



Monday 6th July, 2020

Dear parents and carers,

Hello! I hope that you are all well? Please make yourselves a cuppa, get comfy and read the information below about the full re-opening of school in September – there's quite a lot of advice to digest!

Last Thursday evening, the Secretary of State for Education, Gavin Williamson, announced the government's plans for all children and young people to return to full-time education at the start of the autumn term in Parliament.

In close consultation with medical experts from Public Health England, the government has published supporting guidance that provides schools with the details to plan for a full return.

The schools' guidance sets out a range of measures to protect children and staff and sets out advice on how we can minimise contact and mixing.

Government guidance on school plans for the Autumn term

The government have also published guidance for parents and carers on the plans for the autumn term to help reassure you about what to expect for their children.

The full guidance for what parents and carers need to know about schools in the autumn term can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/what-parents-and-carers-need-to-know-about-early-years-providers-schools-and-colleges-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak>

Why the government are re-opening schools in September

The prevalence of coronavirus (COVID-19) has decreased since schools restricted their opening to most pupils in March, the NHS Test and Trace system is up and running and the government understands more about the measures that need to be in place to create safer environments in schools. As a result, the DfE has asked schools to plan for all children and young people to return from the start of the new academic year.

The scientific evidence shows that coronavirus (COVID-19) presents a much lower risk to children than adults of becoming severely ill, and there is no evidence that children transmit the disease any more than adults. Of course, there will still be risks while coronavirus (COVID-19) remains in the community, and that is why schools are being asked to put in place a range of protective measures.

Attendance

It is vital that children and young people return to school - for their educational progress, for their wellbeing, and for their wider development. School attendance will again be mandatory from the beginning of the new academic year. For parents and carers of children of compulsory school age, this means that the legal duty on you as a parent to send your child to school regularly will apply.

A small number of pupils will still be unable to attend in line with public health advice because they are self-isolating and have had symptoms or



a positive test result themselves, or because they are a close contact of someone who has coronavirus (COVID-19).

How everyone can make school as safe as possible

Over the next few days, I will be completing a new health and safety risk assessment for the autumn term and the return of all pupils.

As part of this, there are certain approaches that the government has asked schools to implement which are essential to reduce health risks.

Parents and carers can support this by:

- ensuring that anyone who has coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms, or has someone in their household who has symptoms, does not attend school - this means if your child, or someone in your household, has symptoms you should not send them to school;
- engaging with the NHS Test and Trace process so that cases can be identified and action taken - this means if your child develops symptoms, you should arrange for them to [get a test](#) and you should inform your school of the results of that test

Alongside this, at school, we are:

- managing confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19), in line with current public health guidance - this means your child may be asked to self-isolate for 14 days (based on advice from our local health protection teams) if they have been in close, face-to-face contact with someone who has tested positive for the virus;
- ensuring everyone at school cleans their hands more often than usual, including when they arrive at school, when they return from breaks, and before and after eating - with soap and running water or hand sanitiser;
- ensuring good respiratory hygiene, by promoting the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach;
- enhanced cleaning, including cleaning frequently touched surfaces more often; and
- minimising contact and maintaining distance, as far as possible – through children staying within specified separate groups (or bubbles), and through maintaining distance between individuals. The government's guidance to schools recognises that younger children may not be able to maintain social distancing so it is likely that for younger children the emphasis will be on separating groups.

Arriving at school and leaving school in September

As has been happening since wider re-opening, class teachers will meet and greet children in the playground at 8.55am (we are politely asking parents and carers to continue saying goodbye to children at the gate, rather than coming onto the playground in the mornings). Please respect other parents / carers' and children's space – please wait at a distance on the ash path if it's busy and please do not engage staff in lengthy conversations when other parents are trying to drop off their children (see 'Communication with staff' below).

Where possible, children and young people are encouraged to avoid public transport, particularly at peak times, and to walk or cycle to school or college.

Where your child relies on public transport to get to school or college, and cannot walk or cycle, the [safer travel guidance for passengers](#) will apply.



Communication between parents / carers and school staff

We encourage all parents to call the school office on 01926 640326 or email admin2604@welearn365.com if there is an important administrative issue. Office staff will not be permitted to visit other groups / 'bubbles' so messages can only be phoned through or emailed. Office staff will not be able to take messages to children in person. Parents will continue to have access to class emails for direct contact, which may speed the process up. *Staff will respond as soon as they are able.* To ensure safety of office staff and parents 2m distancing is mandatory and the office door will remain locked.

Face to face meetings with teachers will not be possible until further notice (this will be reviewed in September). If a parent wishes to discuss a matter with a member of staff this can be done via email or by phone.

Visiting professionals will be managed on an individual basis and where this relates to children, parents will be consulted as to the safest way to enable meetings to take place.

Face coverings

Public Health England does not recommend the use of face coverings in schools. They are not required in schools as pupils and staff are mixing in consistent groups, and because misuse may inadvertently increase the risk of transmission.

Uniform

We have been more relaxed about school uniform for those children attending school over the last few months. However, in September, we are returning to our usual uniform policy. Please note that all children should wear black school shoes (not trainers) in September. Uniforms do not need to be cleaned any more often than usual, or in any different way to normal due to coronavirus (COVID-19).

School food and packed lunches

Our school kitchen will be fully open from the start of the autumn term, and will provide free school meals and universal infant free school meals as usual for those who are eligible. (Families with children registered for free school meals will no longer receive the Edenred vouchers). Children will continue to have a choice of either a hot or cold 'deli bag' or a jacket potato and eat their lunch with their class 'bubble' in their classrooms.

