



Monday 20<sup>th</sup> July 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope you are all safe and healthy. Thank you for your patience whilst we prepared the arrangements for opening Rackham fully in September 2020. We are very much looking forward to welcoming all of our pupils back into Rackham and we have carefully planned for and put in place all the Government guidance to provide the necessary safety measures.

At the time of writing this letter, here is the most up-to-date link for you to refer to:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools> Please be aware that the government plan to review this guidance on the 11<sup>th</sup> August. As such, details included in this letter may be subject to change. I will write to you before the start of term with an update if necessary.

This letter sets out Rackham's response to the guidance and what it means for the whole school community when children return. Please accept my apologies in advance for the length of this letter; our aim is to limit the amount of documents you have to receive from us.

### Attendance

All children are expected to return to school on Monday 7<sup>th</sup> September 2020.

You must ensure that if anyone in your household has COVID-19 symptoms, your child does NOT attend school. Any child or staff member who develops symptoms in the school day will be sent home immediately. If anyone in your household, or your child, tests positive for COVID-19 you MUST inform the school.

Attendance at school will be compulsory for the vast majority of children. Whilst the Government has relaxed the rules on attendance during lockdown this, however, will change in September. The government guidance states:

*'Missing out on more time in the classroom risks pupils falling further behind. Those with higher overall absence tend to achieve less well in both primary and secondary school. **School attendance will therefore be mandatory again from the beginning of the autumn term.**'*

Where pupils are apprehensive about returning to school, we ask you to contact us so we can support you and work with you to make it easier. We need to work together to ensure the best outcome for the children and we will always choose to be supportive when it comes to attendance.

If your child has Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) Mrs. Boyden or Miss. Wakefield will contact you to explain what provision for them will look like from September.

### Start and End of the Day Arrangements

In order to minimise contact between parents and pupils before and after school, we must the stagger start and end times of the school day, as well as how you enter the school. To ensure families with more than one child at Rackham are not having to wait around outside school for differing start and finish times, pupils will arrive at school according to the first initial of their surname. Our school office have worked hard to

divide all pupils in school relatively evenly. Below is a table identifying the exact times parents should drop children off.

First Initial of Surname:	Number projected:	Arrival Time:	Departure Time
A - D	67 children (49 families)	8.30 am	2.45 pm
E - J	62 children (45 families)	8.45 am	3 pm
K - Q	63 children (52 families)	9 am	3.15 pm
R - Z	76 children (53 families)	9.15 am	3.30 pm

I appreciate that this may cause some families difficulties arranging their morning and afternoon schedules, but a great deal of deliberation has been made over this decision and it remains the safest and fairest way we are able to open our school. This does mean you need to make sure you drop off and collect your child/children on time; failure to do this will result in too many adults and children together at any one time and this puts us all at risk. Please also be advised that only one adult is permitted at a time for drop off and collection. Buggies and prams are permitted but it is vital that all adults walk off site without delay after they have said goodbye to their child. Please be mindful that Rackham Preschool will be using their front door entrance which opens onto the path on Main Street. We cannot afford for groups of adults to form on the pavement outside preschool so please try to stay away from their entrance and consider using the other side of the road where possible. We thank you in advance for your support with this.

#### **How do children enter and exit the school?**

- Reception children are to use the Reception outdoor area entrance for the first week. This is accessed by walking down through the staff carpark and to the playgrounds behind the school.
- Reception children will use the Arch doorway near the large Chestnut tree at the front of school from the second week onwards (14<sup>th</sup> September 2020).
- Y1 and Y2 children are to use their classroom external doors.
- Y3 and Y4 pupils to use the Y3/4 Reflection Area entrance, as usual.
- Y5/6 to use their own classrooms external doors. These will be accessed from the staff car park and quiet garden area. (There will be no vehicle movement during this time).

There will be a one way system in place for the front of school. If on occasion a class is not released from school on time, parents are asked to wait 2 metres apart from one another.

A permission slip will be issued at the start of term for walking home alone and for a sibling to collect. If a child is being collected by a sibling then only they will be allowed on to the school site and no friends will be allowed to accompany them. Parents please make this clear to your older child. The NSPCC states that a parent needs to consider an elder sibling's maturity and reliability if they are to be responsible for a younger sibling. However, if the sibling is under 16, then the parent remains legally responsible for the child's safety.

#### **Key points:**

- Do not arrive at school before the time allocated for drop off or pick up – there is nowhere to wait!
- Do not walk in as a group.
- Keep your child/children together with you at all times.
- Do not break the 2m social distancing rule with staff.
- Keep to the one way system at all times.
- Do not wait directly by the school gates – 2m social distancing must be observed outside of the school gates at all times.
- Any urgent messages must be passed via the school office, either through an email or a telephone call.
- Messages should not be shared at drop-off as this will delay drop offs for other families.

