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Monday 18th May 2020

Dear Parents,

PHASED REOPENING

As you know, the Government has announced that primary schools should prepare for phased reopening for **Reception, Year 1 and 6 children only** from the 1st June. **It is very much conditional at this time and dependent on the infection rate.**

Staff and governors are really looking forward to welcoming our children and parents back into our lovely school community and know that we can rely on your cooperation and support to make this transition successful. School has been far too quiet without you! This letter outlines how we will manage this process effectively and hopefully give you confidence. It is long but please take the time to read it carefully.

The school has taken the time to carefully consider the Department for Education Guidance and ensure that we can meet its brief before contacting you. We absolutely want the children back in school safely and want the children to return to a welcoming and familiar environment however a number of changes to the way the school is run have had to be made to meet the Department for Education's health and safety expectations. I appreciate that some of these measures are quite different and may make you feel a little uncomfortable at first but it is imperative that we meet the health and safety requirements to keep our children, parents and staff as safe as we can. The health and safety of our school community is of the utmost importance and not negotiable. We will all soon adapt as we have done thus far.

We would love to see all the Year R, 1 and 6 pupils back in school but parents have a choice whether or not to send them back. The government have made it clear that there will be no fining or any judgements on school attendance figures at this time. Year R, 1 and 6 parents: all we would ask is that if you choose not to send your child back at this time, that you commit to this decision until September as we cannot plan for children coming in and out and we need to keep a consistent pupil group. If you choose not to send your child back, please inform me in writing before the beginning of the May half term holiday so staff can organise groups appropriately. Otherwise I will be phoning you on the 1st June!

Please note that staff teaching Year R, 1 and 6 will **not** have the capacity to post work online for children whose parents/carers have made the decision not to return them to school. Staff will signpost you to websites instead in a list. Year 2, 3, 4 and 5 children will continue to have work posted for them and responded to on Class Dojo and on the class pages of the school website. I hope you understand this decision.

Unfortunately and very sadly, we are unable to hold any of our usual end of year events. This may change over the course of the next few weeks but as of now, it's just not possible.

SCHOOL DAY

The school will operate from 9am to 1pm for children in Year R and Year 1, and 9am – 2:30pm for children in Year 6 and keyworker children, there will be no after school clubs. Please do not arrive earlier than 9am and children must be picked up on time please as staff will need to help clean the classrooms after school.

DROP OFF/ COLLECTION

The Government has requested that we consider pinch points and bottlenecks where people may be crossing or it may be congested. As a result, we are introducing separate entrances for children.

Children in Year 6 and keyworker/vulnerable children will enter school via the main entrance. Children in Maple Class will enter school via the back door next to the classroom. I'm afraid we are **unable** to let parents into the school building and we ask that when dropping off or picking up your children that you maintain social distancing in your child's waiting area. Teaching staff will meet your children at the respective doors. Please ensure that you maintain social distancing as you exit the school grounds.

Parents are asked not to enter any of the buildings at this time. If you wish to speak to a member of staff, please do so outside after school adhering to the 2m rule.

If Year 6 are able to walk home independently or meet a parent a little way away from school then please let us know. Every little helps.

CHILDCARE

We are expected to continue to run a childcare facility for vulnerable children and children of **critical workers only**.

These children will be kept in their own group, they will be socially distanced within that group as much as possible. They will be asked to bring sandwiches. I'm afraid school lunches cannot be provided yet unless the children are in receipt of Free School Meals. There will be no childcare for siblings of anyone in Year R, 1 or 6 **unless** parents are critical workers. Childcare is 9am to 2:30pm. Please do not arrive early. Entry is through the main entrance.

Please do not book in with us if someone is available to look after the children at home – we can only provide for days when parents are working.

YOU WILL NEED TO BOOK IN WITH THE OFFICE A WEEK IN ADVANCE PLEASE BY FRIDAY AT 9AM – email office@okeford.dorset.sch.uk This is important for us to have a register of attendees and for us to staff the children appropriately. **Please do not bring children without booking in.**

CLASSROOM STRUCTURES AND ROUTINES

The government have asked us to split year groups into no more than 15 pupils per classroom, which is much easier for us than larger schools.

We have thought carefully about this and will split the children into YR/1 who will be in the Maple classroom, Y6 who will be in the ICT room and the keyworker/vulnerable children will be in Oak Class. Mrs Peters will be in Maple Class, Mrs Vale and Mrs Clayton will be with Y6 for half the week each and Mrs Robinson, Mrs Pike and Ms Sellick will be with the keyworker/vulnerable group.

The government have acknowledged that it is impossible for Key Stage One children to socially distance so this is not an expectation rather that we must implement 'precautions' such as regular handwashing and regular cleaning of tables and resources, etc. We will remove soft toys and furnishings that cannot be easily cleaned however there is a limit to the changes we can make.