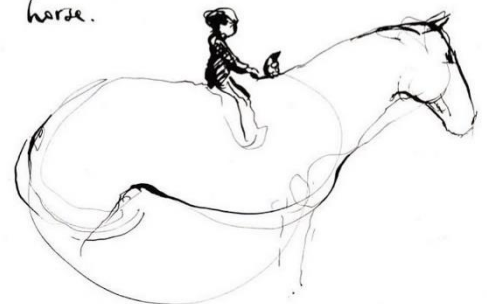
Children who have a packed lunch from home must bring this in disposable wrapping, such as cling film / paper and a disposable carrier bag.

Curriculum

The government has set out clear expectations on what schools are expected to teach when pupils return in September. We will continue to provide an ambitious and broad curriculum in all subjects (I will soon be sending out the Cornerstones Maestro curriculum projects for next academic year, with the information for parents and carers' for the first half term's projects and the 'knowledge organisers').

There may need to be slight changes to the way we teach some subjects - such as P.E. and music - to ensure they can be delivered as safely as possible. At the moment, there will be no swimming lessons in the autumn term.

" We have a long way to go " sighed the boy.
" Yes but look how far we have come " said the horse.



School trips

In the autumn term, the government has advised that schools can resume educational day trips, in line with the latest public health guidance and wider guidance for schools on the actions we can take to reduce risks. We have started to identify potential class trips for the second half of the autumn term. If venues are able to accommodate school bookings safely, we will make arrangements for travel by private transport to further minimise any potential risks. Regrettably, we are postponing the usual autumn term Year 6 residential trip to Marle Hall. We hope that we may be able to offer this opportunity in the Summer term instead.

Assessment and tests

The government is planning on the basis that statutory primary assessments (for those going into year 6 in September) will take place in summer 2021. Schools have not yet received any further information regarding the year 1 phonics screening check; the year 4 multiplication tables check; or year 2 SATs.

School Ofsted inspections

The government has also confirmed that in the autumn term, Ofsted inspectors will visit a sample of schools to discuss how they are supporting pupils back into school. These visits will not result in a graded judgement for the school. It is intended that routine Ofsted inspections will restart from January 2021, so that parents can have the information and assurances they need and rely on, with the exact timing being kept under review.

Extra-curricular activities

Although the government has advised schools will be permitted to run breakfast and after-school activities in September, we need to make sure these can be delivered in line with the wider guidance on protective measures. We may need to run things differently and adapt over time. Mrs Hendriksen will be getting in touch with you over the next few days to ascertain whether or not you require breakfast and after-school clubs so that we may plan to ensure we have sufficient staff and accommodation to keep children in 'bubbles'. I will notify you by the beginning of next week the confirmed arrangements for Breakfast Club and After-School Club in September.

Regrettably, in the first instance, we will not be offering our full range of after-school, extra-curricular clubs in order to minimise risks and help to reduce the risk of transmission. We will keep this under review, and inform you of any updates. There is government advice available for parents on the [use of these clubs and activities](#).

Process in the event of outbreaks

If we experience an outbreak, either because we have 2 or more confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) among pupils or staff within 14 days, or we see an increase in pupil or staff absence rates due to suspected or confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19), we will contact our local health protection team. This team will advise if additional action is required, though the closure of the whole school will generally not be necessary.

Where an outbreak in a school is confirmed, a mobile testing unit may be dispatched to test others who may have been in contact with the person who has tested positive.



Testing will first focus on the person's class, followed by their year group, then the whole school, if necessary.

If our local area sees a spike in infection rates that is resulting in localised community spread, decisions will be made on what measures to implement to help contain the spread. The government will be involved in decisions and will support individual schools to follow the health advice.

In all cases, where groups of pupils need to self-isolate or where a larger restriction of attendance at school is needed, we will seek to ensure children and young people's education can continue remotely.

School Leadership in September

As you will have seen in the weekly newsletter on Friday, Mrs Birch's one-year secondment to Lighthorne Heath as Acting Associate Head Teacher to cover Ms Clifton's maternity leave will end at the end of this term. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Mrs Birch for the great job that she has done, and I'm sure she will be missed by the school community. Ms Clifton has decided that she would like to reduce her working commitments since the arrival of her baby boy, and has taken up a part-time class teaching post at our partner school, Sydenham.

The management of every small school takes careful consideration – they have very small budgets, yet operating costs are similar to those for much larger schools. Additionally, staffing cost increase year-on-year. Since the federation of Lighthorne Heath with Sydenham 10 years ago, we have been fortunate in being able to achieve economies of scale by sharing resources and training costs, and benefitted from being able to share human resources and staffing expertise across both schools.

Every year, the governing board has to consider the organisation of each school and the associated costs. In September, Mrs Jill Manley and I will be taking on the day-to-day leadership and management of Lighthorne Heath. I hope that you feel reassured by the fact that Mrs Manley is a highly experienced teacher, with over 15 years' experience as a primary school senior leader; and that I have been a serving head teacher for 17 years, and am a national leader of education. Furthermore, we're very fortunate at the school to have a team of very experienced teaching staff, who know our school community well.

Mrs Manley and I are very much looking forward to spending more time at Lighthorne Heath, and there will be one of us in school every day - Mrs Manley will be at Lighthorne Heath on Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, and I will be in school on Tuesdays (and probable on additional days). It's very important to me and the school governors that the school continues to go from strength to strength. Mrs Manley and I care deeply about the children and their learning at Lighthorne Heath, and are excited for the future.

Please do not hesitate to contact me (head2622@welearn365.com) and / or Mrs Manley (manley.j@welearn365.com) if you have any queries or concerns about September.

Yours sincerely,

Juliette Westwood

Juliette Westwood
Executive Head Teacher