## **Getting to School**

We would like to encourage as many of you to walk to school as possible. Children are free to cycle or scoot to school but parents must take the bikes and scooters away with them as these cannot be stored at school without bubbles crossing over with each other. The bike sheds will be taped as 'out of use'.

## **Use of Childminders for drop off and pick up**

Using a childminder is essential for many families and the school recognises this. Childminders will be allowed to drop off and pick up. However, this must be done following the school's strict one way and staggered entry and exit times. Furthermore, in accordance with the guidance, parents must limit the number of providers they access – this includes out of school activities such as sporting clubs. Parents should only use providers who can demonstrate the protective measures they are using. The school will liaise with known childminders to discuss allocated drop-off and collection times.

## **Breakfast Club**

We will be running Breakfast Club from September and drop-off will be as it has been this year. However, numbers will be capped and priority will be offered to those who have previously used the club. Places will need to be BOOKED IN ADVANCE. If you have previously used Breakfast Club you will be receiving a letter later today with booking information. Details will also be sent to parents with children joining the Reception class in September. If your child will be in Year 1-6 and you haven't previously used the club but would like to request a place in September, please email the Office stating the days you wish your child to attend. Please note that if there is no booking your child will NOT be able to attend.

Due to safety restrictions, our contractors have not been able to access our site to create our After School Club base during this term and so our After School club provision will not be available until after October half term. We will communicate details about this in the new term.

## **What do the children need to bring to school?**

To reduce the activity in the cloakrooms, we are asking that children only bring essential items to school. No PE kits will need to be in school as children must wear their PE to school on the days where they have PE. There will be no need for book bags because pupils will not be transporting books to and from school until guidance changes. Any medications should be given to the school office. The only item children will need to carry into school with them is their named water bottle which will stay with them all day. Those pupils who bring a packed lunch from home into school need to bring their lunch in a disposable bag as lunchboxes are not yet permitted. In cold weather pupils will also need a coat. We understand that in some exceptional circumstances pupils may need to bring in additional items from home and ask that if this is the case, you contact our school office by email.

Children will be provided with all the stationery they need and therefore must NOT bring in their own pencil cases from home. All children will have responsibility for their own equipment throughout each day, ensuring that their stationery items are not lost.

## **In School**

In school, pupils will be divided into four 'bubbles'. These bubbles will be kept apart from each other as far as is possible and they will have separate play times and lunch times to aid this effort. The bubble structure will be as follows: YR Bubble, Y1/2 Bubble, Y3/4 Bubble, Y5/6 Bubble.

Upon arrival and many times throughout the day, children will be required to wash their hands or use hand sanitiser, including before they go home. It is advised that they should also then wash their hands as soon as they are home.

Once inside the school building, children will be kept in their phase bubbles throughout the day. Breaks will be staggered for each year group and children will be told to stay within one area only and will not mix with any other year group. Children will be reminded to maintain social distance, especially from the staff. The full curious curriculum will be delivered to all pupils and Mrs. Ward will write to you in the new term to detail more about how our curriculum will look in September.

Children in KS2 and where possible, children in KS1 will sit in forward facing rows for the majority of their time. There will be some times where children will sit around a table with a 'horseshoe' design. Any close contact with a teacher has to be kept to a minimum as the guidance states that schools must "minimise time spent within 1 metre of anyone." Teachers will provide children with plenty of opportunities to move and be active within the classrooms. Please do not think that the children will remain seated for the entire day, our teachers will ensure they are moving around safely and taking regular breaks.

Whole School assemblies are not possible at this time. As a result, our values assemblies will be delivered virtually as will our Friday Celebration assembly.

### **Catering**

Our school kitchen will reopen in September and lunches will be available again. Pupils eligible for free school meals will return to having their lunch at school, and will no longer receive lunch vouchers. I would like to thank Miss Smith for working so hard over the past 4 months ensuring that all families eligible for free school meals were able to access them during school closure. For the first three week menu cycle, the kitchen will only be providing the popular school packed lunches. After three weeks, we will risk assess the situation again and potentially begin to integrate hot food into the menus. Please wait for further correspondence detailing how to book school meals. We have not yet received confirmation as to whether the Daily Fruit Scheme will resume in September.

### **Lunchtimes**

Lunchtimes will be staggered. We will be using classrooms and our school hall to ensure adequate spacing is available to maintain social distancing.

### **Behaviour**

Prior to the partial reopening in June, all schools were asked to amend their behaviour policy. As we open fully in September, the amendments continue to stand for the Autumn Term. These are seen as an 'Addendum to the Policy' which can be viewed on our school website. Crucial changes include the following:

- Rules on arrival and departure.
- Handwashing and hygiene rules being followed diligently by all.
- Limiting socialising in school.
- How to move around school to minimise contact with others.
- The 'Catch it, Bin it, Kill it' technique being followed by all – deliberate coughing or spitting into someone's face will lead to serious consequences.
- Children being honest about any illness or symptoms.
- Children to only use toilets allocated to them.
- Racist slurs regarding the origin of coronavirus will lead to serious consequences.

