



Tuesday 19th May 2020

Dear Parents,

Further information regarding schooling on and after 4th June 2020

As of this afternoon, approximately two thirds of Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 parents have responded to our survey indicating whether they intend for their child to return to school if we are to re-open after half term.

It is absolutely understandable that a number of parents have emailed in with questions and that some of you are still giving consideration to this important matter.

I thought that it would be helpful to write with some further information regarding what schooling at Barrow Hedges may look like, answering the most frequently asked questions.

Nursery children

Due to the part time provision we offer i.e. three hours per day, we intend to run only a morning Nursery on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, 8.45am to 11.45am.

This is therefore the only group of children that will NOT be mixed children from other year groups, even where their sibling is another group (known as a 'bubble').

Composition of groups, or 'bubbles'

Where siblings return to school, children will be placed in the same 'bubble' as their sibling. In the event of a child or adult supervising this group becoming ill, then the whole group must isolate so this organisation means that the 'bubbles' are 'preserved' and fewer families could be adversely affected. There will be no more than 15 children in each one, with 10 in some others, depending on the size of the allocated classroom. This is to ensure that we can aim to practice social distancing

Adult supervision

The adults supervising each 'bubble' will not change – adults will not move from one 'bubble' to another for the reason outlined above. There will usually be two adults per day, but because of individual staff members' own working hours or personal circumstances, the pairs of adults may vary in some 'bubbles' from day to day. That said, usually one adult is there all week and it is the second adult that may change. Having pairs of adults means that we can aim to set different activities for Reception/Year 1 children and Year 6 children. This does, of course, mean that children will not necessarily have their own teacher or Teaching Assistant. We have an excellent team of staff at Barrow Hedges so whoever supervises the



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children would fully support them, receiving any need-to-know information from their usual teacher beforehand. However, we cannot say that your child would necessarily be with a familiar adult. Members of the Senior Leadership Team, including Mrs Covey and Miss Cheetham, are likely not to supervise their own 'bubble' as they are required to perform other leadership roles and responsibilities during this time.

Location of 'bubbles' and classroom resources

Nursery children will be situated in the Nursery and in Reception classrooms. All other 'bubbles' will be located across various classrooms around the school. To reduce the risk of the spread of the virus, many of the resources will be removed from the classrooms – in particular, soft furnishings and book corners. Other resources will be limited and only those that can be easily cleaned will be utilised. Sharing of resources will be limited. Children won't bring items to and from school. Much of the furniture will be removed to enable tables and chairs to be spaced apart. Children will have their own table and chair and not sit in a group with others. We will, of course, aim to get the children outside as much as possible for physical activities when we will adhere to social distancing. PE equipment will be used carefully and not shared across 'bubbles'.

Learning and the curriculum

In planning for schools to potentially re-open, the safety of children, staff and our families is the prime consideration; hence the grouping described above. The Department for Education has made it very clear that, as has been the case during the partial closure period, no school is penalised if they are unable to offer a broad and balanced curriculum to their pupils during this period. We are mindful that not all of our children will return on 4th June and each and every child matters to us. Therefore I wish to make it really clear that the return to school is not to focus on any new learning – we want no parent to worry that their child might fall behind others. The DfE also states that schools and colleges continue to be best placed to make decisions about how to support and educate their pupils during this period and we will be particularly focusing on activities that give consideration of pupils' mental health and wellbeing. We recognise that a number of the children have spent weeks and weeks without contact with other children so no matter what the mix of 'bubbles' we aim for the children to enjoy just being together, having fun.

Home Learning – Tapestry and Google Classrooms

Schools have been asked to use their best endeavours to support pupils remaining at home, as well as those attending school, making use of the available remote education support. We are very proud of our provision for home learning and have been delighted with such positive feedback from parents. Teachers and support staff have worked incredibly hard to set up and maintain home learning resources and so we aim for this to continue. I am sure you will appreciate, however, that with staff in school, mostly full time, there will need to be some revision to what is provided. It is our aim that the activities set will not change too much, but the feedback that the teachers are able to give will have to reduce.

Social distancing

As you will have read, all our plans centre around aiming to control the spread of the virus. We will do our very best to ensure that children and staff are safe and adhere to 2m distancing but as I am sure you can imagine, this is not always easy, especially where younger children are concerned. If a child is upset or injures themselves then we will of course do everything we can to ensure that they aren't distressed and the provision of first aid will of course be a priority.

Wearing of PPE

Our Trust have purchased PPE for staff to wear so children should be advised that they will see staff wearing this at times, for example at lunchtime when food is served and when first aid is being administered.

Additional cleaning measures

Over the lockdown period, we have been making preparations for when schools re-open. Each classroom now has wall mounted soap and paper hand towel dispensers and all toilets have hand driers, some of these are new ones, replacing less effective ones. As well as more frequent handwashing, there will be cleaning on a more frequent basis with particular attention to frequently touched surfaces, such as door handles, handrails, tabletops and the play equipment and resources that we will continue to use. School will be closed on Wednesdays (except for our vulnerable pupils and those children of critical workers) for a mid-week deep clean.

Accommodating more children after 4th June 2020

Some parents have asked the sensible question as to whether if they say 'no' to returning straight after half term whether they have to wait until September. This is quite a difficult question to answer because we do not know at this stage how many children are going to return in the first phase, and indeed whether we can accommodate all the year groups that the government have asked us to initially. In liaison with our Trust colleagues, we feel that it will be difficult to add more children into 'bubbles' at later stages before the summer holidays. Therefore any parent who is a critical worker who will need a place should definitely complete the form sent out today even if they have already completed the form to show interest in Nursery, Reception, Year 1 or Year 6 places. Social distancing measures would have to be relaxed by the government if we were to take Years 2 to 5 because we do not have the space or the staff under the current arrangements.

Parents will not be fined for non-attendance at this time

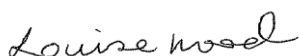
So rather than reply to individual's emails, I have responded to their questions through this letter. I believe I have covered everything that everyone has asked! I hope those of you who emailed me will understand that I felt this was preferable so that our whole community could give careful consideration to this matter.

The surveys that we have sent out to parents via PMX (earlier today and yesterday) are really important to us and therefore I ask that each parent does complete this by 12noon tomorrow, Wednesday 20th May. If for whatever reason you have difficulty accessing the form and need to let us know that you would like your child to return on 4th June, then please email us. However, the form should be simple and easy to use and enables us to pull off the results quickly. Time is of the essence! **If we do not hear from you then we will assume you do NOT want a place and will NOT include for your child in our plans.**

Many, many thanks for reading multiple letters that have been sent to you at an already stressful time! I just want to ensure that you are well informed.

Keep safe and well,

Kind regards,



Mrs Louise Wood
Headteacher