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Dear Parent/Carer,

I am sorry that this letter is so long. I have tried to keep it as brief as possible but needed to include a lot of information. So I suggest that you make yourself a drink and get comfortable. Also a word of caution, I have pulled some of this directly from the guidance and as a result some of it sounds very formal and maybe a bit scary! Please believe me when I say that when your children come back school will feel very settled and calm.

In line with the Department for Education's instruction, it is our plan that all pupils, in all year groups, will return to school full-time from the beginning of the autumn term. As we have a training day on Monday 6th September we will be welcoming the children back on Tuesday 7th.

Our planning is underpinned by the Department for Education's advice on effective infection protection and control which states the following:

"We are asking schools to prepare for all pupils to return full-time from the start of the autumn term, including those in school-based nurseries. Schools should not put in place rotas. Schools must comply with health and safety law, which requires them to assess risks and put in place proportionate control measures. Schools should thoroughly review their health and safety risk assessments and draw up plans for the autumn term that address the risks identified using the system of controls set out below. These are an adapted form of the system of protective measures that will be familiar from the summer term. Essential measures include:

1. a requirement that people who are ill stay at home
2. robust hand and respiratory hygiene
3. enhanced cleaning arrangements
4. active engagement with NHS Test and Trace
5. formal consideration of how to reduce contacts and maximise distancing between those in school wherever possible and minimise potential for contamination so far as is reasonably practicable

How contacts are reduced will depend on the school's circumstances and will (as much as possible) include:

- grouping children together
- avoiding contact between groups

- arranging classrooms with forward facing desks
- staff maintaining distance from pupils and other staff as much as possible”

Many of the protocols and procedures that were implemented during the summer term will remain the same in the autumn term – so all adults and a significant proportion of children are already very clear about our new systems and are following them confidently.

The governors and I have put together a comprehensive risk assessment and this will be placed on the school website. The aim of this plan is to minimise the risks, whilst acknowledging that we can't negate them entirely.

Within the government guidance, the systems of control that schools should adopt are clearly listed. This letter details how we have made them appropriate to our specific context.

The guidance also states that schools should have the following in place:

Response to any infection:

7) engage with the NHS Test and Trace process

8) manage confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) amongst the school community

9) contain any outbreak by following local health protection team advice

Numbers 7 to 9 must be followed in every case where they are relevant.”

Numbers 7-9 above may require school to share pupil/parent contact information with public health officials. This sharing of information is permissible under current law and is in line with data protection guidance covering schools.

If a member of staff, pupil, parent or any other adult show symptoms of Coronavirus or they have tested positive within the last 7 days, **they are not to attend school.**

If an adult becomes unwell, they are to remove themselves from the setting as soon as possible.

If a child in the setting becomes unwell, the existing guidelines will be followed i.e. the child will be removed to my office where they can be monitored and supported until they are collected by their parent/ carer.

Our hygiene and cleaning routines have been strengthened as follow:

Adults and children are to wash their hands on the following occasions:

- Entry to school
- Before/after break times
- Before lunch
- When they change rooms
- Before leaving school
- Anytime that they visit the toilet or cough/sneeze in to their hands.

Additional hand sanitisers have been purchased and are stationed in each classroom. Hand sanitising stations have also been placed at all exits and entrances.

Where children are struggling to wash independently they may receive support assuming the adult supporting is also washing their hands. Children may also use moisturiser supplied from home when required.

Each class will have their own set of classroom cleaning equipment. This will be used by the class teacher and teaching assistant at frequent intervals. Tables and frequently touched surfaces will be cleaned, as well as items that have been used by more than one child. We have asked two members of our cleaning team to work extra hours and they will both be on site from 10am-2pm. During this time they will be following a cleaning schedule which ensures that areas such as the toilets are cleaned on a half hourly basis – with a focus on the times when they will be more heavily used. Any equipment that is to be used by a different bubble will either be thoroughly cleaned or left for 72 hours to ensure that any germs are no longer present. Books that the children take home and then return to school will also be quarantined for 72 hours for the same reason.

