



HIGHER OPENSHAW COMMUNITY SCHOOL  
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8<sup>th</sup> July 2020

Dear Parent / Carer,

### **New Government Guidance & Plans for Opening in September**

I would like to try to provide some clarity around the school position for September 2020 now that we have received further guidance from government on how schools have to operate in the Autumn term. I appreciate that this letter is rather long but necessary to provide you with the wider information you will need to plan for September 2020.

#### **Government Guidance**

It is the government's plan that all children and young people, in all year groups, will return to school full time from the beginning of the autumn term. The scientific evidence shows that coronavirus (COVID-19) presents a much lower risk to children than adults of becoming severely ill. Of course, there will still be risks while coronavirus (COVID-19) remains in the community, and that is why we will be putting in place a strict range of protective measures. In order to effectively manage the risks, things will be a bit different when children return to school for the new academic year.

The government is instructing schools to put in place a variety of different rules in order to open safely. These include;

- managing confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) in the school, in line with current public health guidance - this means your child may be asked to self isolate for 14 days by school (based on advice from the local health protection team) if they have been in close, face-to-face contact with someone who has tested positive for the virus. All staff and pupils have to co-operate with the government's test, track and trace system. If your child is sent home and asked to isolate, due to coronavirus then they will not be penalised for their absence.
- ensuring everyone at the school cleans their hands more often than usual, including when they arrive at school when they return from breaks, and before and after eating - this can be done with soap and running water or hand sanitiser
- ensuring good respiratory hygiene, by promoting the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach
- enhanced cleaning, including cleaning frequently touched surfaces more often
- minimising contact and maintaining distance, as far as possible - this will involve asking children to stay within specified separate groups (or year bubbles), and through maintaining distance between individuals. The government's guidance to schools recognises that younger children may not be able to maintain social distancing so for younger children the

emphasis will be on separating groups, and for older children, it will be on distancing. It is important that children return to school in September for their educational progress, for their wellbeing, and for their wider development.

### **Attendance**

School attendance will again be mandatory from the beginning of the new academic year. For parents and carers of children of compulsory school age, this means that the legal duty on you as a parent to send your child to school regularly will apply from September 2020.

As ever, parents should plan their holidays within school holiday time and avoid seeking permission to take their children out of school during term time.

### **Staggered Start and Finish times**

As part of the protective measures, we will need to stagger and adjust start and finish school times. This helps keep year groups apart on the way to and from school and as pupils arrive, and leave the premises. This will not result in reduced teaching time for your child, as the time will be compensated for where necessary. There will also be amended procedures for dropping off and picking up your child. These staggered times must be strictly adhered to. We understand that this measure will pose problems for parents, particularly those with more than one child and we will try to work with you on this issue, however we are being instructed to operate this way and have been told that school will not be allowed to reopen if these distancing measures are not in place. Your co-operation and understanding with this matter is greatly appreciated.

### **Curriculum**

The government has set out clear expectations on what schools are expected to teach when pupils return in September. We will continue to provide an ambitious and broad curriculum in all subjects whilst acknowledging that some catch up will be necessary.

We will also make plans for the provision of remote education where needed, to ensure that the small number of children that need to be educated at home, for example, due to shielding or self-isolation, are given the support they need to continue learning.

### **Behaviour Policy**

The amendments made to the school behaviour policy will continue in September to reflect the new school rules that are required from the autumn term. All Parents will receive a copy of these new rules and must sign to state that they accept them. The updated behaviour policy will be emailed out to all parents near to the start of term.

### **Uniform**

We will be returning to the usual uniform policy in the autumn term. Uniforms do not need to be cleaned any more often than usual, or in any different way to normal due to coronavirus (COVID-19). Although, they do need to be cleaned on a regular basis as usual.

### **Lunchtimes**

Manchester Fayre are our catering providers, and as such operate their own risk assessments. We are confident that the school kitchen should be fully open as soon as possible in the autumn term. They will provide free school meals and universal infant free school meals as usual for those who are eligible. It will probably be the case that children will start by having packed lunches for a short while upon their return. We hope to return to serving hot meals as soon as it is logistically possible. Lunchtimes will be staggered differently from September to reduce the number of pupils in one place at any one time.

## School Clubs

School will be permitted to run before and after-school clubs from September. We will need to make sure these clubs can be delivered in line with the wider guidance on protective measures, so we may need to run things a little differently and adapt these over time. These clubs will start as soon as we can be sure that they are safe to run. Maximum numbers attending may be reduced.

## Further Outbreaks

If any school experiences an outbreak, either because they have 2 or more confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) among pupils or staff in their setting within 14 days, or they see an increase in pupil or staff absence rates due to suspected or confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19), they will need to contact their local health protection team. This team will advise if additional action is required, though the closure of the whole school or college will generally not be necessary.

I hope you are gaining a sense of how school will operate in September. Details of start and finish staggered times will be provided before we finish for summer.

## Return dates in September

As part of the Local Authority risk assessment process, they have indicated that schools should complete rigorous staff training based around new safety precautions. This will take place across two training days (1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> September). In order to test our new procedures it will be necessary for us to stagger admittance to school over the first couple of days of term. Please take note of when your children will be returning.

Tues 1 <sup>st</sup> September	Training Day
Weds 2 <sup>nd</sup> September	Training Day
Thurs 3 <sup>rd</sup> September	KS2 ONLY Return (Y6, Y5, Y4, Y3)
Friday 4 <sup>th</sup> September	KS2 & KS1 Return (Y6, Y5, Y4, Y3, Y2, Y1)

Monday 7<sup>th</sup> September All Year groups return

Pupils in Nursery and Reception will be informed separately of their individual start dates

As school receives updates during the summer, we will continue to keep you informed. Although, school is closed over summer all staff are still working hard during the holidays to ensure a smooth start in September. Please be aware that all of our decisions are subject to any imposed localised or wider restrictions. The government have stated that the final confirmation for the return of schools will be on 11<sup>th</sup> August, after a review of the national transmission rate.

Yours sincerely,



Headteacher

