

17th July 2020

Provision from September 2020

Dear Parents and Friends of Castle Hill

Before you start to read, we apologise in advance for the length of this letter - there is a lot of information that we need to communicate to you and routines that we need to explain.

The guidance issued on 2nd July advised us that we will be able to open the school to all pupils from September. This is what we had been planning for and we delighted to be able to do so. We are aware that the government is planning to issue further guidance to schools in August. With this in mind we ask that you monitor your email and/or check the school website (<https://www.castlehillprimary.net/>) during the summer break, especially in the weeks just before the children are due to return, as there may be changes to the plans as a result of any change in guidance.

We recognise that the school reopening in September will be a long-awaited relief for many of you and we are looking forward to welcoming the children back as we have really missed them. After such a significant amount of time away from school, for some of our children there will no doubt be some anxiety over their return when it eventually arrives. For the children who have already returned, once their first day was out of the way, the majority have settled in quickly and been incredibly happy to be back in school. We hope that after reading this letter you will feel reassured. We have given huge thought and consideration to planning for the September full opening and have obviously been able to learn and adapt our plans since March; the school has steadily ramped up its pupil numbers and we now have 40% of the children back in 20 Pods.

Guidance and Essential Measures

As we are sure you will appreciate, we will continue to take numerous precautions to limit the potential spread of Coronavirus. Whilst all the information suggests that children are at low risk, we must be mindful that we will need to make some adjustments to our working practice to account for the needs of those who may be more vulnerable to serious illness and the adults who work in school. Our planning and decisions have been made with reference to the Department for Education Publication. It may be of interest and helpful for you to read the guidance in conjunction with this letter. You can find it by following this link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools>

All the guidance from PHE and DfE states that we **must take any measure that we are able to in order to reduce social contact and mixing**. While it is not possible to implement all of the recommended measures completely, since the wider opening on 1st June we have already implemented all the 'must haves' into our processes. You may be familiar with the essential measures which include:

- a requirement that people who are ill stay at home
- robust hand and respiratory hygiene
- enhanced cleaning arrangements
- active engagement with NHS Test and Trace
- formal consideration of how to reduce contacts and maximise distancing between those in school, wherever possible, and minimise potential for contamination, as far as it is reasonably practical.

In order to minimise contacts, we have decided (as much as possible) to:

- deliver the full curriculum by grouping children primarily in their classes, but with an overarching principle of children being in year group pods
- avoid contact between year group pods
- arrange the Year 2 and KS2 classrooms with forward facing desks so that pupils are facing front with the teacher remaining at the front for social distancing. This will mean that we will need to adapt our teaching practices. There will be occasions when staff will need to assist children more closely. Staff will endeavour to minimise the length of time they are in close proximity for 1-2-1 support. Year R and 1 will have a less formal arrangement of desks to allow for the free flow of children. We are adhering to all the safety guidance for these children
- ensure staff maintain distance from pupils and other staff as much as possible. We have introduced additional staffrooms to reduce the interactions between staff at peak times. One-way systems and 2m markers have been put in place around the school to help promote social distancing.

In addition to the essential measures above, everyone at Castle Hill has a role to play by taking responsibility for:

- following the procedures, measures and policies put in place to keep us safe
- washing our hands more frequently and for at least 20 seconds
- ensuring good respiratory hygiene by promoting the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach
- minimising contact between individuals and maintaining social distancing (2m) wherever possible.

Moving forward into next year we will continue to have health and safety at the forefront of our processes and decisions in order to keep the Castle Hill Community safe and well, whilst also trying to return some normality to the school routine. Whilst we will endeavour to mitigate risk as much as possible and provide a dynamic and fun learning environment for the children, it is important to recognise that some compromises and flexibility may be needed for this plan to work and evolve, as it is undoubtedly going to have to.

Measures in School

Our main focus will be on keeping the year groups apart from one another during the school day. To this end we will continue to operate a staggered start and end to the school day.

	Start	Finish
Year R - Rooksdown	08:55 - 09:05	14:30
Year 1 - Rooksdown	08:55 - 09:05	14:30
Year 2 - Rooksdown	08:45 - 08:55	14:40
Year 3 - Rooksdown	08:45 - 08:55	15:00
Year 4 - Rooksdown	08:35 - 08:45	14:50
Year 5 - Rooksdown	08:35 - 08:45	14:50
Year 3 - Greenbank	08:35 - 08:45	14:50
Year 4 - Greenbank	08:45 - 08:55	15:00
Year 5 - Greenbank	08:45 - 08:55	15:00
Year 6 - Greenbank	08:35 - 08:45	14:50

We are asking parents, where possible, to drop their children off by foot and maintain social distancing from other



parents and children. This is to avoid congestion at the school gates. We are aware that staggered starts and finishes are not easy to manage when siblings are involved **so we are allowing siblings to be dropped off together.**

