



**WESTGATE
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Striving for Excellence • Caring for Children



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Thursday 21st May 2020

Dear Parents/ Carers

Re: Plans to reopen more widely

Thank you for your patience over the last 11 days, while we have worked to absorb the fast-changing guidance from the DfE and plan for a safe wider reopening of our school. This evening, I have shared my proposals with the governing body. After careful consideration and discussion, I would like to share with you the plan that we have agreed. I make no apology for the length of this letter: it is essential that you are given as much detail as possible to understand fully what we are able to offer. I am also including the comprehensive risk assessment that has been undertaken, which provides additional detail.

We will work towards opening to keyworker and vulnerable children, Y6, Y1 and Reception, as soon after 1st June as we deem it safe to do so. We are unable to open to Nursery. We will begin with keyworker/ vulnerable pupil groups and Y6 pupils w/c 01/06/20 or as close to that as it is safe to do so. We will use this first week to test out procedures and check our plans. Then, if we feel it is safe to do so, we will open to Y1, followed by Reception.

In order to limit group sizes while offering the benefits of attendance to children in these year groups, each class will be split into 2 halves. Each half will attend for four days. Monday to Thursday, one week out of every two. So, Group A will attend from Monday to Thursday, followed by a closure on Friday for a deep clean and to allow teachers non-contact time to continue to maintain some online learning for children who do not attend school this half term. The following week, group A will stay at home while Group B attends from Monday to Thursday, before a deep clean on Friday and a return to the beginning of the cycle. Keyworker care, because it is structured differently, will operate Monday to Friday, however. Y6 will be based in their classroom, Y1 in the Y2 classroom and their shared area, Reception in Blue Room and Big Room, and key worker/ vulnerable pupils will be in Y3, Y4 and possibly Y5, depending on the volume of demand.

Groups (or 'bubbles') have been created so that children and staff have their contact with others minimised as much as possible. There will be no movement of staff or children between bubbles. This means that for families whose children are eligible for both, you must choose either year group teaching, or keyworker/ vulnerable pupil childcare. It will not be possible to be part of two bubbles. Where there are families who have children in two target year groups, we will endeavour to ensure that their groups are scheduled for the same week, to support families and provide a consistent experience for both children. While at school, bubbles will have no contact with each other (staff or pupils). Each bubble will be staffed by a teacher, which may or may not be the usual class teacher, and a teaching assistant, who similarly may or may not normally work with that class. Once allocated, this staffing will not change or alternate. The allocated staff will provide break cover for each other so that additional staff do not have to be introduced into the bubble. Start times, break times, lunchtimes, outdoor access and finish times will all be timetabled

on a staggered basis. Lunch will be eaten in classroom bases, with the exception of Reception, who will eat in the hall. Keeping strictly to the bubble principle is one of the key ways we can control transmission, and builds on practices we have established from the beginning for our keyworker care.

Keyworker/ vulnerable pupil childcare will continue to take account of siblings and, while learning will be supported in childcare sessions, children will not receive formal lessons due to the varied composition of each group.

Extended hours will not be available for year group teaching in Reception/ Y1/ Y6 as it is not possible to staff this, at least initially. We will review this in due course to see if we can extend the offer. Extended hours will however be available in keyworker/ vulnerable pupil childcare, 07:45- 18:00.

In order to make our school site as safe as possible, all unnecessary furniture and resources have been removed from classrooms, to facilitate concentrated and effective cleaning routines, minimise surfaces to touch and to provide the maximum amount of space to enable social distancing. That means that for Y6 and Y1, the only items in their classrooms are tables and chairs, set apart. I am enclosing photographs for you to see. In Reception, Blue Room has been completely emptied to provide a space where the bubble can be spaced yet taught together on the carpet. Big Room has been re-set to provide 2 sets of mirrored basic provision, so that the bubble can be further split into two to support distancing where appropriate. In Reception and in the KS1 shared area for Y1, resources have been carefully selected and pared back so that the only shared resources that are used are those which can be washed safely on a daily basis.

Where possible, children will be allocated individual resources which are not shared: pencils, crayons, scissors, glue sticks. All their belongings will be stored in their tray, in the classroom. Nobody will use the cloakrooms for any storage. Where children are sat at tables (not Reception), their tray will be stored on or under their table. In Reception, trays will be stored in Blue Room.

Parents will not be able to come onto the school site. Drop off and pick up will be as follows:

Year group	Drop off	Pick up	Location
Reception	08:30	14:45	Nursery black gate
Year 1	08:45	15:00	Long Row gate
Year 6	09:00	15:15	Long Row gate
Key worker groups	As arranged	As arranged	Scarborough Road main entrance

Staff will meet you at the gate. Only one parent should come to school with your child(ren). 2m markers will be on the floor on Scarborough Road and Long Row to help you to socially distance and it is essential that you are on time and leave promptly, to avoid crowding.

TYPICAL QUESTIONS YOU MIGHT HAVE:

Q: Will school definitely reopen more widely as described above, from 1st June? If not, when will we know?

