



Friday 22nd May 2020

Dear Parents,

I apologise in advance that this is a lengthy communication; however I want at this point to provide you with as much relevant information as possible as I appreciate that this transitional phase brings with it new anxieties whilst at the same time you need to consider important decisions about your child's education.

Since I last wrote to you we have been continuing to work on robust risk assessments and careful planning to decide if we are able to meet the government's recent request. If national measures are in place by the 1<sup>st</sup> of June, we aim to reopen Mordiford CE Primary to wider groups of children when we believe that it is safe to do so. Thank you to those parents in YR, Y1, Y6 and the Key Worker group who got in touch to let us know their thoughts as this has been essential to our planning.

As well as consulting parents, staff views have been canvassed and local and national guidance, including that from trade unions has been taken into consideration. The Governing Body of the school have been actively involved on many levels as is warranted for such an important decision.

The Governing Body met this week to decide if in principle, with the caveat that all elements of our own risk assessment can be met and national measures are in place (a decision is expected from the government around the 28<sup>th</sup> of May) we could safely reopen the school more widely.

Following the consultation with parents we are anticipating that there could be approximately 60 children who may return from 1<sup>st</sup> June, out of approximately 70 children from the suggested groups.

Based upon our consultation, risk assessment and planning the school, with full Governing Body support have decided to adopt a phased approach to the reopening, which we believe gives us the ability to provide the safest and most nurturing environment for a smaller number of children, allowing them to adjust to the new behaviour norms and to establish relationships within their group. Once this has been established safely, following regular review and communication with parents, staff and governors, we will be best equipped to do the same for the next year group of children. Based upon our own consultation and government guidance for the prioritisation of year groups we have opted to invite the youngest children Year R and Year 1 to come back to school first, if possible from 1<sup>st</sup> June. The aim is then to review the risk assessment regularly to be able to invite Year 6 children back to school in order to begin that all important transition to their high school education. We are unable to give precise date at this time but hope that this could begin by 15<sup>th</sup> June.

The provision for the children of Key Workers will continue, with the children being taught in 2 groups to allow the children to socialise in a smaller group. The home learning provision will be maintained, but with adaptations as all staff will be required to be present in school to ensure that small, safe teaching groups can be established.

It will be incredibly important that, appropriate to their age, you prepare your child carefully for their return to school. Whilst they are returning to the building that they know so well many things will be different. In order to make the school environment as safe as we possibly can we are being asked to implement a range of approaches and actions which can be seen as a hierarchy of controls that, when implemented, create an inherently safer practice, where the risk of transmission of infection is substantially reduced. The following headings may help you to shape that discussion at home to help to prepare your child for the change.

**Staggered start and end of day routine:** to minimise contact with other people

Each year and key worker group will have their own start and finish time to the school day. This will allow families to socially distance as they wait to enter school at the front entrance.\*You will need to say goodbye

to your child at this point as only staff and children can enter the school building. This is something to prepare for, especially for the younger children as they may be anxious about returning following the long break and having to separate from you.

	Drop Off	Pick Up
Key workers	8.30am	3.30pm
Year R	9.15am	2.45pm
Year 1	9.00am	3.00pm
Year 6 (when their phased return begins)	8.45am	3.15pm

**Please note that these times will have to be strictly adhered to**

\*We are currently making arrangements to ensure that the front entrance of the school is a safe environment for social distancing. Once we are ready to open we will give you joining instructions to explain this fully.

For parents with children in different groups please speak to us individually about how we will make the drop off/pick up process work for you.

**Timetable/curriculum:**

One of the main protective measures that we must have in place is to teach the children in groups of no larger than 15 children, creating a teaching “bubble”. Due to the numbers of children in our cohorts it is likely that Year R and Year 6 will have to be split into 2 teaching groups so not all children will be in their own classroom or with their own teacher. As the Year 1 cohort is smaller this will not be the case for them, although we may have to make their teaching group a mix YR/Y1 group from the start. It is a very important part of the transition that you make time to explain to your child that they are not going to necessarily be with their own class teacher, in their familiar classroom or with all of their class mates.

