



**Mereside Primary School
& Children's Centre**
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Head of School: Ms S. Upton

21st May 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

Thank you for being so patient with us as the school and the academy trust have taken the time needed to carefully plan our phased return of children to school. No doubt you will have seen some of the local and national press coverage on this issue and of the concerns raised by various groups, but also of the strong sense of support for children returning to schools in a phased and safe way.

Much detailed discussion has taken place in recent days and the position taken by the academy trust is that specific cohorts of children should begin the return to school in the week beginning June 8th. The government's ambition of June 1st has proved to be too soon for the trust to make all the necessary arrangements and to consult on and complete all the required Health and Safety risk assessments.

Importantly, the trust do not feel at this stage that they can safely manage the return of nursery and reception age children. The social distancing arrangements are extremely challenging and the trust require more time to devise effective approaches to these particular year groups.

So in the week beginning June 8th 2020, Mereside School will open for Years 1 and 6 only. On Monday 8th there will be essential staff training. From Tuesday 9th all year 1 and 6 children will be able to access school in smaller groups and will be trained on social distancing and necessary hygiene practices and measures within the classroom and wider school setting. We will share more specific information on the plan for that week in the week beginning June 1st.

It's a very unsettling time for us all, but rest assured that we're going to be doing everything we can to make sure we're ready to receive children back into school. Obviously we cannot eradicate all risk, however, we will ensure we minimise the risk as much as humanly possible.

Precautions we'll be taking include:

- Limiting class sizes
- Staggering break times, pick-up and drop-off times
- Increased cleaning and protective measures
- Keeping pupils and staff with coronavirus symptoms at home
- Signage and prompts, one way systems around school

If your child is clinically extremely vulnerable, or living with someone who is in this group, they should not come back to school and should continue home learning. If your child is clinically vulnerable (but not clinically extremely vulnerable), you should follow medical advice to decide if they should come back to school.

I want to reassure you that we're not going to be pressuring anyone to send their children to school. We'll keep you updated with all our preparations for making sure the school is as safe as possible, so you can make an informed decision. The government has announced that no prosecution will take place if you decide not to send your children to school.

We'd like to thank you for your continuous support in helping your child learn from home. We'll keep you updated once we know more about when schools will be able to reopen for other year groups. If your child will remain at home beyond 8th June, we'll continue to support you and them with home learning, and meal support for those eligible. Please do continue to stay in touch with us about how your child is getting on.

It is also important to stress that the current provision for vulnerable children and children of key workers will continue as it has operated so far and is unaffected by these additional plans.

Please read the question and answer section below, as these outline some of the questions we have been asked.

Thank you for your continued support and patience,
Keep safe,

Ms S Upton
(Head of School)

Questions and answers:

Does my child have to wear school uniform?

- Yes. Full school uniform is preferred as this is often easier to wash and dry quickly. If not your child will be able to wear their PE uniform.
- Please ensure that all clothes are washed/changed daily. Children should not come into school with the same clothes on 2 days running.
- An additional jumper will be provided for children coming into school free of charge. Hopefully this will aid with washing.

Will my child have the same teacher/classroom/routine?

- Children will work in smaller classes of 12 at the most.
- Children may not be with their usual class teacher or in their usual classroom or even year group space this is to comply with social distancing and government guidelines.
- Classes will work outside where possible.
- Entrance / exits will be through a designated door at staggered times
- There will be no assemblies and no singing (as this can cause more germs to spread).

What additional hygiene procedures / cleaning will take place?

- All children will be provided with their own equipment that they may need during the school day. They will not be sharing resources.
- Equipment used by children will be cleaned frequently.
- Children will be supervised to wash their hands regularly, hand sanitiser will also be provided.
- Classrooms will be cleaned regularly throughout the day.
- Children will be working in the same place for the days they are in school and will not be moving around, unless to go outside.
- Soft furnishings have been removed where possible to aid cleaning.
- No more than one child at a time will be able to access the toilet blocks to ensure social distancing at hand basins/travelling to/from the toilet blocks.

What will happen at lunchtime and break times?

- Children will have a choice of bringing a packed lunch or having a school dinner.
- Packed lunches and school dinners will be eaten in their classrooms to avoid movement around school.
- Breaktimes/ lunchtimes will be staggered and children given a set area to play in with their group only. There will be no meeting of different groups or 'bubbles' as they have been called.

What will happen at drop off and pick up times?

- Start and finish times will be staggered to prevent too many parents being on the playground at one time.
- Different year groups and/or bubbles will have a different entrance into school.

- School ask that children arrive/leave school promptly to prevent too many adults/children gathering at any one time.
- School ask that where possible only one adult pick up/drop off.
- Please do not arrive earlier/be later than your designated time.

Can parents come into school?

- No. Any queries please phone school on 761531.

What should my child bring into school?

- A packed lunch if they are not on school dinners.
- A coat if needed.
- Your child will not be allowed to bring anything else into school.

What happens if my child is ill?

- In line with government guidance if your child or any one in the household shows signs of COVID-19 they must self isolate. Symptoms are high temperature and/or a new persistent cough or a sudden loss of taste and smell.
- If any adult or child becomes ill then the whole of that bubble/group will be sent home.
- You must inform the school that your child will be absent if your child was due to come in.

What happens if a child can't follow the guidelines and doesn't follow instructions?

- Any incidents of unsafe or high level behaviour/ refusal to do as asked in a situation that goes against government guidelines will result in an immediate phone call home and consequences put in place.