



Dear Parents/Carers,

Can I begin by thanking so many of you for sending emails of support for what the school is doing, and the fact that you will be keeping your children safe, at home until the science says otherwise and/or you have the confidence to return them. I have been a Teacher for over 23 years and a Headteacher for 14 and never have I had so many sleepless nights, wrestling with what we are being told to do and what is the right thing to do. My duty of care for 287 children and 190 staff lies heavy with me, and I know I will make mistakes and I know I won't please all the people all of the time but I have tried my best and I will continue to do so. Yet again Special Schools seem to be neglected in all the decision making and although scientists say children aren't getting COVID-19 to the extent of adults, they seem to forget that schools have children and adults. As you know mainstream Primary Schools are looking at potentially opening to some year groups from 1st June at the earliest but these Headteachers, along with mainstream Secondary and Special are planning, but also awaiting further guidance from the government and from the unions.

Apologies for the length of this letter, but I really want you to have all the information and thoughts I currently have, to help you as families make informed decisions.

Following the Prime Ministers speech on Sunday night, Headteachers did not receive any more information than the public until 8.22pm on Monday night. I will do my best to give you the key information from the document, what that means for WFS, how we intend to react (actions) and how you can support us.

KEY INFORMATION from *Actions for education and childcare settings to prepare for wider opening from 1 June 2020*

*As a result of the huge efforts everyone has made to adhere to strict social distancing measures, the transmission rate of coronavirus (COVID-19) has decreased. We therefore anticipate, with further progress, that **we may be able**, from the week commencing 1 June 2020 to welcome back more children to early years, school and further education settings. **We will only do this provided that the five key tests set by government justify the changes at the time.***

Special schools, special post-16 institutions and hospital schools will work towards a phased return of more children and young people without a focus on specific year groups.

By returning pupils gradually settings can initially reduce the number of children and young people in classrooms compared to usual and put protective measures in place to reduce

risks. Children will need to stay within their new class/group wherever possible and we will ask settings to implement a range of protective measures.

From the week commencing 1 June 2020 at the earliest, we are asking nurseries and other early years settings to open to all children; primary schools to welcome back pupils to Nursery, Reception, year 1 and year 6 (including in middle schools); secondary schools and colleges to offer some face to face support for children and young people in year 10 and year 12 to supplement their remote education; alternative provision to mirror the approach being taken for mainstream schools and also offer some face-to-face support for year 10 and year 11 students (as they have no year 12); **and special schools, special post-16 institutions and hospital schools to welcome back more pupils and students.**

The following principles will apply to this phase of wider opening by settings:

- children, young people and staff who have been classed as clinically extremely vulnerable due to pre-existing medical conditions have been advised to shield. We do not expect people in this category to be attending school or college, and they should continue to be supported to learn or work at home as much as possible. Clinically vulnerable (but not clinically extremely vulnerable) people are those considered to be at a higher risk of severe illness from coronavirus. Staff in this category should work from home where possible, and refer to the detail in our protective measures guidance
- if a child/young person or staff member lives in a household with someone who is extremely clinically vulnerable, it is advised they only attend an education or childcare setting if stringent social distancing can be adhered to and, in the case of children, if they are able to understand and follow those instructions.
- Staff and children or young people should not attend if they have symptoms or are self-isolating due to symptoms in their household

Schools should work through the hierarchy of measures set out in our guidance:

- avoiding contact with anyone with symptoms
- frequent hand cleaning and good hygiene practices
- regular cleaning of settings
- and minimising contact and mixing

It is still important to reduce contact between children and staff as far as possible, and settings can take steps to achieve that and reduce transmission risk by ensuring children, and staff where possible, mix in a small group and keep that small group away from other people and groups

Transport

Parents and children and young people should be encouraged to walk or cycle where possible, and avoid public transport at peak times.

Home to school transport provided or organised by schools, trusts or local authorities varies widely. Schools, trusts and local authorities should work together and with relevant transport providers to put in place arrangements which fit the local circumstances, including the measures being put in place to reduce contact.

WHAT THAT MEANS FOR WFS

Although we are awaiting further Government advice and union advice we are beginning to make plans so that we can **work towards a phased return of more children and young people without a focus on specific year groups.** We will also produce a guidance manual for staff that will be available for parents.

ACTIONS

1. Senior Staff will contact every family from **Monday 18th May** and ask the following questions;
 - Do you want your child to return to WFS in June, or before the end of the summer term? (SAYING YES DOES NOT MEAN THEY WILL DEFINITELY BE RETURNING. That is for our risk assessment, staffing needs etc to determine.)
 - Why do you want your child to return to WFS in June, or before the end of the summer term?
 - Does your child have any health conditions that could potentially make them more at risk of contracting COVID-19 or does your household have anyone shielding or with underlying health conditions?
 - Are you a critical worker as per the governments prescribed list?
 - Would you want your child to attend holiday club in August (there will be no offsite visits and strict control measures will be in place and again saying yes will not guarantee a place as numbers will need to be limited)?
 - Would you prefer to keep your child at home until September and continue to receive the support you are currently getting from school? *We will continue to support our families who make this decision and there will not be any issues with their child not attending. In fact it will support us in getting the measures right with a smaller number of pupils.*
2. We will begin to prepare the building;
 - Paint 2m distance markers on footpaths and outside classroom doors
 - Put adhesive footsteps around school to sign which side of the corridor staff and pupils need to walk and make staircases one way
 - Work with AIP our meal providers to ensure hot meals can be plated and delivered hygienically to classrooms – all meals will be eaten in the classroom
 - Toast at playtime will be delivered to classroom doors
 - Timetable staggered playtimes – 1 class at a time and pupils will be encouraged to socially distance where ever possible
 - Timetable staggered entry to the school building – parents will not be allowed into the reception area so will not be allowed to collect pupils early (it is the parents responsibility to ensure they socially distance on the school grounds)
 - Change entry and exit points to the school and communicate to families

