



17th July 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

Starting School in September with Covid-19 Restrictions

I hope you are all looking forward to joining our school community in September- we can't wait to meet you! As you will know, the government has announced that schools will reopen to all children from September 2020. I am writing to let you know how this will work for those children that are starting school with us in Nursery or Reception in September, as for obvious reasons it will be slightly different than in previous years.

We are planning to open the school in September using a year group 'bubble' system, to limit the potential spread of coronavirus. It is worth noting at this stage that this plan is a first draft, which we have submitted to the Local Authority, and will therefore be subject to change before we come back in September.

We will keep you informed over the summer of any changes to this plan, however I thought it would be useful for parents to share our initial thinking on how things will work.

It goes without saying that there are elements of these plans we have put in place which are not an ideal situation for families with young children starting school for the first time, however please know that we are having to put them in place to ensure we follow strict government guidelines to make school as safe a place as possible for all, whilst allowing full attendance of all children.

Please also be assured that our amazing Nursery & Reception staff will be working to make sure that the children's start at school is as nurturing and welcoming as possible under these difficult circumstances.

Bubble System

Children will be kept in year group 'bubbles'. This means they will be in their usual classes, in the classroom and with the teacher that you have already been told about. The bubble element basically means that there will be no mixing of children between year groups in any areas around school- including the dinner hall, playground and corridors. Routes around school have been meticulously planned so that there is no crossing of bubbles inside the building.



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Oswald Road Primary School

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Headteacher: D. Howard



Start Dates

We are proposing a phased transition for all year groups in September, with all children attending full time by Tuesday 8th September. This plan has already been approved by the Local Authority. The details will be as follows:

- Thursday 3rd September- **Nursery** to start (as per their planned phased transition timetables). Year 6 and Year 3 to also start on this day.
- Friday 4th September- Year 5 & Year 4 to start
- Monday 7th September- Year 1 & 2 to start
- Tuesday 8th September- **Reception** to start

We have prioritised year groups who have not been in school as part of the earlier reopening in June to start first. We feel that this staggered start will be important to ensure that the new logistics of the running of the school are able to be implemented effectively. Please note that the staggered start refers to different year groups starting back on different days. All children are expected to attend full time from their year group's start date (apart from Nursery, who will do their planned staggered start).

For children that will be starting in Nursery in September, you will see on your transition timetable letter that the first day your child comes in we have said that parents would join them in the classroom. Unfortunately, we are unable to allow parents on-site as part of the new guidance, meaning that this will no longer be able to take place. The children should still attend at the times given on their letter, the only difference is that parents will not be able to attend the 'Stay & Play' on their child's first day at Nursery.

Staggered Start and Finish Times

Parents will not be permitted on-site, meaning that all drop-offs and pick-ups will take place at the school gate. We understand that this may be of particular concern to parents of new Nursery & Reception children. Please be reassured that we will have plenty of staff members on site to help the children into class, and we have planned the locations of the gates for each class so that there is only a short walk from the gate to the classroom.

To ensure that social distancing can be maintained at the gates and that year group bubbles do not mix, we will be staggering start and finish times. Each class will have their own designated start and finish time and gate for drop-offs and pick-ups. We will let you know your child's specific times and gate



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nearer the time, however as a guide the drop-offs will all take place between 8:30am and 9:00am, and pick-ups will all take place between 3:00pm and 3:30pm.

The teachers will wait in the playground for their class at their allocated time and walk the line to their classroom. At the end of the day the teacher will bring the class to the gate and dismiss in the order of the line of parents at the gate.

We request that, if possible, only one adult accompanies each child to school in order to maintain social distancing at all times at the school gate. Bearing in mind that parents are not permitted onto school grounds, please only allow your child to ride their bike or scooter to school if they are able to put it in the bike shed by themselves (as staff will not be available able to help with this).

If you are late for your timeslot in the morning you will be asked to return after all other children have entered the school and enter via the office. If you are late for your timeslot in the afternoon, please contact the school office and they will advise you on when and where you can pick up your child.

Unfortunately, this means that there will be very limited time, if any, to speak to the teacher at drop-off and pick-up times, as we will need to ensure that all classes are kept strictly to their allotted times. If you wish to contact your child's teacher, this can be done by calling or emailing the school office and we will pass the message on for you.

Items to bring to school

To reduce the potential spread of the virus through cross-contamination, we are limiting the items that children can bring into school with them. Children should bring a bag, a lunchbox (if on packed lunch), a water bottle, a coat and hat/scarf/gloves, if needed. Children should not bring in any pencil cases or any other items to school.

