



15/05/2020

Dear Parents / Carers,

The Government have now published what they expect to happen in the next few weeks including guidance for parents <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers/reopening-schools-and-other-educational-settings-from-1-june>

From **1st June** we may be welcoming back **Year 1 and Year 6** in addition to the "vulnerable" and "critical worker" children. From **8th June** we will welcome back **Reception** children. However, the return is dependent on national conditions being met and could be changed by the Government at any time.

There is a lot of concern about re-opening school and what we need to consider. Given everyone's concerns, I think it is only right to detail what measures we are taking. No apologies that this is a long letter – people want to know the detail. Many people have asked whether I can guarantee that the environment is safe if we re-open and of course I cannot guarantee that. All I can say is that we will do everything in our power to make it as safe as possible. I think I have been as clear as I can be in detailing below what our measures are and where the "pinch points" are.

Parent / carers must not however send children to school if their child, or anyone in their household is displaying symptoms of Coronavirus, or if their child is "extremely clinically vulnerable". If there is someone in the household who is "extremely clinically vulnerable" or your child is "clinically vulnerable" (definition here

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19>) please discuss this by emailing me at

backtoschool@jessons.dudley.sch.uk as a matter of urgency, to see whether we can facilitate a return via "stringent social distancing". You will be contacted by school as soon as possible. The Government have said they expect everyone to attend, but we understand that there is a lot of worry about that.

Please email backtoschool@jessons.dudley.sch.uk by Tuesday 19th May to say whether your Year 1 or Year 6 child will return on 1st June or your Reception child will return on 8th June.

WE NEED TO KNOW so we can plan staff, class organisation and meals! We are also stipulating that your child is either "back" or "not back". We cannot organise day-to-day opt in and out, or we will be moving class furniture and equipment every night.

As per Government guidelines, staff will not routinely be wearing masks or protective clothing unless they are engaging in routine personal care. We are however looking to source this on the open market with someone even making masks for us.

The school will have been cleaned thoroughly before 1st June during half term when parts of school are closed and surfaces, chairs and common contact points will be cleaned every night with disinfectant. We do have plenty of soap and paper towels. We use our own cleaning services and they have vast expertise in this area. In Early Years and Year 1, we will be removing non-essential soft furnishings. However, it is impossible to remove or clean every toy, book, crayon, paintbrush etc.

As far as possible therefore, we will set procedures to avoid sharing equipment such as pencil cases and colour coded equipment per table, but it is giving false reassurance to say that children will not forget and pick up the equipment of others. School is purchasing a clear pencil case for each child and it will be identified with your child's name. This will contain your child's personal equipment to use in school and will not be shared with anyone else. Please **DO NOT** send in any equipment from home. Any equipment used, including reading books and exercise books, will be locked away at the end of the two days your child attends, so that no-one else will have access to it.

From 1st June, to maintain social distancing and reduce the spread of the infection we will be splitting the week for children, to keep class sizes down. The week will be split so that half of each year group will attend Monday/Tuesday and the rest will attend Thursday/Friday. When we know what children are attending, we will send out letters to tell you which day your child will be attending and their start and finish times. If there are siblings in year groups also attending school we will arrange the same drop-off and pick-up times, to avoid unnecessary travel and waiting around.

Nobody, including the Government, is claiming that it is possible to guarantee social distancing of 2 metres at all times. The younger the child, the less likely it is that they can keep social distance (just try keeping two 4 year olds apart even in your own living room). However, we need to do everything possible to minimise the risk and for that reason we will take the following precautions.

Nursery

We think it is unsafe to have over 30 pupils together in the Nursery and it is not fair to educate them in another room. They need their own toilets and changing facilities, their favourite toys, staff that they know and a familiar and secure environment. Classrooms in other parts of the school do not have the correct facilities. We will therefore not be bringing Nursery children in to school from the 1st June. We will update you when this changes.

Staggered start to the school day

We request that you stay at least 2m apart from other families, and "drop and go" without lingering. If you want to chat to each other, please move away from school to a place where you can distance. You will be sent a letter which gives your child's start and finish times when we know numbers of children who will be attending.

If for any reason you arrive early, please stay in your car or keep a distance from all school entrances until your allocated time to avoid queuing up at the gate. This will help to avoid queues.

Your child may not be based in the usual classroom when they attend school, but they will be in the same one for the days they attend, to reduce chances of cross contamination. You will be

informed which classroom and group your child will be in, as well as the class teacher. You will also be told which gates you will need to enter and leave through at the beginning and end of the day. We do insist that you use the allocated gates so that we can maintain social distancing as much as possible.

Lessons and Learning

When at school, we will provide a balance of basic academic skills as well as emotional support and Personal Social Health and Emotional education. When we return, we will focus on basic skills in writing, spelling and grammar as well as the basics in number work until we are sure that the children have re-gained their basic competence. Year 6 may also be undertaking individual project work and activities based around transition to secondary school. We will lower our expectations of concentration with quicker turn-around of activities. We will plan more outdoor exercise and learning, because we believe that the children having been denied freedom, need the chance to run, jump and enjoy themselves regaining some fitness along the way.

