

**Graveley Primary School
A Church of England (VC) School
Headteacher Mrs Nicky Hand**



Ashwell Common, Graveley Nr Hitchin, Hertfordshire SG4 7LJ
Telephone: 01438 351377 Email: admin@graveley.herts.sch.uk

18th May 2020

PROVISIONAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE REOPENING OF GRAVELEY SCHOOL ON 1st JUNE 2020

Dear Parents,

Firstly, thank you to those of you who have responded to my request regarding your intentions to return to school. This has been helpful in supporting the planning and risk assessment of the potential re-opening from 1st June 2020.

Secondly, thank you for the questions posed. I have tried to address these below, in order to ensure clarity in communication and keep you all equally informed. It is important to highlight however that some, if not all, of the details within this letter are currently provisional. All aspects of the current plan are subject to change as government guidance and regulations are changing rapidly. Therefore, continual adaptations are taking place. I am sure you can appreciate the complexity of planning for such an uncertain situation.

I have grouped some questions together where responses can be combined or questions are only worded slightly differently.

Please can I ask if the children will be expected to wear school uniform when they return to school?

No, uniform will not be necessary this side of September. I am very aware that most of our children will have grown during the school closure and therefore do not expect anyone to purchase new uniform before the start of the new school year. Instead, pupils will need to wear comfortable clothing that will support a range of indoor and outdoor activities. Velcro or slip on footwear is preferable to laces as we will be unable to tie them for the children. With regards to safety measures, it is important that children wear clean and fresh clothes each day they attend school.

Will the staff be wearing masks?/Would you expect the children to wear masks?/Will children and teaching staff be expected to wear PPE?

No, the guidance states that it is not necessary for staff to wear masks, gloves and aprons unless they are carrying out activities that would usually require the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) or if a child, young person or other learner becomes unwell with symptoms of coronavirus while in their setting and needs supervision until they can return home.

'Wearing a facemask in schools or other educational settings is not recommended. Face coverings may be beneficial for short periods indoors where there is a risk of close social contact with people you do not usually meet and where social distancing and other measures cannot be maintained, for example on public transport or in some shops. This does not apply to schools or other educational settings. Schools and other education or childcare settings should therefore not require staff, children and learners to wear face coverings,' (Coronavirus (COVID-19): implementing protective measures in education and childcare settings: updated 12th May 2020

Will children be encouraged to maintain hand washing as previous to lockdown?

Absolutely! This is a fundamental safety precaution, that will be in place. There will be clear expectations for all pupils and staff to wash their hands several times per day. This will include when arriving and leaving the site, as well as at any transition points throughout their school day. Staff will also meet these expectations.

Each group invited into school will also have their own designated group sink space, as well as designated toilets that reduce the risk of groups mixing throughout the building.

Will hand-gel be used at the front door? Does the school have sufficient supplies for this?

Hand washing will be the first essential task for all children and staff on arrival to the school. Where possible we will implement new hand sanitiser stations at each entry and exit point of the building. This is a provision that is not currently in place but is being investigated.

A full order of all supplies is in the process of being collated and all cleaning products will be available prior to any opening.

Will the children have the opportunity to complete exercise during the school day?

Outdoor learning and exercise will form part of the routine for all children each day. However, this will have to be carefully timetabled to ensure that there is no mixing of children between groups. Break and lunchtimes will also be staggered and children will not be able to use the playground equipment as this cannot practically be cleaned in between each group of children.

Will all children be having a packed lunch?

There will be no hot meals served for the foreseeable future. We will be offering a packed lunch provision which will be provided by our current caterers. This would be free for those children in classes 1 and 2 as part of the Universal Free School Meals. Meals will be delivered to the children in their classrooms, as we are unable to use the dining room safely under the current guidance. Children in KS2 may order a packed lunch option from school at the normal price of £2.55 or bring their own from home.

Will parents be guided on social distancing when dropping and collecting children?/What will drop off and collection times look like to protect parents and carers as well as teaching staff and children?

The school will be operating a strict system for entering and leaving the site. This will be marked out prior to the re-opening and signs will be displayed to remind parents and pupils of this expectation. Each group of children will also have a designated entrance and exit into the school building. Parents will not be permitted to enter the school grounds, without prior arrangement, but instead will drop their children at the gate. Full details of this will be shared at a later date, but it will likely also include staggered drop-off and collection times for different groups.

How would the physical environment at school change to adhere to social distancing and new hygiene guidelines?

The physical environment in school is already undergoing some changes. The guidance regarding social distancing in schools is very different to public guidance. In a primary school, it is recognised that social distancing is not practical or, in most cases, possible. The implementation of social distancing in a classroom will be very difficult, therefore it is essential parents are aware that our safety measures are based upon 'safe distancing'. Pupils will be encouraged to remain at a distance from their peers and staff, but we will not be able to guarantee a safe 2m distance between pupils. In year 1 and year 6 children will be asked to stay at their desks as much as possible throughout the day. Teachers and LSAs will also attempt to stay 2m away, but this will make teaching difficult. We do not expect our very young children reception children to be able to manage this easily, but will endeavour to positively encourage them to do so.

