

22.5.2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope you are all well and safe. As you will know, the government recently announced that, from June 1st, schools **may** be able to welcome back more pupils, starting with: Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6. The Government has also suggested that other primary year groups **could** return before the start of the summer holidays.

You will be aware that there has been a lot of national debate about the Government's aim to have more children in school from 1st June. Like yourselves, we at Windmill want nothing more than for our children to return to school. However, **the safety of our children, families and staff is our number one priority** and therefore we have been working extremely hard to consider how to do this appropriately.

The Government most likely will not be finalising their decision on whether pupils in Nursery, Reception/Foundation Stage 2, Year 1 and Year 6 will return to school until Thursday **28th May**. When they have made their final decision, I will send out a letter out on the Friday **29th May** to the parents of those year groups with further details.

We are of course continuing, as we have done throughout school closures, to provide provision for vulnerable children and those of key workers. If you are a key worker and need to use this provision, please ring and speak to our office staff. You will need to bring evidence of your work such as an ID or payslip.

If the Government go ahead with opening schools from the 1st of June, I thought it would be helpful for you to have a little taste of how school will be different and what to expect. These procedures have been devised following detailed risk assessments:

- Year groups **may** be admitted on the following days, Nursery will start on Tuesday 2nd June, Reception on Wednesday 3rd June, Year 1 on Thursday 4th June and Year 6 on Friday 5th June. This is so we can support you and your children with the new routines as we build up the school intake safely. **HOWEVER, if the government change their guidelines again on 28th May, we may need to delay these dates to give us time to change our present plans.**
- The start and collection times of the day will be different for each year group, so that parents/carers do not cross with each other.
- Only one parent/ carer may bring a child to the school and you will unfortunately not be able to go into the classes. If your child does not settle, you will need to take them home, as staff will be unable to help you with handling your child such as holding their hand or give them a reassuring hug. You can then try again on the next day.
- Children will not be able to touch staff and must stay, if possible, 2 metres away from them.
- You will be required to queue 2 metres apart from one another.
- If you are late, you will need to queue outside the school office and wait.
- Children will be grouped in 'bubbles' (small classes of 10-12 children initially). These 'bubbles' will stay as a unit, they will not interact with other 'bubbles', they will have the same members of staff to a bubble. These members of staff may not be your child's usual teacher. They will have their playtimes

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and lunchtimes as a 'bubble'. Whilst we can try and separate children in the class, children will be split into the same smaller social groups of 4 or 5 children outside to play non-contact activities.

- Your child may not be with all their usual friends in their 'bubbles' but we will try to ensure they have some of their friends.
- There will be no full time places for nursery children. This is because they cannot have contact with two different 'bubbles'.
- Nursery session times will be shorter so that the staff can change all equipment and clean before a different set of children come in the afternoon. There will be no lunches in the Nursery.
- Classes will have less desks and chairs in them for fewer children; they will be spaced out so that children sit separately. Children will not be allowed to move freely around their classrooms.
- Soft furnishings and equipment that cannot be wiped, such as cuddly toys in the nursery, will be removed.
- Children will have a wallet that will have their pencils etc in so that they do not share resources. This will not be possible in the early years as they use a wide variety of equipment all the time.
- We have strict cleaning rotas and personal hygiene procedures in place. Your child will be expected to wash their hands as they come into their class and throughout the day.
- Children may see staff wearing PPE if they have to administer first aid or a child is showing Covid-19 symptoms and needs to be isolated, whilst we wait for parents/carers to collect.
- Only one person at a time can come into the school reception area. It is better to phone if possible.

This is by no means an exhaustive list but I hope it gives you an idea of how different the school will be when your child returns. **Please talk to your children about these things to help prepare them.** Things will keep changing as numbers increase and we update our risk assessments. The arrangements we put in place for the first phase of opening will change as we admit more children as the school opens further.

School Meals

Children will have packed lunches for the first two weeks at least and eat those in their classrooms. If you are eligible for Free School Meals and presently are in receipt of vouchers, when your child returns to school, you will **no longer** be able to claim these. However, if you decide that your child is not returning, you can still claim your FSM vouchers. All Reception and KS1 children have a free meal in school whether, as a family, you are eligible for FSM or not. Year 6 families will need to pay for their meals if they are not eligible for FSM. Children may still bring packed lunches.

Vouchers will be available for FSM families over half term.

Home-Learning

If you decide you do not want your child to return then they will continue to receive home learning packs and have contact with a member of staff through the online learning platform Seesaw. Children who are in school will not need home learning packs but will still be able to use Seesaw.

Should I send my child to school?

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The Government are encouraging parents to send their children to school when they decide that it is safe to do so, whether that be June 1st or later. I encourage you to think very carefully about what is right for your child when the time comes that you have the opportunity to send them. School is the best place to educate your child. However, what is important for you to consider is, that despite all the measures we will put in place, it is **impossible for me to promise you that your children will always socially distance from others, particularly the young children**. The Government have also acknowledged this point. We will minimise the risks by having your child in a small group.

Attendance for the summer term is not statutory and there will be **no fines** for non-attendance. Your child will not lose their school place. Thank you to those of you that completed our survey for the first phase of opening, if you change your mind please let the office know.

As a parent myself, I know the decision you have to make is a difficult one, whatever decision you come to, it will be respected. I want nothing more than to welcome back all the children to the beautiful school that we had before lockdown began. It will be different for a while to keep us all as safe as possible and in the future, it will be the same lovely welcoming school it has always been. Until then, staff will be maintaining a distance with big smiles on their faces to welcome your children back.

Take care and please keep safe,

Teresa Shrestha

Headteacher