contact with other people and maintaining 2 metre distance where possible.
- **Class groups** – Each YR, Y1 and Y6 class will be split alphabetically into two groups, Class Group A and Class Group B. Each class group will have a Teacher and TA supporting teaching and learning. Either the Teacher or TA in each class group will be the usual member of staff. This will provide familiarity for our children, but also ensure our staff all have an excellent knowledge of the children in their group. Priority children and children of key workers will be split into two groups, a Y2/3 class group and a Y4/5 class group.
- **Practical steps to reduce risk** - Times of the school day will be staggered for all timetabled events to support social distancing and to minimise mixing of class groups and staff. There will also be a 30 minute



drop off and collection window to reduce volume of parents on the school site at one time. School will be operating a one way system into and out of our school site. Class groups will have staggered break and dinner times and will each have half of one of our playgrounds to themselves. Our lunchtime staff will be supervising the same groups of children each day. Pathways and corridors will be marked out in 2 metre lengths. Movement around school will be restricted. Use of communal spaces inside school is not permitted. Packed lunches and prepared school lunches will be eaten in classrooms or outside (weather permitting).

- **Behaviour and children's individual needs** – Health and wellbeing activities will feature heavily in our school curriculum for all children when we return. There will be changes to our positive behaviour policy, sharing new expectations with children. We will introduce the 'bubble' approach to all children and staff: The idea being that children are all in a bubble, they must protect their bubble, and if someone is too close then their bubble will pop! Children to use the phrase 'Watch my bubble please' when children know others are too close. Our one school rule is more important than ever – Showing each other consideration and respect.
- **Routine changes for staff and children** – All children to have their own individual desks, chairs and learning resources. Shared resources will be limited and cleaned after use. Classroom routines and procedures have been revised and will be shared with children. To minimise movement around school, staff and children will not be permitted into other class group rooms. No reading books or 'Me to You' to go home. No written feedback to be given in children's books. All feedback on learning will be done verbally.
- **Visitors and parents on site** - Visitors during school hours will be limited. The intercom will be used by the school office and they will manually sign in any visitors into school using a paper system. Parents and children will be encouraged to arrive and leave the school site at staggered times and will follow the one way system when on school site. Parents are not permitted to enter the school building. Parents are encouraged not to 'gather' whilst on the school site or outside the school gate.
- **Communicating with staff** - The school office is closed for face to face contact. Parents will not be able to talk at length to staff whilst on site, but greetings and smiles are still very welcome. Longer conversations will need to be completed via phone calls or emails to the school office.
- **Communicating with parents** - Regular whole school information will continue to be shared via our weekly newsletter, which will be posted onto the front page of our school website. Regular tweets and texts will continue to be sent, often signposting parents to key information posted onto our school website. Class pages will continue to share home learning, for those children not in school. Phone calls will be made home by staff when required.
- **Managing the wellbeing of children and staff** - Family information obtained from wellbeing phone calls home during lockdown will be shared with the Teacher and TA of each class group. PSHE lessons and circle time will be used to support children who have found the long period at home hard to manage, or who may have developed anxieties related to the virus.
- **Curriculum** - Curriculum to balance reintegrating children into school and a familiar work ethic alongside supporting their mental wellbeing. We will spend the first couple of weeks recapping previous learning, regaining momentum in speaking, listening, reading and counting and calculation. Y6 to focus on reintegration into school and transition to secondary school. Time should be focussed on ensuring that children are secondary ready.
- **Home Learning** - All teachers will be required to be back in school to provide face to face teaching for eligible children. Planning and resources for these children will be provided by teachers in YR,1,6. This will be adapted where possible for home learning. Teachers in Y2,3,4,5 will continue to plan home learning for their own year groups. Oak Academy and BBC bitesize will continue to be used to support this

It is crucial that we spend time preparing our children and staff for returning to a school that will look and feel very different. I would like to take this opportunity to assure you that the children, staff and community remain at the forefront of all decisions being made in light of the government guidance that has been issued.

Yours sincerely



Mr N Coleman
Headteacher