



Coopers Lane Primary School

Pragnell Road, Grove Park, London SE12 0LF

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Head Teacher: Mr Paul Hooper

19/05/2020

Dear Mums, Dads and Carers

RE: Phased return to school

Firstly, I would like to thank you all for keeping us smiling with your regular home learning updates – it has been so wonderful to see so many of you getting creative and really enjoying your time together as families as much as possible at this difficult time. Our newsletter pulls together the positivity of our staff and children in school and your fabulous activities at home, giving us a real sense of our amazing Coopers Lane community. We hope that you are enjoying reading them. We are so proud of you all!

As we are sure you are aware, the UK Government has released guidance for the expansion of the number of pupils returning to primary school settings. The latest guidance for parents can be found here:

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

This document will also answer a range of questions that you may have regarding potential issues such as siblings, attendance, travel and testing.

Headlines

The main headline to be taken from the guidance, and what we have been working on for the past week as a Senior Leadership Team, is the phased return to school for our Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 pupils 'from the week commencing 1st June at the earliest.' Alongside this we will continue provision for the children of critical workers, other priority groups and will extend this to include nursery children of critical workers (we cannot accommodate other nursery children at this stage). As this is a phased return, some year groups and priority groups will be in for the first week, but others will not be starting until the second week of June. It is essential that we plan this carefully and have the capacity to support those children and staff returning to school. However, the Government has made it clear that this will only happen if their five key tests have been met. This includes a reduction in the rate of infection and the effective operation of the enabling programs set out in the Government Roadmap.

Organisation

As mentioned above, we have already started to map out what this phased return may look like in school. As I'm sure you can imagine, when planning and organising the possible return of over 270 children, there will be an almost endless list of steps to consider to satisfy the new requirements in stage one of their plans to rebuild. Some of the considerations that the government have recommended include:

- organising small class groups (a maximum of 15 children)
- arranging staff cover to ensure that these small groups stay in 'bubbles' with no cross over of adults (where possible) or children from one to another
- organising classrooms to maintain space between seats and desks, as well as ensuring access to learning resources without children having to share anything



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- deciding which lessons or activities will be delivered and reducing movement around the classroom
- staggered break times
- split lunch times – both where the children will eat and where they will play.
- staggered drop-off and collection times
- organising parent/carer protocols that minimise adult to adult contact.

This is in addition to:

- considering how to keep small groups of children together throughout the day and to avoid groups of children mixing
- considering how/if play equipment can be used to ensure it is appropriately cleaned between groups of children using it – this may mean that we have to split our playgrounds into sections
- removing soft furnishings, soft toys and equipment which are hard to clean.

What does this mean for your child?

We think that it is our duty to share with you that when your child/ren returns to school, it will be very different to the school that they left. The Government guidance suggests (in the first instance) to:

- Keep cohorts together where possible – this means children will remain in the same small groups each and every day and will not necessarily work with previous classmates. We will be reviewing numbers of children returning to school and will do our best to keep school life as positive for them as possible.
- Ensure that the same staff members are assigned to each group every day – this means that your child may have a different teacher to their normal class teacher for the duration of the half term on their return to school. Please also note that they may be in a group led by a nursery nurse or teaching assistant.
- Ensure that wherever possible children and young people use the same classroom or area of a setting throughout the day – this means your child may be in a different classroom setting.
- Reduce mixing within school – this means each group will have a set 'zone' for playtime and lunchtime, and will not be able to mix with children outside of their group 'bubble'.
- Use outside space as much as possible – this means children should be prepared for outdoor learning in all weathers.
- Reduce the use of shared resources – this means it may not be possible to provide resources to take home, such as reading books etc.
- Adjust transport arrangements where necessary – this means there may be different start and finish times for different groups, reducing the congestion at the beginning and the end of the school day. We are also working on a new one-way system for drop off and pick up which we will share for you as soon as we have agreed it.

When the guidance is fully implemented, many of the routines, lessons, aesthetics and relationships our children have come to know and love will be very different. We will prepare resources to assist you in preparing your own child for this. One thing that will certainly not change is the love, care and nurture that they will receive from each and every member of our staff. They make your children



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happy and they will continue to do so during this transitional period. Your child's mental well-being will be our priority.