As we have been advised not to send anything home from school, our reading book systems will not be reintroduced yet.

There will be no national testing for Reception, phonics for Year 1, or SAT's for Year 2 and 6. We may give Y6 a go if papers are released, however they will not be used for any purpose other than to find gaps that we, or the next school can work on. We will be assessing children based on what we know about their abilities and we are already working on end of year report formats. Our Teacher Assessment judgements will no doubt be moderated and standardised.

We will continue to provide work packs for children who are not in Reception, Year 1 or Year 6. Children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 will also receive work packs for the remaining days that they will not be in school each week. It will be possible to plan catch up lessons for some pupils who return to school and we will be able to provide 1:1 support where children are entitled through an Education Health and Care Plan.

Around school

We will have a one-way system where children walk on the left. There will be stickers 2m apart on the floor which will reinforce the need for social distancing and arrows to show them the direction they should be moving.

Toilet areas are problematic because, even if 2 children are using them at the same time there will not be 2 metres distance. Entrances are narrow, urinals and basins close together and they are only supervised remotely. We will try to stagger their use, but keeping distance is not enforceable and 1 child at a time not logistically possible.

We will again teach the children how to wash their hands properly and re-establish the good practice that we built up before lockdown.

Where possible, we will use outside doors and walk in the outdoors to avoid corridor congestion.

We will keep as much natural ventilation as the outdoor temperature allows.

Break times and lunch time

Break times - we will stagger these so children go out in small class groups, but different classes go to a different playground.

School Meals and Packed Lunch

Lunchtimes in the hall are usually staggered in school. We will increase the time between school meals in R and Y1, so many will have finished eating before the next class come in. It is difficult to predict how quickly children will eat and therefore impossible to know distances. However, we will adjust when we see how this is going.

In consultation with our caterers, if children return to school on 1st June we will be able to offer a limited hot meal menu. You will have to pre-order their meals in order to move the lines through. Children will say their name and then the food will be put on a plate and the child will collect it at the end of the counter. Children will have to socially distance in the hall. If this does not work, then the children will eat their food in their allocated classroom.

If you are entitled to Universal Free School Meals in Reception or Year 1, or Free School Meals, these will be available as usual. We are still finalising the method to pay for school meals and you will be informed of this as soon as possible. If you receive FSM vouchers we are still unclear as to how long these will carry on for and we are unclear whether you will still receive vouchers if you choose to keep your child at home and are seeking guidance on this.

Lunchtime staff will thoroughly clean tables and equipment before other children sit down.

Lunchtime Play

It is fair to say that this is the time when ensuring social distance is the most difficult. Ratios of children together and movement increase and it becomes "free play". Lunchtimes will be staggered as much as possible and children will be encouraged to stay in a particular area of the playground with their small class group.

Breakfast club and After School Club

These will not be running when school reopens. We will be aiming to reopen them in September.

General school rules

School uniform will not be required, but is permitted if that is your preference. Some parent / carers will want to wash clothes every day and not having to have the same clothes ready for the next day should really help. However, safety rules on footwear i.e. no open toed sandals or high heels and jewellery still apply. If you have a mask and want your child to wear it, send it in. It is unlikely that they will keep it on throughout the day, but a little protection may be better than none and some research is not conclusive about their effectiveness. Similarly, if you want to send named hand gel and accept the risks - that is allowed, but hand washing will be encouraged because it is more effective.

Children who show any signs or symptoms of Covid-19 will wait in the designated first aid room (which is spacious) until their parent / carer comes to collect them. Parent / carers were brilliant before we broke up and all people attended as quickly as possible. **It is essential that this continues.**

All other school rules apply and there will be certain amendments to the Behaviour and Anti Bullying Policy. Our safeguarding policy will remain the same and this policy is on the website.

After that ...

The Government have said that they want to re-open schools to all children for a month before the summer holidays where feasible. At this point true social distancing will be impossible, but we will use the Risk Assessment written at the beginning of the crisis to minimise risk. That includes forward facing seating plans, open doors to avoid contact with handles, hand washing and education about sneezing and coughs etc.

To support you

This is to make the "drop and go" system successful and avoid the need for conversations at the door.

Things to do

- Email us by **Tuesday 19th May** using backtoschool@jessons.dudley.sch.uk if you are, or are not sending your child back to school on 1st June. Please email us if you change this decision in subsequent weeks.
- Note the new time and place of arrival to and departure from school (which will be in the letter you receive).
- Ensure that your morning routines are sound and that you arrive to school **on time** and you pick your child up **promptly**. We will be unable to look after children by the office if parents are late.
- Watch out for messages for changes to arrangements either by text or email. The Local Authority and Government may make last minute changes which affect our plans.
- Let us know by email if there is any detail that we have missed, or things that you think we need to clarify and we will follow up with more guidance as we go through the next couple of weeks.

If you are worried about a serious safeguarding issue about any child at the school, contact us immediately, or in the school holidays the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub can be contacted on: Office hours 9am - 5pm: 0300 555 0050

Out of office hours: 0300 555 8574 or in an emergency call 999.