Unfortunately, we are still unable to accommodate parents on site, so if you bring the younger sibling in at the time allocated to their older brother/sister, that will help the school team settle them in. The gates we need parents to use are listed below:

Year Group	Entry/exit gate
Year R - Rooksdown	Year R gate on service road
Year 1 - Rooksdown	Park gate
Year 2 - Rooksdown	Park Gate
Year 3 - Rooksdown	Lower gate on service road
Year 4 - Rooksdown	Lower gate on service road
Year 5 - Rooksdown	Park Gate
Year 3 - Greenbank	Rear gate at top of stairs
Year 4 - Greenbank	Rear gate at top of stairs
Year 5 - Greenbank	Lower gate onto Winklebury Way
Year 6 - Greenbank	Lower gate onto Winklebury Way

We appreciate that this may not be ideal for parents, but hope you understand that the decision has been taken on the basis of health and safety and in line with the guidance we have been given. **We will be sending maps and further guidance on arrivals and departures at beginning of September.**

Class teachers will be in the classrooms, so on arrival children will be directed from the entry gates straight into their classrooms. Non-class-based staff will be located at key positions on site to guide the children to the correct place. They will be immediately directed to wash or sanitize their hands. In small groups, the children will be asked to place their bags and coats in the appropriate place in the corridor. During the day the children will wash or sanitize their hands before and after eating, when they come in from breaks, before they go home and after each visit to the toilet (if you could provide a named bottle of sanitizer for your child this would help us greatly).

Within the school day we have made further adaptations to minimise contact. Lunch times and morning breaks will be staggered and year groups will be kept apart by playing in an allocated zone. At lunch time, food will have to be eaten in the classroom so there will be no hot lunch choices available from September. Children can either order from the picnic menu (<https://www.castlehillprimary.net/parents/school-meals>) or bring a packed lunch from home.

Unfortunately, many of the aspects of school life that we hold dear will have to be adjusted or temporarily suspended in the autumn term since... *'Groups should be kept apart, meaning that schools should avoid large gatherings such as assemblies or collective worship with more than one group.'* Therefore, collective worship will take place within class groups primarily, but could include the occasional year group gathering.

Face masks are not currently encouraged in schools (however, we are aware that this guidance may change). The guidance states *'if your child wears one on the journey to school, they are encouraged to remove this before entering the classroom. Pupils must be instructed not to touch the front of their face covering during use or when removing them. They must wash their hands immediately on arrival (as is the case for all pupils), dispose of temporary face coverings in a covered bin or place reusable face coverings in a plastic bag they can take home with them, and then*



wash their hands again before heading to their classroom. The class teacher will be at the external door with hand sanitizer ready for use. Please note our policy from day one has been that if a child or staff member wishes to wear a mask or visor, they are able to.

It is of vital importance that we work together and we ask for your support so that we all act as role models to the children, exhibiting the kind of behaviour and adherence to new routines that must become the 'new normal' for these times. These measures will remain under constant review as we progress.

With respect to hygiene, the guidance states that: *'...different groups don't need to be allocated their own toilet blocks, but toilets will need to be cleaned regularly and pupils must be encouraged to clean their hands thoroughly after using the toilet.'* The children will continue to use the toilets that are nearest to their classroom and the teachers will ensure that all children are reminded about this at the start of term.

It is going to be really important for children to take responsibility for their own handwashing as this is key to our success in preventing the spread of the virus. We have installed plenty of visual prompts and reminders to help children with this. The guidance states, *'Coronavirus (COVID-19) is an easy virus to kill when it is on skin. This can be done with soap and running water or hand sanitiser. Schools must ensure that pupils clean their hands regularly, including when they arrive at school, when they return from breaks, when they change rooms and before and after eating. Regular and thorough hand cleaning is going to be needed for the foreseeable future.'*

We have already significantly ramped up our cleaning regimes with the main contact points in the classroom, corridors and toilets being cleaned during the course of each day on a regular basis. These areas are also being cleaned in the evening ready for the start of the new day.

If coughing or sneezing, children will be encouraged to follow the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' guidance and dispose of tissues in the allocated bin before washing or sanitizing their hands. Routines will be established from the first day in school. We have prepared for this by buying additional covered bins and tissues for the school so that we have plenty in the lead up to the winter months.

Some of these routines may feel a little unusual to the children initially, but our experience over the last 4 months has shown us that these new measures quickly become the norm in a very short time.

Equipment

- Children can bring one bag to school containing a packed lunch (if needed), a coat, hat and sun cream (if needed) and a water bottle. The bag can be a ruck sack. Please make sure it easily identifiable to your child(ren)
- All children will need a wrapped, healthy snack, as the free fruit and vegetable scheme will not be up and running for key stage 1 in September
- Children must **not** bring their own pencil cases etc. All school equipment will be provided by the school
- If you could, we would like you to provide the following:
 - a small named bottle of hand sanitizer for your child
 - a packet of tissues
- Please do not allow your child to bring in unnecessary items from home such as toys, balls, trading cards etc.



