



St White's Primary School

*Challenge, Commit, Conquer and Celebrate*



Thursday 14th May 2020

Dear Parents/Carers

Firstly, we would like to thank you hugely for all your support over the past weeks and for all the hard work that you have undertaken to help your children with their home learning. We can't thank you enough for all the help that you have given us in supporting your children's education.

Now, following the government's new guidance, we are planning on beginning to get back to something approaching normality and will be opening for children in EYFS, Year 1 and Year 6 from Monday, 1<sup>st</sup> June. We know that many of you will be extremely anxious about sending your children back to school, and we really do sympathise. The government have stated, and we agree, that social distancing is not possible in primary schools but we want to reassure you that we are doing everything that we possibly can to reduce the risk to your children and our staff.

Government guidance says that classes should be reduced to no more than 15 children to ensure that there is more space in classrooms and children can sit further apart. We will inform you as soon as possible of which class your child will be in. The children will have learning packs that contain their stationery and pencils so that sharing is reduced. Staff will have a socially distanced briefing every morning and then stay in class with your children. At lunchtime, a MDSA will arrive directly to the classroom door and take charge of the group of children who will have lunch and playtime together but will not mix with any other groups. To ensure that everyone is as safe as possible, there will be no Wrap Around facility for any pupils for the rest of this academic year, and no clubs will take place in school. This is to maintain the integrity of the class 'bubbles'. For the same reason, the minibus will not be in use at the moment.

You will be aware that many classes share toilets and outside learning areas. This will no longer be the case as measures have been put in place to keep children separate. Playtimes will also be staggered so that children are safe within their smaller group.

There will be staggered opening and closing times for the school so that there is reduced risk of spreading the virus at these times. We ask that only one parent drops off or collects and that you leave the site immediately following drop off or pick up. A letter detailing this part of the plan will be sent out next week to all families.

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We would encourage you to wash hands before leaving home, and children will wash their hands on arrival in class. There will also be additional hand washing in class during the day. The school has implemented a new cleaning regime and the classroom surfaces will be wiped down at regular intervals throughout the day. School will begin a staggered closure to all children and teaching/administration staff at 12 noon on Fridays so that there can be a deep clean of the building every week. This has the additional benefit of allowing teachers their planning time out of school which reduces the risk of contamination from other staff even further. To further reduce the risk of infection spreading, no parents/carers will be allowed to enter the building. Our extremely hard-working administration staff will be very happy to chat with you on the phone but the reception area will be closed throughout the school day.

If any child or member of staff shows any symptoms such as a temperature or cough, they will immediately be isolated and sent home. Testing will be available for all those who attend school and their families, so we will arrange for a test to be carried out. If there were to be a positive test, that whole class bubble including staff would be sent home to isolate in line with government advice and if symptoms emerged, then testing would be made available. Our understanding is that the scientific and medical advice suggests that testing works best if done within 3 days of symptoms appearing which is why we could not test everyone immediately.

As you know, at St White's we are very keen on 'learning'! Any children who have been in school have been following the lessons put on the website and emailed out to parents. Children who return to school in EYFS, Y1 and Y6 will be taught as they would normally be taught in school. We will continue to promote and support learning for those children not in school. If your child is in one of the year groups initially returning to school, how we support learning at home may need to change to reflect that teachers will need to be physically in school teaching.

It is clear that after this very anxious and unusual time, everyone will need to take care of their mental health. As part of the return to school, all classes will start with 'circles' where they can share their feelings and worries. There will be the opportunity for class teachers to consult with our Family Support Worker for advice and she will be working hard to suggest interventions that will support any children and adults who are worried.

From 1<sup>st</sup> June, with EYFS, Y1 and Y6 children in school, and the children of key workers and those who are vulnerable, we can manage with the space and staff we have. The government is keen, if possible, to have all children back in school for the last four weeks of term. As the government increases the year groups who should attend school, the school will run out of space as we would need 22 classrooms under current guidance, and we have only 11. At this stage, we may need to look at running timetables where children attend on certain days of the week, or certain weeks.

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We are shortly sending out a questionnaire that asks for your opinions and we will use this to decide which approach will best suit our community.

Free school meals will be provided in school for all eligible children who attend. If your child does not attend school and they are eligible, hampers will continue to be provided at the moment. We hope that the kitchen will re-open on 1<sup>st</sup> June and school dinners will be provided for all pupils in school who require them. There will be no charge for EYFS and KS1 under the universal scheme. Year 6 and keyworker children in Year 3 and above will be expected to pay unless the child is entitled to Free School Meals. We will send information about the meals and how to order and pay for them as soon as possible.

Because we really do sympathise with the difficulty of this decision, we would like to reassure you that no action will be taken if you choose not to send your child to school. In addition, the guidance states that if your child, or someone in your household is designated as 'extremely vulnerable' they should not come to school. All extremely vulnerable people should have received a shielding letter. If someone in your household is in any other vulnerable group i.e. pregnant or diabetic, the guidance says that these children can go to school.

Please be aware that the school opening to EYFS, Year 1 and Year 6 is based on the government's current advice. If the government change any of its advice, we will adapt our plan accordingly and update you.

Thank you so much for bearing with us while we get school restarted. We do hope that the arrangements that we have put in place are clear and seem sensible to you. If you have any questions, please do get in touch. We can assure you that we are doing everything in our power to safeguard your children and the school staff and are really looking forward to starting to get back to normal. We will be writing to parents of children in EYFS, Year 1 and Year 6 again shortly to ask your intentions with regard to sending your child/children back to school, and then with detailed arrangements when we know how many children we are expecting.

Kind regards

Clare Tilling  
Headteacher

Matt Bishop  
Chair of Governors

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