Home learning

We will continue to provide home learning resources via google classroom for the remainder of the summer term in order to support the children not in school.

Health, safety and well-being

On any return to school, our first priority will be to ensure the health, safety and well-being of our children and staff. This will be a huge effort for all concerned as the guidance states:

'We know that, unlike older children and adults, early years and primary age children cannot be expected to remain 2 metres apart from each other and staff.'

As a school we will endeavour at all times to maintain social distancing guidelines, but there is no doubt this will be almost impossible; children at this age want to mix, hug, hold hands and be around their friends.

In addition, the Government has suggested that all children are back in school a month before the summer holidays; however, with the current social distancing guidance, this is simply not feasible.

I know many parents are also keen to get back to normal and return to work, but I also need to consider the staff in school, who are also working parents. They have been fantastic during this crisis and have continued to work hard at home and at school. Our incredible team are looking forward to being in school doing the job they love, but naturally some are worried and concerned for their own health and the health of their families.

We would like to reassure you that if a child has an accident, our staff will not think twice about comforting them – that's part of our job and we care deeply for all the children. Therefore, parents and staff need to feel convinced that it is safe for them and safe for the pupils to return. We will be working with our staff and governors to review our plans and ensure that all are comfortable with what we have agreed before proceeding.

Summary

The guidelines released by the Government leave us with much to consider in order to meet the full demands of returning Reception, Y1 and Y6 to school from Monday 1st June. Hopefully you will now have a better understanding of how different school will be and we would very much appreciate your patience at this time as we formulate the safest way forward for the children of Coopers Lane. We want to get this right for our wonderful children. We want to get this right for our supportive families. We want to get this right for our dedicated staff.

Next steps

Before giving consideration to the named year groups (R, 1, 6), I need to establish the number of parents who will require provision because either they are a keyworker, or their child is vulnerable.



HEALTHY SCHOOLS
LONDON



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For the last 8 weeks that we have opened for these families, our numbers have been small. However, I anticipate that more parents/carers who have been managing to work from home or source alternative childcare might now need this provision. Therefore at the end of this letter is a form for you to complete and return to the school by 12 noon on Thursday 21st May at the latest. ***If you are a keyworker and require childcare provision from 1st June it is essential that you complete this form as quickly as possible. If you are unable to return the form electronically please call the school and a member of staff will be able to go through the information required with you.***

Once I have this information, I will be able to plan the staffing for the provision for keyworkers and then assess the staffing capacity left. This will determine how we then timetable the return of children from the named year groups.

Later this week, I hope to be in a position to send you our proposed plan detailing which children, on what days and in which week we feel it is safe to invite back to school and what control measures we will be putting in place for you and the children. We will ask the relevant parents at each stage of the plan if they will be sending their child to school, as we feel this needs to be a fully informed decision at the appropriate time. This process has the full support of the Governing Body. **Please do not send your child back to school until I have confirmed with you directly the date and time of their proposed return.**

Thank you for your support.

Kind regards

Paul Hooper



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EMERGENCY CHILDCARE PROVISION

If you require emergency childcare provision from 1st June 2020, please complete this form and return to info@cooperslane.lewisham.sch.uk by 12noon Thursday 21st May. Please put 'return to school' as the subject. If you prefer you can go through the form with someone from school by phone. Thank you.

Name/s of child/ren:

Class/es / Year group/s:

*This section refers to our **emergency childcare provision** which runs from 8:45am-3:15pm for children whose parents are critical frontline workers and/or children who are known to be vulnerable (ie: they have an Education Health Care Plan and/or they have access to a social worker). Please complete this even if your child has been attending provision during the last 8 weeks.*

I will require emergency childcare provision from 1st June 2020. YES / NO

This is because: (please tick those that apply)

- My child has an Education Health Care Plan
- My child has access to a Social Worker
- I am a Keyworker

This provision is not for parents/carers who have been asked to go back to work. The government guidance still states that if it is possible to work from home, you should. This provision is for those parents whose jobs are critical to the frontline defence against COVID-19. If you have ticked 'keyworker':

- What is your job?
- How does this form part of the frontline defence against COVID-19?
- What are your days/hours of work?