



15th May 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

We hope you are all keeping safe and well. Over the last six weeks, I have been incredibly grateful to the staff, parents, governors, and children in our school community who have supported the school during this challenging time. I have received numerous emails from parents, amazing work produced by our pupils and regular communication from our dedicated staff; either in school supporting our vulnerable and key worker children or working from home on exciting school improvement activities. Whilst we may have been apart, our sense of community has grown stronger with many of our children flourishing in so many ways whilst learning from home. You are all doing an amazing job.

Following my letter on the 12th May, I have been working tirelessly with staff, the SLT team and the Chair of Governors to plan for the phased opening of school for more children from the 1st June. As a school we are desperate to see our children. They are at the heart of everything we do and quite simply, we miss each and everyone of them and you. However, we are absolutely determined that when children return, they will do so under the safest conditions for all. I feel that it is essential that we are honest with our parents and the current guidance does not make it clear how this can realistically be achieved.

I would urge you to read the current DfE guidance about preparing for wider opening and guidance for parents and carers:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers/reopening-schools-and-other-educational-settings-from-1-june>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-educational-and-childcare-settings-to-prepare-for-wider-opening-from-1-june-2020/actions-for-education-and-childcare-settings-to-prepare-for-wider-opening-from-1-june-2020>

Some of the key suggestions, which may be most challenging to implement are around reducing class sizes and social distancing, this is due to the capacity of the accommodation available in school, the difficulties in ensuring all children remain 2m apart particularly with the youngest and staffing numbers. The guidance states that:

‘...early years and primary age children cannot be expected to remain 2 meters apart from each other and staff.’

Whilst we will endeavour to minimise contact, we cannot guarantee that pupils will be kept 2 metres apart.

In order for you to feel fully informed, we would like to summarise some of the key differences to our daily practice, if we reopen from 1st June for particular year groups:

- Provision for Key Workers' children and vulnerable pupils will remain the same, they will be booked in on a weekly basis, and will stay in the school hall.
- The latest guidance states that children and adults shouldn't wear face masks in school unless providing first aid or intimate care. However, some of our staff may choose to do so- children should be prepared that teachers may look different.
- Children will be organised into groups of no more than 15 pupils and they will stay with a designated adult all day; this adult may not be their usual teacher (due to reducing class sizes) and they may not be in their usual classroom either.
- Desks will be spaced as far apart as possible, but this may not be 2 metres in order to fit the number of children into a room.
- The groups of children will be kept apart and will not mix with other groups.
- Parents will be allocated drop off and collection times, so it is staggered to limit contact. Therefore, it may not be the usual school times.
- Break and lunch times will be staggered to limit contact.
- Where a child or staff member tests positive, the rest of the group will need to self-isolate for 14 days.
- Regular 20-second hand washing will occur throughout the day.
- Reading books will not be sent home to reduce cross infection.
- Flexibility on the content of each day with a core focus on emotional and physical well-being.
- Soft furnishings, soft toys and toys with intricate parts will be removed.
- The children will have to sit in the same seat in their designated classroom and will have use of their own pencil, rubber etc and not share equipment with others.
- Only one adult will be allowed to drop off/pick up pupils and adults will not be able to sit and chat.
- We will continue to send home learning resources for children at home.
- We cannot take siblings of children in the designated year groups.
- Parents will be asked to respect the two-metre distance rule at all times.
- If parents would like to speak to a teacher, they will need to do so via a telephone conversation or a pre-arranged face to face meeting where two-metre distancing must be adhered to.
- If parents decide to send their child in with face protection, whilst it is not required, we cannot take responsibility for them wearing it correctly through the day.
- We strongly advise against parents sending pupils to school with gloves, the regimes we will have in place, which will include regular hand washing and cleaning of the areas and contact points in use throughout the day, will be more effective.
- We need parents to play their part in this potential return to school by educating their children in the positive behaviour they will need to adopt to keep all pupils as safe as possible within school. This situation may go on past September so having an awareness now will help them as and when they return to School.
- The guidance states that school will be reopening **from June 1st**, this does not mean butterflies, reception, years 1 & 6 will all be returning on this day. We are still in the planning process, but it will definitely be a **phased** return and school may be closed on some days due to cleaning and teacher preparation time. Some year groups may not return until the week beginning 8th June.

This is not school as we know it, or as we want it- but we will try our best to make is as happy as possible for the children.

Please bear with us as we try to arrange and finalise how this is all going to work. I will be sending out information to particular year groups as soon as possible.

I know that some families have decided they won't be sending their children back until September and more of you may make that decision. I also fully understand that families will be facing their own challenges and difficult decisions around returning to work. I know that the uncertainty of the current situation is difficult for us all, but please be reassured that the safety of our children and staff remains my top priority. I will endeavour to take every step to make our school as safe as possible.

At this stage it is important to remember that the reopening of school on the 1st June is not definitive and the government maintain that they will only do this provided that the five key tests justify the changes at this time, including that the rate of infection is decreasing.

The support we have received at Brook has been wonderful and I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for your kind messages and wishes- it really does mean so much to all the staff.

Please stay safe and keep smiling during these difficult and uncertain times.

Best wishes,

Mrs M.Fellows
Headteacher

Mrs L Sahota
Chair of Governors

George Street, Wordsley, Stourbridge,
West Midlands. DY8 5YN. Tel: 01384 818835
E-mail: info@brook.dudley.sch.uk