All parents will be asked to sign a new Covid Compliant Home School Agreement within the first week of term in September.

### **Cleaning**

Throughout the day, classroom doors and windows will be left open as much as they can be. Furthermore, doors around the school, e.g. to enter the hall, will be left open to minimise the number of people who need to touch these. Other areas, such as toilets, toilet doors, equipment in corridors etc. will be cleaned more regularly throughout the day.

## **Uniform**

All pupils are to wear school uniform from September. However, we understand that for many pupils, uniforms may no longer fit and people may have found purchasing new uniform difficult. We can assure you all that no pupil will be made to feel penalised in any way for not having a school uniform and our policy will be 'more relaxed' to allow parents time to organise suitable uniform.

## **What will happen if a child becomes unwell?**

All parents MUST engage with the NHS Track and Trace system.

If a child shows any of the following symptoms (they don't all have to be shown), they must not come into school:

- new, continuous cough
- a high temperature
- loss of taste and smell

The child MUST have a test administered through the NHS.

If a child becomes unwell displaying any Covid19 symptoms in school then they will be taken to the isolation room. The adult supporting that child will wear PPE. The school will contact the child's parent/carer who must collect the child as soon as possible.

Parents/carers will be advised to follow the 'Stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus infection' which sets out that the person with symptoms must self-isolate for at least 7 days and the parent/carer should arrange a test for the child to see if they have coronavirus. All links to relevant government guidance can be located on the 'Coronavirus-latest' section of our school website.

Other members of the household, including any siblings in the school, will also be sent home and should self-isolate for 14 days from when the first child showed symptoms.

It is extremely important that the school is notified of any test results. We are being asked to keep a log of all children being sent home and where tests are administered and to have regular communication with Public Health England (PHE).

If a child's result to the test is negative then the child can return to school once they are feeling well again.

If a child's test is positive then the rest of the bubble will be sent home and advised to self-isolate for 14 days. In this event, remote learning will recommence with immediate effect. The household of that wider group do not need to isolate unless the contact subsequently develops symptoms.

## **Reporting Absence**

Please report absence in the usual way – by emailing our office, speaking to our office on the telephone or leaving a message on the school answerphone. We will need to know the exact reason your child is not in school, e.g. they have a high temperature and not "they are unwell." If a general statement is made then the school will have to contact you for further information.

## **Visitors**

Visitors will not be permitted in the school unless an appointment has been made. If you need to leave a message, then please telephone or email the office. In the Autumn Term, it is likely that our parent consultation meetings will be held through a telephone call with each parent/carer.

## **Trips/Visits**

We will not run any trips in the Autumn Term. This will be reviewed after October half term.

## **Clubs**

No after school clubs will run through the Autumn Term. There are several reasons for this precaution, including our staggered exit times and our extended cleaning cycle.

## **Holidays Abroad in the Summer**

Travel restrictions for many countries were lifted on July 4th. However, there are still restrictions in place for many countries. This means that when you arrive back in the UK you will not be allowed to leave the place where you're staying for 14 days – known as quarantine - unless you are arriving from an exempt country. A list of exempt countries can be found following this link: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-travel-corridors> It is extremely important that you notify the school if your child is unable to return to school for this reason.

I appreciate that there is a huge amount of information in this letter and that this may seem overwhelming. We have tried our utmost to make the huge guidance document as workable and readable for you as possible. Thank you for your understanding.

May I take this opportunity to reassure you that we are on hand to support all of our students at this challenging time. The return to the school may be a daunting one, but we have planned this very rigorously to ensure that, when students and staff do come on site, they will be safe, and their learning experience will be a positive one.

## **Thankyou**

I would like to thank Miss Crawley for all she has done for Rackham over the years. On behalf of all pupils, parents, staff and governors at school, we wish you the very best for the future.

I would like to thank our incredible staff who have worked relentlessly and passionately to ensure our pupils are still able to learn and enjoy themselves during these challenging months. They embraced a new way of working and I feel fortunate to lead such a dedicated and hard working group of individuals.

I would also like to thank our governors for their unwavering support and help over recent months and indeed all year. Similarly, I would like to thank Jonathan Lewis and the Local Authority for the support and guidance that they have afforded us on a daily basis during these difficult times.

I would like to end this letter with a message of thanks to our parents. Staff at Rackham are so appreciative of the support you have afforded us over recent months. Your messages of support and kindness have lifted our spirits when things have felt difficult and although I have not had the time yet to respond to your emails individually, I would like parents to know that your positivity and encouragement has been truly gratefully received.

Stay safe everyone, and have a wonderful summer of memory making.

Yours sincerely,

Bridget Harrison

