



## **Preparing for the full opening of schools**

Dear Parents,

The government announced their plans for the full opening of schools on 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2020. Guidance for full opening for be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools>

We have summarised this document and highlighted the most prevalent points for parents. *All statements in red are taken directly from the guidance.*

Fortunately, West Felton CofE Primary School has remained open throughout the pandemic albeit for a limited number of pupils and therefore we have been working within these guidelines for some time, staff and attending pupils have adapted superbly to the new 'norm,' however, it is still not possible to ensure a totally risk-free environment.

We have summarised the document into several headings:

1. Welcoming our pupils back
2. Systems of control
3. Symptoms and Cases
4. Bubbles
5. In the classroom
6. Attendance expectations
7. Breakfast and After School Club
8. The Curriculum
9. Wellbeing and Behaviour
10. Practicalities

### **Welcoming our pupils back**

*It is our plan that all pupils, in all year groups, will return to school full-time from the beginning of the autumn term. The prevalence of coronavirus (COVID-19) has decreased, our NHS Test and Trace system is up and running, and we are clear about the measures that need to be in place to create safer environments within schools. The risk to children themselves of becoming severely ill from coronavirus (COVID-19) is very low and there are negative health impacts of being out of school. We know that school is a vital point of contact for public health and safeguarding services that are critical to the wellbeing of children and families.*

### **Systems of control**

We have been operating under these systems for some time (and have a rigorous risk assessment in place) and will continue to:

- 1) minimise contact with individuals who are unwell by ensuring that those who have coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms, or who have someone in their household who does, do not attend school
- 2) clean hands thoroughly more often than usual
- 3) ensure good respiratory hygiene by promoting the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach
- 4) have enhanced cleaning, including cleaning frequently touched surfaces often, using standard products such as detergents and bleach
- 5) minimise contact between individuals and maintain social distancing wherever possible
- 6) where necessary, wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE)

We will not be routinely be taking temperatures. *Public Health England is clear that routinely taking the temperature of pupils is not recommended as this is an unreliable method for identifying coronavirus (COVID-19).*

### Symptoms/Cases

We must operate under Public Health England guidelines on their prevention scheme. We will be:

- *Ensuring that pupils, staff and other adults do not come into the school if they have coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms, or have tested positive in the last 7 days, and ensuring anyone developing those symptoms during the school day is sent home, are essential actions to reduce the risk in schools and further drive down transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19).*
- *If anyone in the school becomes unwell with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature, or has a loss of, or change in, their normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia), they must be sent home and advised to follow 'stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection', which sets out that they must self-isolate for at least 7 days and should arrange to have a test to see if they have coronavirus (COVID-19). Other members of their household (including any siblings) should self-isolate for 14 days from when the symptomatic person first had symptoms.*
- So, if your child displays a new, continuous cough or a high temperature, or has loss of, or change in, their normal sense of taste or smell, then we will ring you and you will need to collect your child and any siblings. They will be moved to the office with an adult whilst you make your way here to collect them. We appreciate how disruptive this may be but we must follow DfE directives to minimise the risk of further infection.

### Bubbles

Pupils who returned in the summer term were organised into 'bubbles' – small groups of up to 15 children. *Consistent groups reduce the risk of transmission by limiting the number of pupils and staff in contact with each other to only those within the group. They have been used in schools in the summer term in recognition that children, and especially the youngest children, cannot socially distance from staff or from each other and this provides an additional protective measure. Maintaining distinct groups or 'bubbles' that do not mix makes it quicker and easier in the event of a positive case to identify those who may need to self-isolate, and keep that number as small as possible.*

Logistically, the cap of 15 children meant it was impossible to welcome back larger numbers of pupils. However, bubble sizes have now been increased and our 'bubbles' will be our classes: Acorn, Oak, Beech, Willow and Sycamore. Classes will be kept apart where possible. Older children are encouraged to maintain social distancing however, it is acceptable for them not to distance within their bubble.

*Both the approaches of separating groups and maintaining distance are not 'all-or-nothing' options, and will still bring benefits even if implemented partially.* We will keep our children in their class bubbles for the majority of the day but will allow minimised mixing for wraparound care (Breakfast and After School Club).

We will be minimising the movement of staff between bubbles, however, teachers and Tas can operate across different classes and year groups in order to facilitate the school timetable.