A: There is a great deal of uncertainty nationally about the 1st June, linked to the 5 tests that have been set out and the test, track and trace system currently being developed. We have been given no firm indication of when this will be confirmed, but it could be as late as 28th May. As ever, we will endeavour to keep parents informed as swiftly as possible as things change.

Q: Why aren't Nursery children able to come back to school?

A: Our school site cannot accommodate both Nursery and Reception children, due to shared spaces, toilets etc. We have therefore decided to prioritise Reception over Nursery to support their transition to Key Stage One. Another consideration was Nursery children's ability to understand the changes we have had to make to make school safe enough for the majority of pupils.

Q: Why are children being asked to attend on a part-time, week on/ week off basis?

A: We don't have the space or staff to facilitate full-time attendance. We have carefully considered other solutions, such as further limiting the year groups we can open to. However, we would be unable to provide a duplicate, appropriate learning space for Reception if we were to do this, Y1 would be moved into the KS2 building (and we may not be able to accommodate both groups at once in any case) and we would be unable to open to Y6 at all. The plan I have set out is deemed to be the safest and most appropriate for our children.

Q: Can Westgate guarantee stringent social distancing?

A: No. It would be inappropriate and psychologically damaging to our youngest pupils to enforce stringent social distancing. In sending your child, you must accept that we cannot guarantee this. We have taken every step we can to facilitate as much space as possible, to support effective hygiene, while still providing an appropriate learning environment. But there is no guarantee that any child, even in Y6, will be able to socially distance at all times.

Q: My child has asthma. Should they attend?

A: You should contact your GP to confirm whether or not your child's medical condition means that they are clinically vulnerable. If they are clinically vulnerable you should consider very carefully whether or not to send your child, as we cannot guarantee stringent social distancing, which increases the risk to them. Clinically vulnerable staff are not included in the staffing rota for this reason.

Q: Somebody in my household is shielding (clinically extremely vulnerable). Should my child attend?

A: Medical advice is clear that pupils who are shielding or who live in a shielding household should not attend school, as the risk is unacceptable.

Q Will my child be taught by their class teacher?

A: Not necessarily. Staff are not able to move between bubbles, meaning that full-time members of staff can only be allocated to one bubble. This is the draft staffing plan, taking into account shielding and clinically vulnerable staff:

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Rec A	Mrs Colannino Ms Ellison	Mrs Colannino Ms Ellison	Mrs Norton Ms Ellison	Mrs Norton Ms Ellison	Closed for cleaning
Rec B	Mrs Brogden Mrs Pearson	Mrs Brogden Mrs Pearson	Mrs Jagger Mrs Pearson	Mrs Jagger Mrs Pearson	Closed for cleaning
Y1 A	Mrs Senior Mrs Divers	Mrs Senior Mrs Divers	Mrs Senior Mrs Divers	Mrs Chilton Mrs Divers	Closed for cleaning
Y1 B	Mrs Ireland Mrs Winterburn	Mrs Ireland Mrs Winterburn	Ms Romaine Mrs Winterburn	Ms Romaine Mrs Winterburn	Closed for cleaning
Y6 A	Mr Hackney Mrs Kerry	Mr Hackney Mrs Kerry	Mr Hackney Mrs Kerry	Mr Hackney Mrs Kerry	Closed for cleaning
Y6 B	Mrs Cable Miss Gnap	Mrs Hooper Miss Gnap	Mrs Hooper Miss Gnap	Mrs Hooper Miss Gnap	Closed for cleaning
Keyworker rooms 1/ 2/ 3	Mrs Eley Mrs Hattersley Miss Jeffery Mrs Pollhammer Miss Robinson	Mrs Eley Mrs Hattersley Miss Jeffery Mrs Pollhammer Miss Robinson	Mrs Eley Mrs Hattersley Miss Jeffery Mrs Pollhammer Miss Robinson	Mrs Eley Mrs Hattersley Miss Jeffery Mrs Pollhammer Miss Robinson	Mrs Eley Mrs Hattersley Miss Jeffery Mrs Pollhammer Miss Robinson

Q: My child will not be attending school this term, but their class teacher is scheduled to teach or to staff childcare. What happens to online learning?

A: Online learning will continue. However, to reflect the increase in face to face duties, you should expect a significant reduction in the amount of interaction and feedback teachers are able to manage.

Q: Are children required to wear uniform?

A: We will encourage school uniform for year groups and key worker bubbles, but it will **not** be compulsory over the next half term. In order to support stringent hygiene measures, it is essential that children and staff come to school in clean, fresh-on clothes every day, and that these clothes are removed and set aside for washing as soon as you get home. This increase in laundry might mean that children can't wear school uniform every day, and that is fine. Long hair must be tied back to reduce the need to touch the face.

Q: What is happening about snacks, drinks and lunch times?

A: Children are asked to bring their own snacks and water bottle, and keep these in their tray. You may choose to bring a packed lunch. All lunches and snacks must comply with the school packed lunch policy. If you would prefer a hot school meal, the catering agency has worked hard to produce a simplified menu. Meals will be prepared and then left for collection in the school hall. Bubble staff will serve the food to their children and kitchen staff will have no face to face contact with anybody in a bubble.

Q: What about Y2/ 3/ 4/ 5?

