

**Headteacher: Mr D Childs**

21<sup>st</sup> May 2020

Dear Parents,

I hope this letter finds you well. Over the past couple of weeks we have been working hard to create our plan for the possible reopening of schools from June 1<sup>st</sup> onwards. To create the plan, we have read through several guidance documents produced by the Department for Education, and we have worked with our Ryarsh community to create an approach that will minimise risk as much as we possibly can.

As in my previous letters, I wish to be as transparent with you all as possible. We know that it is impossible to socially distance children so our plan is based on how we reduce risk and keep our children and staff as safe as we possibly can.

There will be drastic changes needed across the school in order for us to be in a position to possibly open from June 1<sup>st</sup>. The changes required will be against many of our professional instincts and the school will be a very different environment to what you and the children are used to. Nothing is more important to us than the safety of our community so these changes are necessary. Please remember that the school will be closed for children on Monday 1<sup>st</sup> June as we need to train the staff team to ensure we are as prepared as possible for children to return to school from Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> June.

Accompanying this letter, you will find an abbreviated copy of our school plan. I apologise for the length of this document, but as I have stated, we want to be as transparent with you as we can be. I appreciate that there is a great deal of uncertainty around the country at the moment so we feel it is important to provide you with as much information about how our school will operate differently. This plan is evolving all of the time as we receive new or updated guidance. For the rest of the letter, I will try to summarise the key points of the plan. However, I would urge you to read the full planning document.

### **Entry to the school**

School will have a staggered start time and will be as follows:

- 8:30 – 8:40: Key Worker Children
- 8:40-8:55 – Year 6
- 8:55-9:10 – Year 1
- 9:10-9:25 – Reception

On arrival, a verbal check-in will be carried out for each child to ask about symptoms i.e. continuous cough, temperature, loss of taste or smell. Should any children be displaying any of these symptoms, they will not be allowed into the school. We are also intending to carry out a quick temperature check as part of entry to the school. In order for this check-in process to happen, it will be very important that each child attending school is brought in by a parent, including children in year 6. We will not be allowing a child access to the school if the check-in process is not completed with a parent present – to clarify, parents can only bring their own children.

Parents will bring their child on to the school playground where there will be 2M markings along the yellow lines of the netball court. Parents will queue at these markings whilst waiting to complete the check-in.

Once the check-in process is complete, you will need to leave the school via the emergency gates, through the staff car park and out of the small gate. The main car park gates will be locked from 8:30 – 9:30 to allow you a safe way to leave the school.

Year 6 children will walk across the playground to the pod. Year 1 children will walk across the playground and through the outdoor KS1 area into their room. Reception children will enter the school using the door by the Den and enter their classroom using the outdoor area. Key Worker children will enter through the year 2 door on the KS1 outdoor area. We would be grateful if you could explain this to your child so they know what to expect when they arrive in school.

Parents must arrive on time for entry to school, they must not arrive early or late. In the instance that parents have children in more than one year group, parents may wait with their children in the playground, strictly following social distancing from other parents and children.

There will be no access to the office. Should you need to speak with the office team, please call them or email using [office@ryarsh.kent.sch.uk](mailto:office@ryarsh.kent.sch.uk). Should any visits to the office be required, this will need to be made by appointment only.

### **Exit from the school**

School will have a staggered end time and will be as follows:

- 2:30 – 2:45 – Reception
- 2:45 – 3:00 – Year 1
- 3:00-3:15 – Year 6
- 3:15-3:30 - Key Worker Children

When dismissing the children, parents will need to queue at the 2M markings placed along the yellow lines of the netball court. This is the same as the system in the morning. Adults will bring their group to the playground, queuing at 2M distances and then dismiss the children to the parents. Parents will collect their children and leave immediately via the emergency gate and through the car park. The main gates of the car park will be shut from approximately 2:30-3:30.

Again, parents must not arrive early or late. They must collect their children on time so that teachers can release children safely. The playground will be open to parents to briefly wait in before their children are released to them. Whilst parents are waiting, social distancing must be adhered to.

Should a parent be significantly late, the child will need to return to their allocated classroom to wait for collection.

Teachers will not be available to speak to parents unless teachers initiate the contact. Teachers must commit their time to ensuring that all children safely leave their care. Parents can contact teachers through email or phone if they have queries about the day. The school office remains inaccessible at the end of the day.

We would ask you to keep all siblings at home during drop off and pick up times. However, we do appreciate that this be impossible. In order to help us maintain social distancing, please ensure that any siblings that do need to wait with you stay by your side.