We will host virtual assemblies, worship and Golden Book for the Autumn term rather than large gatherings. Sadly, there will be no whole-school events or church visits arranged for the Autumn Term.

The classes have been assigned different spaces for break and lunch to avoid large gatherings.

### In the classroom

As you know, space is limited in our classrooms. We have used all available space and are erecting gazebos to provide further outdoor learning opportunities.

- We will aim to avoid face to face contact and arrange our seating accordingly.
- Children will be encouraged not to touch staff where possible.
- Frequently used equipment, such as pens and pencils will be provided for the children.
- Classroom based resources can be shared with the bubble.

## Attendance Expectations

*In March when the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak was increasing, we made clear no parent would be penalised or sanctioned for their child's non-attendance at school. Now the circumstances have changed and it is vital for all children to return to school to minimise as far as possible the longer-term impact of the pandemic on children's education, wellbeing and wider development.*

We will be operating our same attendance procedures as previously. Please report any absence to the school office before 9:00am.

## Breakfast and After School Club

We will continue to offer wraparound care for our children from 8:00am – 5:30pm every week day. We will recommence our charges which remain the same. We are operating two stations for Breakfast and After School Club to minimise mixing and movement. Nursery, Reception, Y1 and Y2 based in Catkins, Y3/4/5/6 based in the Pine Room.

We are now able to offer a limited menu including: yoghurts, brioche, cereal and dried fruit.

Unfortunately, we will not be offering any other extra-curricular activities during the autumn term.

## The Curriculum

Despite valiant efforts from both teachers and parents, children have missed a significant chunk of the education and it is important to adapt to meet these challenges. We will be operating under the following principles:

- *EYFS teachers will focus on the prime areas of learning, including: communication and language, personal, social and emotional development (PSED) and physical development. For pupils in Reception, teachers should also assess and address gaps in language, early reading and mathematics, particularly ensuring children's acquisition of phonic knowledge and extending their vocabulary.*
- *KS1 and KS2 will prioritise identifying gaps and re-establish good progress in the essentials (phonics and reading, increasing vocabulary, writing and mathematics), identifying opportunities across the curriculum so they read widely, and developing their knowledge and vocabulary.*
- We will maintain an ambitious and broad curriculum. The only subject we will be temporarily suspending is Music as *there may be an additional risk of infection in environments where you or others are singing, chanting, playing wind or brass instruments or shouting.*
- We will consider how all subjects can contribute to the filling of gaps in core knowledge, for example through an emphasis on reading.
- Teaching time will be prioritised to address significant gaps in pupils' knowledge.
- Statutory assessments are planned to go ahead in the Summer term 2021.

## Wellbeing and Behaviour

*Pupils may be experiencing a variety of emotions in response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, such as anxiety, stress or low mood. This may particularly be the case for vulnerable children, including those with a social worker and young carers. It is important to contextualise these feelings as normal responses to an abnormal situation. Some may need support to re-adjust to school; others may have enjoyed being at home and be reluctant to return; a few may be showing signs of more severe anxiety or depression. Others will not be experiencing any challenges and will be keen and ready to return to school.*

We are prepared for this and have adapted our timetable to meet the needs of individuals or groups who may struggle to return. Our highly trained pastoral team will be available to those pupils and we will communicate with parents on an individual basis regarding this.

Our behaviour policy has a clear and consistent approach and we will be maintaining this on our return.

## Practicalities

### Drop off and pick up

We will continue with our staggered drop off and pick up times of 8:45 – 9:15 and 2:45 – 3:15. Acorn, Oak and Beech will continue to enter and exit via the staff car park (vehicles will not be moving). Willow and Sycamore will continue to enter and exit via the Pine room.

### Lunch

We will continue to offer 'grab bags,' not hot meals at this stage. We will clarify how to order nearer the time. Children may bring their own packed lunch, snacks and drinks.

### Uniform

Children will return in full school uniform in September. *Uniform can play a valuable role in contributing to the ethos of a school and setting an appropriate tone. Uniforms do not need to be cleaned any more often than usual, nor do they need to be cleaned using methods which are different from normal.*

We appreciate that this is a lot of information to take on board. Please take your time to read and digest and, as always, ask any questions or queries you may have and we will respond as soon as we can:

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Thank you for your ongoing support during these challenging times.

Yours sincerely,



Mrs. Hughes