The staff have been advised to remain 2 metres away from children if possible but we recognise in practice that with small children, this is not practical or appropriate at times.

The three groups will operate completely independently and will not mix. Children will stay with the appointed

adults for the whole week. They will have separate play spaces with plenty of room to learn and play. Sadly there will be no collective worship together at this time.

We will attempt to get the children outside as much as possible so that the risk of any possible transmission is lower but this is obviously weather dependent. We are so lucky to have such lovely grounds to spread the children out and for them to enjoy the outside space!

We are unable to have any visitors in school or anyone helping with readers unfortunately.

Please note that if we are still having to split the year groups when Year 2,3,4 and 5 are phased in for the last month of the term, I should let you know now that we will not be able to have all the children in full time every day and will have to work a rota system. We don't have the rooms or the staff to manage and neither does any other school. We assume at that point the government will think it safe for us to be back in our classes at full capacity. I will ask parents nearer the time about their intentions to send the children back in.

CURRICULUM

We will be focusing on a restorative curriculum to start with – attending to children's emotional well-being before we implement any challenging academic work. This has been a really tough time for our children, and it would be wrong to assume that it hasn't affected them even in a small way. Routines and concentration will be important things to develop again. However, I am sure that it won't take them long to get back into the swing and will be learnings at full speed once again! Children are very resilient!

ILLNESS

It is imperative that if your child shows any symptoms of COVID 19 that they **stay home**. Please don't be tempted to give them Calpol and send them in -this is not the time for that!

If a child shows any symptoms in school, parents will be contacted and will be expected to collect **immediately**. Children will be isolated from other children until parents arrive. They will then need to stay at home for the appropriate time.

According to the government all Year R , 1 and 6 children in school will be eligible for a COVID 19 test if they show symptoms. This is for parents to organise. **If a child is found to be positive, the whole class group and staff must stay home and quarantine for 14 days. Please don't let this put you off getting a test – it is important for your child, your family and the school community.**

If a child lives with a family member on the clinically vulnerable list, it is advised that the pupil does not come to school as we are unable to guarantee strict social distancing. Please refer to the Department for Education Guidance for Parents and Carers online for more information.

The government advise that it is not appropriate for staff or pupils to wear face masks in school, nor would we want them to, however if a child is displaying symptoms then the supervising staff member is advised to wear PPE whilst waiting for parents to collect.

UNIFORM

Technically the children should be in summer uniform now but I think this is the least of our concerns! I would rather that children wore their own clothes so that they can come into every day in a fresh set of clothes. We are all expected to remove and wash our clothes at the end of each school day as soon as we get home.

SUN CREAM

Usual rules apply please - we cannot apply sun cream to children. Please apply cream before school or supply it in a tube for pupils to apply themselves. We have been so lucky with the weather recently I am hoping it will stay nice for a bit longer.

LUNCHES

Hopefully the catering staff at Local Food Links will be back from furlough by June 1st and if you have ordered hot meals, your child will receive them. If not, please bring a packed lunch. We will let you know beforehand. We are aiming to do outdoor picnics where possible. If your child is in receipt of Free School Meals then they will receive a meal as usual if you have booked it.

For those children in Year 2,3,4,5 in receipt of Free School Meals and not yet in school and those in Year R,1, and 6 that are not returning, the voucher system will continue until the end of the summer term.

All of this being said, it is important for you to know that it is still the Headteacher's decision whether a school can open and run safely and within the law. If staff fall ill and we are unable to meet these guidelines, we may have to close classes or make adjustments. Our plan has to be flexible and always have the children's and staff's best interests and health and safety at its core. It will be reviewed weekly and in line with government guidance. We hope that we will have your understanding and full cooperation if we need to make changes.

I hope that this has answered many of your questions about how reopening will work. I'm afraid though, I cannot allay all of your fears. We can only do our best and our best we will do! I would like to thank my staff who have worked so hard throughout to meet the children's needs in such difficult and peculiar circumstances. They, with me, have risen to the challenge of trying to make this work and I know that they will make the school a fun and welcoming place for the children even though it will be very different.

We only ask that you, as parents, continue to maintain social distancing outside of school. This means that the children cannot play together outside nor can they go into each other's homes. This will ensure that the children and staff who are coming to school are not unnecessarily put at risk.

I would also like to thank you wholeheartedly, parents and children, for coping so admirably with this situation, the like of which we have never encountered before. It has not been easy we know, but together, we can do this! Let's build our school back up again together.

Thank you for all your support and I hope to see you again soon.

Take care and stay alert.

Kindest regards

Mrs Peters