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14 May 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

## Parent Letter – 14/05/2020

I hope you and your families are well. Firstly apologies for the delay in communicating, our system has been down!

Below is a video summarising the key points of the letter. Click on the image or [here](#) to play. Please get in touch with [virtualclassroom@school21.org.uk](mailto:virtualclassroom@school21.org.uk) if you have problems accessing it.



As you may have seen in the news the Government has announced the potential re-opening of schools from June 1<sup>st</sup> at the earliest.

The Prime Minister stated that if the threat of Coronavirus is reduced further:

- Primary schools could begin to reopen in smaller groups from June 1 for children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 6.
- Secondary and Sixth Form students taking their exams next year (Year 10 and 12) will have “some face-to-face time” to support remote learning

More information here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-educational-and-childcare-settings-to-prepare-for-wider-opening-from-1-june-2020/actions-for-education-and-childcare-settings-to-prepare-for-wider-opening-from-1-june-2020>

I imagine that for some of you this will be a source of happiness and for others it will be a cause of anxiety. Or like me you may have both emotions. As an educator I am desperate to get as many children back to school as possible. But as a parent and leader of our school I worry about everyone’s safety.

Our school value of community is the one we have relied on most during this time and so as we move to the next stage we are trying to balance the needs of all members of our community - children who need to learn and stay well, families who need to work, teachers and support staff who need to feel safe. This is the difficulty we face. And whilst we certainly don’t have all the answers, we are committed to communicating with you as transparently as possible so you can make your own decisions.

## Planning days Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> May and Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2020

At present we are making plans so we are ready to open to more children from June 1<sup>st</sup>. We are also planning online provision for the rest of the academic year for children not coming on site. To complete this work we are putting in place two inset days on 21/22 May. **There will be no online or onsite provision on these days.** Over the half term period we will get everything ready to ensure safety measures are in place.

### Attendance to onsite school

We are not going to be pressuring anyone to send their children to school. You know your children and personal situation best. There will be no fines, no referrals. We will keep you updated with all our preparations, so you can make an informed decision.

Thank you to parents in Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 who have completed our surveys about sending children in already. There will be opportunities each week to complete similar surveys over the next half term so you can change your mind.

More specifically:

- If your child or anyone in your household has [symptoms of coronavirus](#) everyone must self-isolate and not come in. [School children will be eligible for testing](#) and you should take medical advice by calling 111
- If your child is [clinically extremely vulnerable](#) they must maintain strict social distancing and they must not come in. If your child lives with someone in this category they must not come in.
- If your child is [clinically vulnerable](#) they must not come in. If someone in your household falls into this category please seek medical advice about whether it is safe to send your child in.

We will release more details about our opening plans next week. There will also be a 'Virtual Q&A' with the Head of Primary, the Head of Middle and myself next Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> at 4:00pm. I would encourage parents of children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 to join (as well as other interested parents)

To access this meeting, we will use Google Hangouts. It is helpful to have the app installed on your phone or device, but this can also be accessed through a laptop or PC. [Please use this link to access the meeting.](#) We will text this link again in a reminder text on the day. Please email [virtualclassroom@school21.org.uk](mailto:virtualclassroom@school21.org.uk) with any issues

### Principles of our approach

Set-out below are the principles we will employ in the re-opening phase. It is important to note that we cannot give guarantees about safety. As the Government has acknowledged in their guidance younger children can not socially distance and whilst we will put in place as many safety measures as we can, parents will have to assess the risks themselves.

#### 1. Gradual and phased

Given the unprecedented nature of this situation we think it is right to go slowly - a year group at a time. We need to review everything regularly, helping make children as safe as possible.

In practice this means:

- Not all children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 will be back on June 1<sup>st</sup>. **At present we are proposing to welcome Year 1 on June 1<sup>st</sup> (in addition to the children of key workers and some specific children by invite) and Year 6 on Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> June.** This will all be confirmed next week.
- We will review everything during the first week and see whether we think we can keep our safety protocols for Reception. On this basis we will decide either to welcome Reception back on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> June or Monday 15<sup>th</sup> June. We will endeavour to communicate this to you as soon as possible
- We have not yet made a decision on Years 10 and 12 but will be touch next week

## 2. Outside is better than inside

Our understanding is that the virus is less likely to be passed on outside. So in practice this means:

- Where possible children will learn/play outside (so you may need to send them in with coats)
- At first we will only use classrooms where doors can be opened outside (we will leave them open as standard practice). If we open to more children outside Reception, Year 1 and 6 we will only use well ventilated rooms
- We will use the whole site to keep the youngest children as safe as possible

## 3. We will work in 'pods' - limiting contact

In practice this means:

- Classes will be no more than 13 with one teacher and/or one Pupil Achievement Coach in primary/middle. Higher up the school where children are more able to keep two metres apart classes may go slightly higher but not significantly and this is dependent on space.
- These pods will be kept separate from others for the whole day - including staggered lunch and break. Within the pod we will limit physical interaction between children as much as possible
- Where a child or adult has Covid 19 symptoms the pod may be asked to self-isolate. If there is a confirmed case the pod will be asked to self-isolate for 14 days

## 4. We will follow protective measures

In practice this means (this is not an exhaustive list):

- Washing hands on entry, before and after break and lunch and before home time
- Parents separated for staggered pick and drop offs (one parent only for pick up and drop off)
- Respiratory hygiene reinforced 'catch it, bin it, kill it' and then wash hands
- Regular cleaning of key, well used surfaces and areas
- Reduction in resources in rooms
- (As per the key worker school) Temperature taking on entry
- Reduction in mixing within pods (two meters apart where possible)

## Further information coming next week

- Confirmation of re-opening plans, including school day times
- Plans for the online learning offer
- Advice on travelling to school
- The approach to Year 10 and 12

Our overriding principle over the next few weeks is the well-being of everyone. We will pause our reopening plans if we feel we cannot follow the government guidance and/or our own safety protocols. Thank you once again for all your support over recent weeks and please get in touch with Meg (Head of Primary - [mdrummond@school21.org.uk](mailto:mdrummond@school21.org.uk)) or Anna (Head of Middle - [akyrk@school21.org.uk](mailto:akyrk@school21.org.uk)) if there are any questions or concerns.

Stay well and healthy.

Yours faithfully,



O de Botton  
**Headteacher**