Please ensure your child has everything they need with them at the start of the school day. Due to the fact that parents will not be able to speak to the teachers in the playground, we anticipate that the school office team will be exceptionally busy, and therefore will not be delivering items to class that are dropped off late. If your child requires medication in school, please drop this off at the school office.

Symptoms and Illness

If your child has symptoms of coronavirus, please keep them at home and inform the school office as soon as possible. If your child is in school and has symptoms of coronavirus they will be kept in isolation (with a member of staff) and will need collecting as soon as possible. To help this please can you make sure the office has your up to date contact details.



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You will then be asked to follow the [stay at home guidance](#), which states that your child must self-isolate for at least 7 days and should arrange to have a test to see if they have coronavirus (COVID-19). Other members of their household (including any siblings) should self-isolate for 14 days from when the symptomatic person first had symptoms.

You should inform the school immediately of the results of a test.

If someone tests negative, if they feel well and no longer have symptoms similar to coronavirus (COVID-19), they can stop self-isolating. They could still have another virus, such as a cold or flu – in which case it is still best to avoid contact with other people until they are better. Other members of their household can stop self-isolating.

If someone tests positive, they should follow the '[stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection](#)' and must continue to self-isolate for at least 7 days from the onset of their symptoms and then return to school only if they do not have symptoms other than cough or loss of sense of smell/taste. This is because a cough or anosmia can last for several weeks once the infection has gone. The 7-day period starts from the day when they first became ill. If they still have a high temperature, they should keep self-isolating until their temperature returns to normal. Other members of their household should continue self-isolating for the full 14 days.

If there is a confirmed case of coronavirus in school, we will inform parents of all children who have come into close contact with the individual and they will be advised to self-isolate for 14 days. This may mean closing down entire year group bubbles, if we are advised to do so by Public Health England or the Local Authority.

Household members of those contacts who are sent home do not need to self-isolate themselves unless the child, young person or staff member who is self-isolating subsequently develops symptoms. If this does happen, they should follow the [stay at home guidance](#) and get a test.

In class we will be reinforcing **the hand washing protocols** we used prior to closing on March 20th. Work will be done in class on the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' routine as well as other key hygiene messages designed to stop the spread of disease within school. We have also planned for enhanced cleaning procedures in school.



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Travelling Abroad Over Summer

If you are planning a trip abroad over the summer holidays, please ensure you follow the [government 'travel corridors' guidance](#), as there are some countries that you will be required to quarantine for 14 days after returning from.

Public Transport

Children are encouraged to walk or cycle to school if possible, to reduce the demand on local public transport and traffic on the roads around school. If you need to use public transport, please follow the government's safer [travel guidance for passengers](#). As part of our risk assessment for September, we are also asking all parents and carers to complete [this online survey](#) to let us know how they plan to travel to and from school.

Dress Code

The government have advised that school uniforms do not need to be cleaned any more often than usual, nor do they need to be cleaned using methods which are different from normal. Our dress code policy will therefore remain the same as usual (standard set of clothes is non-mandatory, parents can choose if they would like their child to wear this or their own clothes to school).

Wraparound Care

Owl Club and Early Birds should be running with amendments to allow for consistent bubbles. The logistics of how this will work with the new guidelines are currently being worked out, so Owl Club will send out information over the summer on their specific arrangements.

Attendance

In March when the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak was increasing, the government made it clear that no parent would be penalised or sanctioned for their child's non-attendance at school.

Now the circumstances have changed, the government have said that it is vital for all children to return to school to minimise as far as possible the longer-term impact of the pandemic on children's education, wellbeing and wider development.

School attendance will therefore be mandatory again from the beginning of the autumn term. This means that schools will be required to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices in line with local authorities' codes of conduct, for non-attendance.

Where a pupil is unable to attend school because they are complying with clinical and/or public health advice (eg. they have been told they should continue to shield, or they have been told to self-isolate



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after being in contact with someone who has tested positive), absence will not be penalised and school will be expected to provide access to remote education. Similarly, where children are not able to attend school as parents are following clinical and/or public health advice, absence will not be penalised.

I'd like to finish by saying that this letter is not something I'd hoped to have to send to any parents as part of their welcome to the Oswald Road Primary School community. The measures that we are required to put into place are in no way reflective of the warm, nurturing and welcoming environment that our school is known for. We understand that this will be an anxious time for those parents whose children are starting school in September, and we'd like to thank you in advance for your understanding and cooperation with the procedures we have had to put in place.

As I am sure you can appreciate, we are trying our best as a school in these difficult times.

Kind regards,

Deborah Howard
Headteacher



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