

Greystones Primary School

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14.05.2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

We hope you are all safe, well and coping during this difficult time.

We miss seeing all of the children and parents/carers and are really keen for the school to be back up and running but only when it is safe to do so.

As I am sure that you are aware, the Government has sent out guidance for us to start to plan to reopen school from as early as Monday 1st June, given the right conditions. I must emphasise that 1st June 2020 is the date from when schools may be able to extend their opening arrangements it is by no means certain that it will be.

I also do not know what that will look like. In order to ensure the health and safety of the children, their families along with the staff and their families we may need to have a more phased return or a much more limited return than the government have indicated, especially as we still do not have the final details from the government. Whatever we are told to do we will make a moral decision when it comes to the health and safety of the school community.

Whilst the Government have named Foundation, Year 1 and Year 6 children as the first cohorts to return to school they have also been clear with schools that we must **prioritise our key worker children and vulnerable children first.**

Once we are certain of the potential number of key worker and vulnerable children who will need a place in school from Monday 1st June we will be able to plan how we may organise things for Foundation, Year 1 and Year 6 children, prioritised in that order, to return.

We will also be able to decide if we can admit all of the children in those year groups full-time, if we will have to stagger admitting the children to school or if we will only be able to offer part time provision.

For all children, if we are able to return in the way stated by the government, things will be very different from 1st June in the following ways:

- Children will be in smaller classes, no more than 15 and hopefully less. 15 is the government recommendation but makes 2 metre social distancing very difficult.
- The children will stay with this group all day, every day and will not be allowed to mix with other groups of children at any time.
- At least half of the children from each class will not be with their own teacher.
- At least half of the children will not be in their own classroom or even in their usual building.

- The curriculum will be very different, especially in Foundation where the use of outdoor equipment will be very limited and there will be no free flow provision.
- The curriculum will be a lot more formal.
- Classrooms will be very different, soft furnishings like cushions must be removed and the contents and resources minimised so that the highest standards of cleaning and hygiene can be maintained and contact reduced.
- The day will have to be highly structured and strictly timetabled, possibly including times to use the toilet.
- Playtimes and lunchtimes will be staggered and structured so that groups of children do not mix.
- Hot meals will not be served so that children are not queuing, touching surfaces etc. instead there will be a grab bag meal provided, some children may eat in the dining room but the majority will eat in their own classroom.
- The start and end of the day will staggered with clear time slots and entrances for different groups of children. Parents will be expected to stick rigidly to that staggered timetable. This process could take up to an hour.
- Children from Year 1 upwards will need to bring their own pencil and pen in their own pencil case.
- The government, whilst advising that face masks may be worn in public places, shops etc. has said that they are not necessary in schools. Staff or children may choose to wear these if they so wish.
- Given that children must stay with the same group, in the same room, with the same adult each and every day we are not sure if we will be able to run the after school club as the children will inevitably mix with each other even if they social distance.
- Attendance rates will not be tracked, **fixed penalty notices will not be issued and parents will not be challenged if they decide not to send their child to school during this period.**
- Depending on how many staff we have in school we do not know what kind of home learning we will be able to provide for children staying at home and children in Years 2, 3, 4 and 5. We may have to direct you to using The Oak Academy and BBC Bitesize platforms.
- Cleaning of handles etc. will go on throughout the day using effective cleaning agents.
- Having said all of the above (which does sound a little grim) we will still try to make school as warm, welcoming and fun as we can.

We will have to plan this carefully, potentially, if we have all key worker children and all of Foundation, Year 1 and Year 6 in school, we will have around 320 children (270 children in FS2, Y1 and Y6) plus all of the staff that would be needed to safely meet their needs. In total around 370 people in one place, possibly more. After weeks of self-isolation and social distancing and clear messages about coronavirus you will understand that we have a certain amount of anxiety about this and also about ensuring safety of the whole school community.

Even if we only split children in to groups of 15 (it may have to be smaller group sizes) we will use at least 20, if not all 21 of our classrooms. The ambition to have all children in school for a month before the summer holiday certainly is an ambition!

As I said at the start of this letter we need to know potential numbers so that we can plan the provision, placement of children, staffing, timetables, health and welfare provision, routes around school and the curriculum.

Mr Brooke-Smith will be in touch shortly with instructions for a simple survey. The questions that we ask will need a yes or no answer.

We will ask you:

- if your child is in Foundation and you would like them to have a place in school from Monday 1st June, also if you are a key worker.
- if your child is in Year 1 and you would like them to have a place in school from Monday 1st June, also if you are a key worker.
- if your child is in Year 6 and you would like them to have a place in school from Monday 1st June, also if you are a key worker
- if you are a key worker with a child in Year 2, Year 3, Year 4 or Year 5 and you will require a place in school from Monday 1st June for your child. Please complete this even if you have already done so via previous questionnaires.
- if your child has an EHCP and you would like them to return to school from Monday 1st June.

If you have more than one child, please do complete a separate survey for each child.

When we know the numbers and have further clarity from the government we will be able to put hard and fast plans in to place and let you know what we may, **safely** be able offer from Monday 1st June.

In the meantime, thank you for your incredible support, care and good wishes and thank you, in anticipation, for completing the survey.

To all of you who are key workers, thank you for everything that you have been and continue to do for all of us and if you are a frontline NHS worker there are no words for the gratitude that the whole of the Greystones Community feels for you.

Yours sincerely



C.M.Jennings
Headteacher