The curriculum will be designed to best support the children during this transitional phase. Their emotional well-being will be the priority. Upon returning to school, a key area for us to think about will be the development and re-establishment of relationships. This will not only be for pupils with other pupils, staff with pupils and staff with each other. We will focus on relationships **first**; how to support staff and pupils to connect when they have been separated as well as children and their peers re-establishing friendships. Younger children may need additional adult support in reminding them of how to play and interact appropriately with others. We will aim to make the learning opportunities fun, interactive and practical ( whilst balancing the need to maintain good hygiene and distancing measures) It is important to stress that we will not be getting straight back into a traditional teaching model, teaching sessions will not be like the ones that we left behind in March. Classrooms will be adapted at an age appropriate level to maintain the control measures that we need to achieve. We want to strike the right balance between maintaining the safest environment possible and being a child friendly space that is not covered in tape and exclusion zones. Establishing the “teaching bubble” is the most important factor, but the removal of some furniture and soft furnishings will allow us to create more space to minimise contact between us all.

Rather than bombard you now we will give you more detail on what social distancing measures will look like for your child once a date is confirmed.

**Staffing:**

Each teaching bubble will contain at least two adults, and in some cases 3, where possible this includes a qualified first aider. The office will be staffed on alternate days by Mrs Crisp and Miss Griffiths. We ask that you communicate with the office by telephone and email. We will not be able to receive parents at the office window. Mr Watson will resume his role as Road Crossing Patrol officer. We have 3 cleaning staff available. Mrs Haines will return to support lunch provision; AIP will deliver the lunches but not serve. Deliveries will be

made to the foyer; contractors will not be permitted in the school building unless it is an urgent situation. We do have staff medically shielding and where possible they will be working from home.

### **Behaviour:**

Our regular behaviour policy document will have an annex to support the challenging time of transition back into school. Staff are aware and will act in a manner that is supportive and sympathetic to the heightened levels of worry and anxiety that everybody will be experiencing. At such times all children, especially those with special educational needs, will have heightened reactions to triggers and their fight/flight instinct will be aroused with greater speed. This is one of the main reasons for staffing each teaching “bubble” with more than 1 adult. Staff will be mindful of the need to manage transitions and potential areas of concern that might trigger a child to act in an uncharacteristic way.

It is imperative that we work in partnership to support children with this transition and explain the different behavioural rules and expectations to ensure all are kept safe and healthy.

### **Before the children return to school you must discuss the importance of these changes.**

Children need to be made aware, in age appropriate ways, of the importance of following the health and safety rules to minimise the risks of spreading the Covid-19 virus.

When in school the children will be taught the new routines and the expectations. These will be clearly explained on the first day back. This message will be repeated regularly to ensure the children know and understand the behaviours that are expected of them.

All staff need to be mindful that the children have been out of school for an extended period and so will need to be retaught the behavioural expectation (both Covid-19 specific and the regular school rules).

- To maintain high levels of personal hygiene (wash their hands regularly for at least twenty seconds whenever instructed by a teacher.) Hands must be washed between activities, after playtimes, before food and snack times and upon entry to the school in the morning.
- To ensure they maintain the social distancing that is asked of them (this will vary according to age)
- To maintain social distancing during food times and not to share food or drinks from packed lunches.
- To stay within their group to ensure the potential risks of cross contamination are minimised.
- To use the resources that are provided for them within the school and not to bring in items from home.
- To follow the new routines that are put in place (this will include the timings for the start and end of each day, the use of one-way systems in corridors, and which toilets are allocated for them to use.)
- At playtimes, children will be within their bubbles. Equipment is to be used under direction and when permission is given by adults. Year 6 children will be required to maintain their social distancing when at playtime.

