

## Frequently Asked Questions – FAQs – Return to school – COVID-19 – June 2020

Please see below some of the questions that we have anticipated you may have about our reopening.

We have already had one or two questions from parents, which we have endeavoured to answer and we thought it would be useful to share these with you.

Please do not hesitate to contact us in school if you have further questions that are not answered here.

### 1. Which year groups are returning to school?

The Government has asked special schools to ensure increasing numbers of children and young people attend on-site education, whilst prioritising the safety of children and staff. Special Schools are to work towards a phased return of more children and young people but this **is not** focused on specific year groups,

### 2. Why aren't all the children coming back?

The DfE have based this on the need to reduce the rate of transmission of the virus so have taken account of the need to reduce numbers returning as a gradual process and smaller groupings in classes can be maintained.

### 3. Does my child have to attend?

No one with symptoms should attend for any reason. Parents will not be fined for non-attendance at this time and schools will not be held to account for attendance levels.

### 4. I am worried that my child is vulnerable or that a family member is. Should I send them back to school

Children and young people who are considered extremely clinically vulnerable and shielding should continue to shield and should not be expected to attend.

Clinically vulnerable (but not clinically extremely vulnerable) people are those considered to be at a higher risk of severe illness from coronavirus. A minority of children will fall into this category, and parents should follow medical advice if their child is in this category.

Children and young people who live in a household with someone who is extremely clinically vulnerable and shielding should only attend if stringent social distancing can be adhered to and the child or young person is able to understand and follow those instructions. As we will not be able to socially distance children within their class group, it would be advisable for these children to remain at home.

Children and young people who live with someone who is clinically vulnerable (but not extremely clinically vulnerable) as defined in the social distancing guidance and including those who are pregnant, can attend. DfE May 2020

5. How big will the classes be?

Classes will not be running as normal, and should your child return, they may not be in the same class or with the same teacher as they were previously. Currently our class sizes are very small, with a maximum of 4 children.

6. Will you guarantee that social distancing takes place e.g. keeping children 2m apart?

We will of course do our best to support distancing, especially with any adults in the school. DfE guidance states 'We know that, unlike older children and adults, early years and primary age children cannot be expected to remain 2 metres apart from each other and staff. In deciding to bring more children back to early years and schools, we are taking this into account.'

Therefore, we are not going to be implementing social distancing within each class. We will be ensuring that each class 'bubble' does not come into contact with other class bubbles. Children will only be able to socialise with children in their class. Parents need to know that in returning to school there is a very real likelihood that children will touch adults and one another and come into close contact.

The nature of the school site and the needs of our children is such that this is unavoidable and we cannot be expected to respond to complaints around this when it inevitably happens. We cannot alleviate every risk and parents must understand what we are able to do and use this to inform their decision making.

7. What hygiene measures will be in place to prevent transmission?

School has carried out a full risk assessment. Once this has been ratified by the Local Authority, we will publish it on our website. We are following Public Health England guidance on hygiene. All staff working with children are expected to wear full Personal Protective Equipment.

8. Will children be confined to the same classroom environment most of the day?

Government advice on the Scientific evidence shows that the outdoor environment is much more manageable in terms of virus transmission. With the Summer weather we will be moving towards more of an outdoor learning approach, where possible. However, outside of this, we will keep children within their classroom during the day.

9. How will lunch time work?

We are asking families to provide a packed lunch for their children which will be eaten in the classroom.

10. Will travelling in school transport increase risk of transmission

We are asking transport to collect children in their class bubbles although this is yet to be confirmed

The school may need to look at a staggered arrival and dismissal as we increase numbers.

11. What measures will school be employing to help prevent transmission?

In addition to what has already been mentioned and in the risk assessment

We will:

- give children a designated classroom and group (which we are referring to as their bubble) for lessons, toilets and play, to minimise the opportunity for mixing
- regularly clean the setting
- use PPE such as gloves, aprons, masks, hand sanitiser and anti-bac wipes as identified in our Risk assessments, when it is necessary to do so
- confine resources to rooms to minimise sharing and when sharing is essential
- organise lunchtimes and playtimes differently, keeping children in their bubbles
- be vigilant in identifying children with symptoms, isolate them and ask parents to collect them
- removal and/or restricting access to unnecessary items in classrooms
- removal and/or restricting access to some soft furnishings, soft toys and toys that are hard to clean
- not share equipment

12. Will the school have assembly/acts of worship?

Class bubbles will have an opportunity for reflection within their daily session, but there will be no mass gatherings or daily acts of worship as a school for the time being.

13. My child is feeling anxious about coming back to school, how can I prepare him/her?

You will need to prepare your child by talking about what school was like and what it will be like now. It will be different. We will help you to prepare for this by putting information on our website to show what you and your child can expect, when things are ready.

Sharing social stories can be really helpful for young children and help to express the situation in a clear factual way.

It will be important to encourage your child to talk about their experiences in 'lockdown' and that this period is now ending.