- Work with transport to ensure pupils are not crowded onto buses with increased risk of COVID-19 and devise a system for collecting from and escorting to transport without having contact with personal assistants and drivers
 - Put anti bac pumps at entry points as a first measure of reducing spread followed by ensuring staff and pupils hand wash for at least 20 seconds.
 - Ensure increased stocks of hand soap, anti-bacterial spray, cloths, gloves, aprons
 - Put all doors on 'locked' fobs to prevent pupils leaving classrooms and mixing with other pupils/staff
 - Work with the cleaning company to ascertain what are the priorities for cleaning everyday
 - No entry to the building of parents or any visitors
3. We will begin to prepare the staff;
- Staff to develop systems for ensuring pupils do not share resources – pencils/glue sticks/scissors/toys etc
 - Staff to develop a timetable for regular hand washing – including very time they exit or enter the classroom, before eating or drinking, between change of activities
 - Staff to reduce the availability of resources that pupils can independently access so that everything can be wiped with ease and not shared with other pupils
 - Pupils must be escorted to the toilet to ensure social distancing is adhered to and handwashing carried out
 - Staff to look at what kind of curriculum offer they can provide without moving out of the classroom
 - Staff to try and socially distance pupils where ever possible
 - Staff to socially distance from other adults where ever possible
 - Prepare medical room with full PPE in case anyone presents with COVID-19 – Parents must be able to collect pupils straight away if they present with illness



- Staff to regularly wipe down surfaces and equipment
- Staff will need to stay with the class they are assigned to all day (*I cannot guarantee the same staff everyday nor the staff pupils currently know as I*)

have a number of staff, especially teachers, who are on the shielded/vulnerable list, who are heavily pregnant or who are ill).

- Staff to be hyper vigilant at playtimes to encourage social distancing between pupils and staff
- There will be no lunch time clubs
- Staff will need to wipe down surfaces after lunch and snack time
- Where pupils require personal care PPE is required as per the guidance
- Where pupils require 1 to 1 feeding PPE is required as per the guidance

Support

I would ask, wherever possible, you keep your child at home while we test out life at WFS with all the new measures and slowly increase pupil numbers. Children will not be able to leave their classrooms, mix with other children from other classrooms or move around the building for specialist lessons or support. The curriculum offer will not be the same as before lockdown. The routine that many of you crave for your children will not be there as life will need to look differently in the beginning and may very well heighten anxieties.

Pupils will need to bring their own drinks bottle in so that we do not have to use cups that they might inadvertently share and anything being sent into school must be able to be easily wiped e.g.; lunch boxes and items being brought into school should be kept to the absolute essentials.

If your child does come to school and they show any symptoms of illness, they need collecting straight away and we will need you to adhere to the length of time we request they remain away from school. Children with any illness will be isolated in the medical room with a member of staff in full PPE.

I need to be honest and give you the full facts.

What does the future look like?

If only I had a crystal ball, however I am trying to work with the theory of September looking more 'normal' than at the moment. Again though, anyone wishing to keep their child at home will be fully supported and everything is subject to change if we get another spike of COVID-19.

We will run holiday club in some form over the summer holiday but it will not involve any offsite visits and activities will have to ensure the appropriate measures and hygiene standards can be maintained. We will be in contact about this mid-June.

1. We will keep classes and staffing **exactly** the same (unless the member of staff is on maternity leave or ill) as they currently are until October half term. We will then transition to new classes and welcome new pupils into our nursery from November. This will hopefully remove any anxieties for families.

2. Classrooms will remain **exactly** the same as they are now until October half term so pupils will have the familiarity of returning to their old classroom in **September**.
3. Children currently in Nursery who are due to come to reception will stay with the nursery staff and within the nursery setting until October half term.
4. It is highly likely that during the whole of the autumn term we will still have to have many measures in place including; lunchtime arrangements, staggered playtimes, no parents or visitors into the building, regular handwashing, use of PPE etc
5. Be prepared for videos of your child's new staff team and classroom in readiness for November rather than coming into school to see it.
6. Be prepared for videos of your child's class doing an assembly to an empty hall.
7. Be prepared for the Early Years Nativity to be a video rather than being played to a packed hall of parents.
8. Be prepared for parents evening to be conducted via the telephone or zoom
9. Be prepared for annual reviews to continue to be via telephone or zoom

So, what happens next? As a family you must discuss carefully the information that I have provided and start thinking about the questions I posed earlier in the letter. A member of the Senior Leadership Team will contact you next week to discuss the questions and seek your thoughts. But please remember, just because you may want your child to return, circumstances and risk assessment may dictate that they will not be amongst the first back. Those that have accessed our childcare provision as critical worker children and/or vulnerable will continue to do so on the rota basis.

Let me reiterate my heartfelt thanks to those of you that have taken the time to thank me and my staff for what we are doing. We really do appreciate your support.

With kind regards, stay safe, stay well.

Bec Garratt

Headteacher