Children who are following the rules will be mindful of others, respectful of adults and their peers and thoughtful about how their actions will impact on those around them.

### **Sanctions:**

It is vitally important that children follow the rules and routines that are set, especially as it could have a significant negative impact on the health and safety of others.

As a result, where children do not follow the set instructions the following actions will be taken:

- Children will receive a warning and the teaching staff will ensure the child understands what they were meant to have done, what they did wrong, and why it is essential they do not transgress again.
- Following this, if the child again transgresses, they will be removed from the situation and spoken to by a senior leader within the school. Their parents/guardians will also be informed at the end of the day to help teach the child the importance and potential impact of their actions.
- If a child continues to transgress and, by doing so, the staff believe the child is potentially risking the school’s ability to provide a safe environment where social distancing can be maintained the child will need to return to home schooling until the school believes it is appropriate and safe for the child to return.

- If a child is seen performing a deliberate, malicious act that could result in transmission this will result in the child immediately being removed from the setting and being taken to a senior leader. If it is deemed this was a malicious act the child's parents will be contacted.

### Playtime and Lunchtime:

These times will be staggered to allow children to exercise, play and eat in their teaching groups.

We will aim to be outside with the children as much as possible to take advantage of our wonderful grounds and get plenty of fresh air and hopefully sunshine. This time will be timetabled to avoid different groups having social contact.

AIP will be providing packed lunches for those in receipt of Universal Free School meals, Free School meals and for those who wish to purchase a packed lunch.

If you are providing your child with their own lunch please be mindful that they will need to be largely independent with unwrapping the food themselves and please provide their own cutlery eg spoon for yoghurts etc

### Hygiene:

- Cleaning hands more often than usual - ensuring that children wash their hands thoroughly for 20 seconds with running water and soap and dry them thoroughly. We also have hand sanitiser available in all teaching and office spaces, and wall mounted sanitisers arriving for school entrances.
- We will continue to teach about good respiratory hygiene by promoting the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach: all classrooms will have lidded bins, which will be emptied regularly throughout the day
- Staff will cleaning frequently touched surfaces often
- The school cleaning schedule is based upon Public Health England guidelines and guidance from the DfE. We have a surplus stock of cleaning supplies.
- Staff may need to wear PPE for First Aid situations or if children become unwell

### Keeping well:

We need to ensure that we minimise 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 school.

The most important **symptoms** of coronavirus (COVID-19) are recent onset of any of the following

(Please note new symptom \*):

- a new continuous cough;
- a high temperature; (we have an infrared forehead thermometer in school)
- a loss of, or change in, your normal **sense of taste or smell**(anosmia)\*

If anyone has **any** of the symptoms above they should self-isolate at home.

Now, more so than ever before, the partnership between home and school will be vital for the children to be able to flourish on their return. There is inevitably an element of challenge to this as our interactions will be socially distanced and we will be relying so much more on electronic communication, however we are used to this because of lockdown and communication has been maintained well throughout this time so I know that we can make this work.

School remains open next week on Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> and Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> for Key Worker children. A deep clean of the school and final health and safety checks are arranged for Friday 29<sup>th</sup> May. I appreciate that you may still

have questions that you would like to ask and we are very happy to answer these, so please do not hesitate to get in touch via [admin@mordiford.hereford.sch.uk](mailto:admin@mordiford.hereford.sch.uk) or ring the school office 01432 870258 leave a message and we will get back to you as soon as possible.

The DfE has also published updated guidance on their website on 20<sup>th</sup> May "*What parents and carers need to know about schools and other education settings during the coronavirus outbreak*"

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you for your support during this difficult time; it has been very gratefully appreciated by me and the staff team. In the meantime please keep safe and well and we hope to see you as soon as it is safe to do so.

Kind regards,

Kerri Finney

Head teacher

Rev Chris Moore

Chair of Governors