### **School Closure on Friday afternoon**

In order to provide staff with their legal entitlement of planning, preparation and assessment time, we will be closing the school on Friday afternoon. This will mean that you will need to collect your child after they have eaten their lunch. The times for collection will be:

- 12:30 – Reception
- 12:45 – Year 1
- 1:00 – Year 6
- 1:15 - Key Worker Children

### **Movement around the school**

All children will be placed into groups with a maximum number of 15. Each group will be a 'bubble'. Each bubble will have an allocated classroom and specific timetable. Each bubble will remain isolated from every other bubble in the school to limit the amount of contact that any one person has. The bubbles, their classrooms and their timetable will remain the same for the duration of the return (until further guidance is issued).

Contact between people needs to be minimised. This will mean that children in their bubbles will not come into contact with the children or adults in other bubbles. To facilitate this, we will be taking the following actions:

- Each bubble will have an allocated room which they must stay in for the duration of the day (there will be opportunities to use the playground and field on a timetable).
- The children in each bubble will have an allocated seat in the classroom which will be behind a desk which will be spaced out as much as possible.
- Ideally, the children will be supervised by at least two adults. We hope that this will be a teacher and a teaching assistant, although this may not always be possible. It is important to note that the adults in the bubbles may not be adults that the children are familiar with.
- The children will be provided with a set of resources that they will need throughout the day. These will vary from year group to year group due to the nature of the resources required. These resources are for the individual child and are not to be shared or taken home. These resources will be limited because we will need to ensure that they can be kept clean.
- When the children are allowed outside for break times, they will not be allowed to use any of the outdoor equipment. This is because it will not be possible to clean down and disinfect these areas after each individual use.

### **Extended School**

At this stage, we will not be offering extended schools provision. This will be reviewed once we feel as though we are in the position to offer extended school provision.

### **Cleaning and Hygiene**

If a child shows any symptoms of Coronavirus in school, they will be taken immediately to the den (room near the office). Parents will be called and the child must be collected as soon as possible.

Adults and children are to wash their hands on entry to school, before break time, after break, before lunch, after lunch, before leaving school, and anytime that they visit the toilet or cough/sneeze in to their hands. This will need to be for at least 20 seconds at a time. Where possible hand sanitisers are to be made available in classrooms. Where children are struggling to wash independently they may receive support assuming the adult supporting is also washing their hands.

Personal hygiene will be taught to the children. Children, especially those in the younger year groups, will need to be shown how to wash hands effectively. Please support this at home by reinforcing hand washing routines to your child.

We will be allocating toilets to specific groups of children to try and reduce the risk. Specific toilets will be allocated to the different bubbles of children around the school.

There should be tissues available in the classroom for the children to use. We would encourage you to send your child in with a pack of tissues also.

### **Equipment needed and uniform**

Please send your child in with a plastic bag that contains a water bottle, books, snacks and trainers. We would recommend sending in an additional snack for the afternoon as we appreciate that children's eating routines would have changed over the past weeks. Year 6 children will be able to bring in their pencil cases but resources will be for individual use only and need to stay in children's individual trays.

The children will not be able to use the drinking fountains but will have access to their water bottles. It is very important that you send your child with a water bottle labelled with the child's name, especially during the next term.

We appreciate that you may not have been able to buy new uniform due to shops being closed. Therefore, we are relaxing our uniform policy for the summer term. The most important thing is that children have clean clothing, whether this is school uniform or their own clothing. This also extends to footwear. You can send your child in wearing trainers or they can bring trainers in their plastic bag.

As we are approaching the summer, we would also ask that you send your child in with their own sun hat. We will not be able to provide school sunhats this summer. We would also ask you to make sure that your child is wearing sun cream when it is appropriate to do so.

### **Break times**

Break times will work on a rota system for the different groups. Each group will have an allocated space in the playground so that they don't come in to contact with other children from different groups. Weather permitting, we could also use the field as well as the playground.

The adventure trail, gazebo, and EYFS climbing structure will be out of use for all children. Any static play equipment will be out of bounds.

### **Lunchtime**

Children in Reception and Year 1 will still be eligible for a Universal Infant Free School Meal. To minimise contact, the only meals provided by the school catering company will be a packed lunch.

A form has been sent to all parents to find out if you would like a school packed lunch or prefer to provide your child with a packed lunch yourselves. Please fill this in so we are able to provide the catering team with the details required.

The children must stay in their bubbles at all times.