A: You can see that to even accommodate the initial target year groups has proved challenging. At present there is no further information about when and how we might be asked to reopen to additional year groups. We have therefore not begun to plan for this. As more information about the government's plans becomes available, we will keep parents informed.

Q: How will you support regular handwashing?

A: We will provide pump action vacuum flasks in classrooms where there is no hot water supply, to provide hand-hot water for washing. Every bubble has its own sink with running water, soap and paper towels. Hand sanitising stations will be provided at building entry/ exit points. Children will wash their hands thoroughly and regularly throughout the school day.

Q: What will the curriculum consist of?

A: In keyworker care, children will not be taught formally but will be supported to complete home learning set by their class teacher and supervised for a range of play and other activities. In year groups, the priority will be activities to support children's emotional wellbeing, minimise/ manage anxiety, and also key skills in English and mathematics. Learning will take place outdoors wherever it can. Curriculum planning for year groups will be led/ supervised by the class teacher for both bubbles. All staff are acutely aware of the emotional support children will need in returning to school.

Q: What about PE?

A: Each bubble will have regular timetabled slots outdoors. No indoor PE will take place and children will not get changed for physical activity outdoors, so they should come in appropriate footwear for running and playing games, every day that they attend.

Q: I have been receiving food vouchers/ a daily packed lunch/ a weekly hamper as my child is eligible for Free School Meals (FSM). What happens on the 1st June?

A: We are currently planning this in more detail but we expect that these arrangements will continue for children not attending school. If your child is attending school, they will receive a school hot meal on the days they are in school, unless you indicate otherwise. More information will be available shortly about this.

Q: What happens if there is a possible case of Coronavirus in school?

A: Children must not attend if they, or a member of their household, has any of the symptoms of Covid-19 and should therefore be self-isolating. If a child develops symptoms whilst in our care, we will isolate them from the rest of their group and call you for immediate collection. A staff member will remain with the child, but will be required to wear PPE, including a face mask. If a member of staff develop symptoms they will be sent home to self-isolate until they have been able to take a test confirming negative results. Members of their household should self-isolate for 14 days, although they may also be eligible for testing. If a staff member or a pupil tests negative and no longer has symptoms, they can return to school, but only if a test has been carried out and results received. The school may ask for evidence of this. If staff member or a pupil tests positive the rest of their group (and the staff) will be sent home and will need to self-isolate for 14 days. Other members of households will not need to self-isolate unless the pupil or staff member they live with develop symptoms.

Q: Why is Westgate's offer different to another local school?

A: Throughout the school closure period, the whole Family of Schools has worked very closely to support each other. In making plans for our individual schools, we have all had to take into account the unique circumstances of our organisations, including building configuration, staffing and resources. We all fully support and understand the different decisions each school has had to make and recognise that what is right and appropriate may not be the same in each school.

Q: What does Westgate expect of families whose children attend school?

A: It is essential that all families continue to strictly observe the lockdown conditions as set out by the government. Parents of Y6 and older children should think very carefully before letting their children play out unsupervised, where they may congregate in groups or otherwise not observe social distancing. Any breach of the conditions set out for us all put your family and everyone in your child's bubble at increased risk.

You should also check your child's temperature before setting off for school each day. If anybody in your household begins to display Coronavirus symptoms, your child should not attend school and you should all follow the government advice on self-isolation.

Q: Having read all of the DfE guidance, and understanding school's plans, I feel uncomfortable sending my child to school. What should I do?

A: The government wants to encourage children to attend school this term. We have put careful plans in place to mitigate risk to the greatest degree we think is manageable and appropriate. However, we cannot eliminate risk. Neither can we give children the same provision or experiences that we ordinarily offer. If you do not feel that our offer is appropriate or safe enough for your child, you will not be penalised for non-attendance. However, we cannot advise you on the best decision for your child: that responsibility rests with parents. Rest assured however, that no judgements will be made by anyone at school, whichever decision you make.

We support and trust you as parents to make the right decision for your family. We are also reviewing ways to make available additional resources eg exercise books, for those that need them next month.

Q: Can I change my mind?

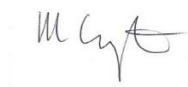
A: Of course. Our plans are all set up based upon full or near full attendance, so we can accommodate rising numbers in year group bubbles. The only thing you can't change your mind about is keyworker care/ year group bubbles. It will not be possible to move from one bubble to another partway through the term.

You may have other questions, and I will be happy to try to answer them. Please email info@westgateprimary.co.uk and I will endeavour to get in touch to discuss specific concerns over half term.

Before I finish, I would like to thank all of our staff, who have worked tirelessly since school closure, including through bank holidays, school holidays and weekends, to try to get this right for the whole of our school community; they continue to want to get the next stage of this crisis right, by going the extra mile. I feel exceptionally proud to be part of this team and I am sure like me you appreciate their dedication and care. Thank you too for your messages of support and concern. They are greatly appreciated by us all.

Tomorrow I will send out a new survey asking parents to confirm their plans for after half term. Thank you for your help in this matter.

Yours sincerely



Rob Wilks
Chair of Governors
On behalf of the governing body

Helen Carpenter
Head teacher