The children will be placed into 'bubbles' the purpose of this is to minimise contacts and mixing between people, reducing the transmission of coronavirus. There has been recognition from the DfE that children cannot distance themselves from staff or from each other. Bubbles provide an additional protective measure and they make it quicker and easier to identify those who need to self-isolate as a result of a positive test result. We do expect Year 5/6 children to observe social distancing as we feel that they are old enough to understand and remember.

The DfE guidance reads as follows:

"In this guidance for the autumn term, maintaining consistent groups remains important, but given the decrease in the prevalence of coronavirus (COVID-19) and the resumption of the full range of curriculum subjects, schools may need to change the emphasis on bubbles within their system of controls and increase the size of these groups."

I know that in my last letter I said that we would be putting the classes into their own bubbles. However we have had a lot of discussions about this and have decided that in order for us to offer a curriculum that caters for our children the best we have taken the decision to put our children into four phase bubbles – EYU, Y1/2, Y3/4 and Y5/6. The reasons for this are as follows:

- Children will be able to play with their other friends in their year group – this is particularly important for those children who will be moving up into a new class in September
- Maths and English teaching will be more easily tailored to meet the exact needs groups and enable gaps to be filled more efficiently
- All children will be able to be considered for catch-up interventions as the support can work across phases. There would not be enough adults to offer the levels of support that we would like to if we had individual class bubbles
- Social and emotional support can be offered to more children
- Our Curriculum is based on phase mixed-year groups and the sharing of resources and equipment to facilitate this. There would not be enough resources to support a broad curriculum if we used individual class bubbles.
- Staggered starts, finishes, playtimes and lunchtimes can be managed more effectively if the children are in phase bubbles

Timings of lunchtimes will be staggered, as will break times. Midday supervisors will continue to support the supervision of lunchtimes but they will be allocated to phase bubbles that cannot mix. A rota will be drawn up to ensure that only members of staff within appropriate bubbles supervise their bubbles at break times.

We will be changing the layout of the classrooms. Where tables are used, they will all face the front and children will sit side-by-side. Children will also have their own packs containing a whiteboard and whiteboard pen, pens, pencils and coloured pencils.

Unfortunately, there will be no whole-school events where children and adults are required to congregate. Assemblies will continue to be delivered via the Google Classroom but there will be no singing. Maybe a blessing as I am getting a bit tired of hearing my own voice singing "Alive, Alert, Awake!"

We expect all parents and staff will be informed to engage in the NHS Test and Trace process if required to do so. Anyone who displays symptoms of coronavirus can and should get a test. If the test result is negative, the child can return to school assuming they would do so under normal circumstances. If the test result is positive, the child and family need to follow the 'stay at home' guidelines. A positive case would be communicated to the public health team and we would then work under their guidance.

Our Curriculum will remain as broad as it usually is, although teachers will be looking for additional opportunities to fit maths and English in. We have already identified the gaps in learning. In Maths, we will use a combination of NCETM guidance and White Rose materials to identify where the children are in their mathematical understanding and support them to move forward from there. English offers valuable cross-curricular links so children will be able to revisit and develop their reading, writing and speaking and listening skills through lots of other topics.

Lisa Solanki's team will ensure that appropriate materials are on hand to support children's wellbeing. PSHE sessions will need to provide children with the opportunity to rebuild friendships and social engagement and address issues linked to coronavirus if appropriate.

I hope that this letter has given you every reassurance that you need before sending your child back in. It is so much easier for me to know that it will feel safe and that your children will be happy as I have seen it first hand from when we opened more widely at the beginning of June. You will be getting another letter a little later in the week which will give you more information about dropping off and picking up your child.

As always, if you have any questions please send them to me through the admin email address.

Yours,

Tina Clarke