As a result, we will be creating safe 'bubbles' within our school that minimise the interactions between different groups of pupils. Dependent on the number of parents who choose to send their children back, pupils in reception will stay together as one bubble, year 1 another bubble, our key worker children as a bubble and year 6 as another bubble. They will not mix with other bubble groups.

Classrooms will look very different. We will be minimising the furniture in rooms and classroom layouts will look different to when we left. Where desks are in place for pupils, these will be safely distanced from one another but not necessarily 2m apart. Specific resources, that are not easy to regularly clean will be removed, for example sand trays, playdough, cuddly/soft toys and some soft furnishings.

Will there be daily checks on staff and children for high temperatures?

No, checking of temperatures will not take place in school. All families will be expected to monitor themselves closely and report any symptoms of Coronavirus to the school as soon as possible.

“Parents, carers and settings do not need to take children’s temperatures every morning. Routine testing of an individual’s temperature is not a reliable method for identifying coronavirus. Educational and childcare settings should reiterate to parents the need to follow the standard national advice on the kind of symptoms to look out for that might be due to coronavirus, and where to get further advice.”

(Coronavirus (COVID-19): implementing protective measures in education and childcare settings: updated 12th May 2020)

What will the reporting process be for identification of symptoms amongst children and staff during the school day?/Will there be regular testing for the virus?

The specifics of the process will be outlined in a return to school agreement which will be shared with parents prior to any re-opening. Families will be expected to agree to the re-opening measures and this will include communicating honestly any symptoms of the virus within their household, as soon as possible to the school.

Tests will be made available by the government for any child, staff member or family member of a child or staff member should they become symptomatic if we re-open.

How will new rules and guidelines be communicated and enforced amongst children during the school day?

Adaptations to our behaviour policy will need to be made prior to re-opening. This will be communicated to all stakeholders once completed. We will communicate rules and expectations consistently, positively and regularly with all of our pupils. If at any time a risk assessment is compromised, due to unsafe behaviours, parents will be contacted and a review of that child’s attendance and support procedures will be carried in order to best ensure all of our pupils, staff and community remain safe.

How will teaching methods change to work around the new guidelines?/What areas of the curriculum will be focused on?/What emotional support will be offered to returning children?

Our priority is the safety and well-being of pupils. We are not expecting pupils to return to school and follow their previous teaching timetable. Learning at school will look very different than what the children are used to. We will be focussing on key skills, such as reading, writing and mathematics, as well as additional PSHE lessons and will use the outdoor areas for learning, where safely possible. It is also important you know that children may not necessarily be taught by their own class teacher during this time.

Will children share resources as before? How will classrooms and equipment be sanitised after use?

No. Children will have individual resources allocated to them which will be cleaned daily after use. No pencil cases or other belongings to be brought in from home. Classrooms will be cleaned thoroughly each day, by the teachers and LSAs. A full risk assessment and increased cleaning checklist will be implemented to support this heightened cleaning expectation.

How will those who choose to keep children at home be supported?/Will the same information and resources be made available to home schoolers so that they are not at a disadvantage?

As a small school, managing home learning and also supporting children in school will be a big challenge. We have a small team that is reduced at this time, as several are unable to work on the school site, due to

individual circumstances. Home learning activities will continue to be provided in the same format as now. Those children attending school will be accessing the same Maths and English activities that we are sending home. The complexities of mixed-age classes and part-time staffing make it difficult to provide both home based and school based activity. As our teachers will still need to plan and support the other year groups and in order for us to fully support children at home and in school equally, school will only be open for children in reception, year 1 and year 6 for **3 days a week**. Email communication from teaching staff may reduce when staff return to school. This has all been a considerable factor in our plans moving forward.

Is there any way we can help in keeping everyone safe?

A return to school agreement will be published and we expect this to be agreed to. This will be shared with you prior to any reopening. Within this document the huge importance our families play in ensuring the safe reopening of our school will be established.

I appreciate that there is an awful lot of information contained within this letter and as I said previously, the guidance being issued by the Government and Department for Education is being updated daily. The current government guidance states clearly that there will be no penalty for non-attendance. Therefore, if you choose for your child not to attend at this time, we understand and will not be implementing our usual attendance policy.

In order for us to try and plan for a June 1st reopening we must now ask you to confirm by emailing admin@graveley.herts.sch.uk whether you would like to send your child back to school, by **Wednesday 20th May at the latest.** This should then allow us time to plan all the necessary staffing and risk assessments which will be needed to make this safe, and also to communicate back to yourselves the specific details and arrangements that will need to be in place from the 1st June. This is just for those children in **reception, year 1 and year 6** and does not include siblings of these children. Please note that all of our potential plans rely entirely on the number of children attending, staffing, physical space and evolving guidance. Safety of the whole school community will be our main priority.

As in previous weeks, we will continue to open 5 days a week for children of critical key workers. Please note that if necessary, we would use the government guidance of prioritising places to children of critical key workers, then offering to reception, then year 1 and finally year 6.

Thank you all for your understanding.

Kind regards,

Nicky Hand
Head Teacher