Attendance

School attendance is compulsory and we will follow our usual absence procedures in the case on absence and lateness. With this in mind we **ask you to strictly adhere to the staggered start time you have been allocated.** If your child arrives late it impacts on the following:

- staff capacity – once fully open we do not have enough staff to come to the gates
- your child's attendance percentage
- social distancing

We understand that some parents and carers will be anxious. Nonetheless, people who are clinically vulnerable, living with extremely clinically people, or those who have other vulnerabilities may have increased nervousness. The PHE and DfE guidance suggest that all students should return to school. If you have any concerns, it is important that you discuss these with your child's class teacher as soon as possible.

Learning

When the children return to school, we will initially do some work with them around personal, social and health education. They will also be assessed academically to shape the next steps in their learning journeys.

With the wellbeing of our whole community at the top of our priorities, it is important that we take a pragmatic approach to our recovery programme so that children don't feel undue pressure. With our curriculum adjustments in place as well as additional support where needed, we are confident that pupils should not be unduly worried. We will integrate these adjustments as we always have done and will liaise closely with parents and carers to find helpful ways forward.

Uniform expectations

The government guidance stipulates... *'Uniforms do not need to be cleaned any more often than usual, nor do they need to be cleaned using methods which are different from normal.'* This means that **full uniform expectations will be in place** (<https://www.castlehillprimary.net/parents/uniform-personal-belongings>). The only exception to this is on a day where children have PE. PE bags will not be required initially. You will be informed at the end of the first week of your child's PE timetable and we ask that on those days they come to school dressed in their PE kit and remain in this all day (a boot bag at most may be required).

We have clear rules on the use of sports equipment and some restrictions on PE provision that will be in place for the autumn term. Pupils will however be given clear instructions in PE lessons to minimise the spread of the virus.

Clubs and Wrap-around Care

We are still working on the details and it is very complicated owing to the need to reduce mingling between year group pods. This brings with it staffing, space and financial viability challenges! In light of this, we will not be able to resume many of the clubs that we would normally hold during the school day or after school in September. This will probably last until at least half term. However, we will eagerly watch for any changes in the advice so that we can resume some of these when we are able to.



Music Lessons

Peripatetic music lessons are expected to return in the autumn term. However, details of this have not yet been provided and we will inform you of how this will work when we have the information.

Housekeeping

- We are a cashless and paperless school. Please make sure you can use SCOPay/Tucasi (the online payment system). If you are unable to log-in, please contact the school office. For children who are new to us in September, you will be sent a Link Code letter giving you the details of how to log-on in the first week of term. You will need to use this system to pay for things like school dinners
- If you wish to speak to a member of the school staff please contact the school office in the first instance by email admin@chjs.net or telephone 01256 473777
- **Parents are not be able to come into the school grounds unless this is by appointment or an emergency.**

Contingency Planning

In the event of a suspected or confirmed case of Coronavirus within our school community, we will contact Public Health England and follow their instructions. Please be aware that we are not permitted to discuss with parents the health of any member of the school community other than one's own child and we ask for your support in this matter. Please avoid using social media groups to discuss such matters which could lead to misinformation or anxiety for others. Clearly this is a sensitive issue, so we will of course support families on an individual basis.

Should it be necessary to partially close the school owing to Coronavirus, we will provide remote education via our Learning Platform. Given the levels of uncertainty with respect to the spread of the virus, like all schools, we will need to take pragmatic decisions as and when the need arises and in consultation with Public Health England and the Local Authority.

Key Dates

The dates for the start of autumn term for each year group is as follows:

Date	Year Groups in School
Thursday 3 rd September	INSET training day No Year Groups in school
Friday 4 th September	INSET training day No Year Groups in school
W/C Monday 7 th September	Year R home visits and afternoon drop & plays All other Year Groups in school – staggered arrival and departure times
W/C Monday 14 th September	Year R half days commence All other Year Groups in school – staggered arrival and departure times
W/C Monday 21 st September	All Year Groups in school full time

We will continue to do our very best to keep you informed of any changes that may affect these plans as they develop over the coming weeks and months.

Most importantly, we are thrilled that all our children can return to Castle Hill in September. This has been a truly surreal and challenging time for everybody and we look forward to the Castle Hill Team being reunited in the autumn term. As you know, Castle Hill Primary has remained open throughout the whole pandemic and we will be working



hard throughout the summer holidays to implement the plans that will enhance the education for all our pupils.

Thank you, as always, for your continued support. One last favour, on Monday we are sending out a questionnaire (details to follow) and we would really like your feedback. Have a great weekend.

Mr John DF Martin and The Castle Hill Team