### **Supporting Medical needs**

Appropriate medicine and record-keeping will be placed in the correct classroom so that the child has appropriate access to their medication e.g. asthma pumps (blue ones only) will be kept in the child's tray.

If a child in the setting becomes unwell, the existing guidelines will be followed i.e. the child will be removed to a designated isolated space where they can be monitored and supported until they are collected by their parents or carers. This will be the Den. There will also be a designated toilet assigned to children who fall ill. This is likely to be the toilet by the kitchen. Once the child is collected, both spaces will be thoroughly cleaned by a member of staff wearing both gloves and a mask.

The child should then be tested for coronavirus. If the test is negative the child could return to the setting assuming they are well enough. If the test is positive, all children and adults within that group should self-isolate for 14 days and not attend the setting. This guidance also applies if an adult presents as unwell and is subsequently tested as positive.

### **What the children will be learning**

At Ryarsh, we have been working incredibly hard on our curriculum, teaching and learning to ensure that children receive a broad and balanced curriculum, taught in a way that helps them to understand the concepts deeply and in a way that makes them enjoy the learning process. Unfortunately, it will not be possible for us to teach the curriculum for all three year groups and the nominated group to the level that we would normally pride ourselves on.

We will have to modify our teaching approach to keep a distance from children in each bubble as much as possible.

During the first weeks, teachers will revise some previously taught content in the core subjects, with a heavy focus on basic skills.

For EYFS, we need to use reasonable endeavours to meet the existing EYFS learning and development requirements. As far as possible, children should benefit from a broad range of educational opportunities, but this also provides schools with the flexibility to give additional focus to fundamental areas where support is required following time spent out of school, such as reading.

For year 1, we need to try and work out where children have fallen behind or have progressed further against the school's existing reading curriculum. If they have forgotten aspects already covered, then we will reteach and practise this material, where necessary reteaching phonics and using appropriately matched reading books to practise reading. Where there are small numbers significantly behind others then we need to think about how we provide support as intensively as can be managed to catch up, and liaise where possible with you to ensure you can support too.

In year 6 it is unlikely many of the end of term traditions will be able to take place, for example, whole year or class assemblies with parents, school journeys and trips. We need to provide opportunities for children to discuss this as it may be a source of anxiety or sadness. Though visits to secondary schools for induction will not take place this year, we will discuss options with secondary schools.

Year 6 teaching during this time should focus on readiness for secondary school, including academic readiness, which could involve additional teaching in any subject, but in particular mathematics and English to make up for any losses to learning incurred while at home.

For those children that require further academic support, we may have the capacity to provide them with additional adult support, whilst adhering to social distancing guidelines but this will depend on staff availability and on the number of children present in school.

There will be no expectation on teachers to provide written feedback to children. Feedback provided will continue to be based on the needs of the children but will be verbal, with the child present. This will provide the children with the opportunity to immediately respond to the feedback provided.

Once all the children are able to return, training will take place on creating and implementing a full 'recovery curriculum' that will support all of the children's transition back into school. Over this period, the children will have experienced a significant trauma and lost many aspects of their normal school life (friendships, routines, social interactions, relationships etc.) and this will need to be rebuilt.

### **Online learning for children not in school**

Google Classrooms will continue as a mechanism for home-learning and support for parents.

For year R, 1 and 6, our intention is to use google classrooms to upload the plans and resources we will be using for the children in school as this will help to support home learning. We will not be able to use the platform beyond this purpose as our staff will not have the capacity to use the platform to interact in the same way they have been.

For years 2, 3, 4 and 5, we are intending to continue to use google classrooms. On some days, teachers from years 2, 3, 4 and 5 are required to support one of the 'bubbles' in school. On these days, you will notice that they will not be able to interact on the platform or respond to emails as they soon as they would like to.

### **Bereavement & Mental Health**

Should any families experience a loss of bereavement of some kind, please let the office or Mr Childs know and we will be able to offer support.

Many of the children haven't left their families for a long while and they might find this difficult. We will plan settling in activities as the children enter (particularly the younger children) so that they don't feel additionally upset or anxious. Further daily opportunities will also be provided to support the mental health needs of the children as the transition back into school.

I appreciate that this is much information to digest. Should you have any further questions, please email me on [Daniel.childs@ryarsh.kent.sch.uk](mailto:Daniel.childs@ryarsh.kent.sch.uk) or call us on 01732 870 600.

Take care and stay safe,

Mr Childs and the team at Ryarsh Primary School