14. Will children go straight back into normal lessons following the normal Curriculum?

No, not initially

The initial focus, for as long as we feel necessary, will be on supporting personal, social, health and emotional aspects of learning to support children's wellbeing, in addition to working on their personal EHCP targets. They have all gone through an incredible period of change and may have experienced loss on a number of different levels. This shouldn't be ignored. However, we also know that children like routine; therefore, new routines will quickly be established.

15. Will staff wear masks or PPE?

Yes, gloves, aprons, masks and protective eyewear will be worn by staff.

Children will not be required to wear PPE

16. Will my child need to wear a school uniform?

No. However, we ask that children come to school in fresh clothing every day.

17. Will we allow visitors and volunteers into school?

No. Until the situation improves, we would prefer to minimise additional adults coming in and out of school.

18. Will the school office be open?

A member of staff will be available in the office to take calls, but the reception won't be open as normal.

19. Will you continue to provide online home learning activities for children who do not return to school?

We will continue to set home learning activities during term-time, so that all children have access to provision to support their learning. Please visit our website for details or email your class teacher

20. Will children and young people be eligible for testing for the virus?

The government advice is:

When settings open to the wider cohort of children and young people, all those children and young people eligible to attend, and members of their households, will have access to testing if they display symptoms of coronavirus. This will enable them to get back into childcare or education, and their parents or carers to get back to work, if the test proves to be negative. To access testing parents will be able to use the 111 online coronavirus service if their child is 5 or over. Parents will be able to call 111 if their child is aged under 5.

21. Will teachers and other staff be able to get tested if they have symptoms?

Access to testing is available to all essential workers. This includes anyone involved in education, childcare or social work – including both public and voluntary sector workers, as well as foster carers.

22. Will the school take my child's temperature every day?

No, but we may use a non-invasive thermometer which points to the forehead if we suspect a child of having symptoms.

### 23. What will happen if a child in the class shows symptoms?

We will follow the Government guidelines set out below.

If anyone becomes unwell with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature in an education or childcare setting, they must be sent home and advised to follow the COVID-19: guidance for households with possible coronavirus infection guidance.

If a child is awaiting collection, they should be moved, if possible, to a room where they can be isolated behind a closed door, depending on the age of the child and with appropriate adult supervision if required. Ideally, a window should be opened for ventilation. If it is not possible to isolate them, move them to an area which is at least 2 metres away from other people.

If they need to go to the bathroom while waiting to be collected, they should use a separate bathroom if possible. The bathroom should be cleaned and disinfected using standard cleaning products before being used by anyone else. PPE should be worn by staff caring for the child while they await collection if a distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained (such as for a very young child or a child with complex needs). In an emergency, call 999 if they are seriously ill or injured or their life is at risk. Do not visit the GP, pharmacy, urgent care centre or a hospital.

If a member of staff has helped someone who was unwell with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature, they do not need to go home (although this will be offered to any member of staff if the case arises) unless they develop symptoms themselves (and in which case, a test is available) or the child subsequently tests positive (see 'What happens if there is a confirmed case of coronavirus in a setting?' below). They should wash their hands thoroughly for 20 seconds after any contact with someone who is unwell. Cleaning the affected area with normal household disinfectant after someone with symptoms has left will reduce the risk of passing the infection on to other people. See the COVID-19: cleaning of non-healthcare settings guidance.

### 24. What happens if there is a confirmed case of coronavirus in school?

We will follow the Government guidance set out below.

When a child, young person or staff member develops symptoms compatible with coronavirus, they should be sent home and advised to self-isolate for 7 days. Their fellow household members should self-isolate for 14 days. All staff and students who are attending an education or childcare setting will have access to a test if they display symptoms of coronavirus, and are encouraged to get tested in this scenario.

Where the child, young person or staff member tests negative, they can return to their setting and the fellow household members can end their self-isolation.

Where the child, young person or staff member tests positive, the rest of their class or group within their childcare or education setting should be sent home and advised to self-isolate for 14 days. The other household members of that wider class or group do not need to self-isolate unless the child, young person or staff member they live with in that group subsequently develops symptoms.

As part of the national test and trace programme, if other cases are detected within the cohort or in the wider setting, Public Health England's local health protection teams will conduct a rapid

investigation and will advise schools and other settings on the most appropriate action to take. In some cases a larger number of other children, young people may be asked to self-isolate at home as a precautionary measure – perhaps the whole class, site or year group. Where settings are observing guidance on infection prevention and control, which will reduce risk of transmission, closure of the whole setting will not generally be necessary.

25. Will there be any trips once school opens on June 8th?

No. There are no plans to take the children out of the school grounds until further notice.

26. Where can I find more information about returning to school?

The Government information is provided here

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers/reopening-schools-and-other-educational-settings-from-1-june>

27. Will there be a nurse on site?

Yes, a member of the special school nursing team will be on site each day when the children are in school.

28. Why can my child not come back to school now?

We are liaising regularly with health and social care colleagues to identify which children absolutely need to come back to school, and for whom it is safe to do so. We must follow the government guidance about a slow increase in numbers of children in school, therefore we cannot accommodate all children at the moment.