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DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL
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24th June 2020

Letter for parents/carers of children in Reception, Year 1, Year 6 and key worker parents, regarding wider school reopening from 29th June

Dear Parents/Carers,

Following a further period of careful planning, we are now able to share details of our plans for when our school reopens to more children from 29th June. **I would ask parents of children already in school to read this letter too, as there are some changes to the organisation of existing “bubbles”.** These changes have been agreed to by Health and Safety at Durham County Council.

Although it is unlikely that they will be changed by further guidance from the government, the availability of staffing may be affected by the current pandemic, which could cause a disruption to the delivery of these plans. I hope this isn't the case and that we can go ahead from 29th but, as the safety of pupils, staff and families remains paramount, we have to be responsive to any new information we receive that might prevent the next stage of reopening.

Please note that the school will close early, at 1pm on a Wednesday for all but the children of key workers. This is to allow for a substantial clean to take place mid-week and for teachers to have PPA time (Planning, Preparation and Assessment) so they can plan and monitor ongoing learning at home and in school.

As we increase the number of children in school, it makes sense to change the existing bubbles so that children of Key Workers are taught in groups of similarly aged children. The following table shows how the bubbles will be organised:

Name of class		Teachers
Willow	New Reception class children will be added to the existing class. No further changes will be made.	Miss Bradley Miss Dunn
Horse Chestnut	This class is made up of the 10 Year 1 children already in school. No children will be added into this bubble.	Mrs Dean Miss Richardson
Sycamore	This is a new bubble made up from Year 1 children wanting to join school and Year 2 Key Worker children already in school	Miss Craven
Lime	This bubble will be created from Year 3 and Year 4 Key Worker children wanting to join school.	Mrs Vest Mrs Marambe
Silver Birch	This is a new bubble made up from Year 5 Key Worker	Miss Richmond Mrs Wellstood

	children and Year 6 children wishing to join school.	
Hawthorn	This bubble is already full and no changes will be made.	Miss Peel

The only additional children who will be accepted into school after the 29th June will be those of key workers and they will be added to the Sycamore or Lime bubbles.

Where and when do I drop my child off and collect them?

Only staff and children will be allowed into the school building. Only one adult should arrive with their child please. We would encourage Year 6 children to walk in and out of the school grounds themselves. We are staggering strict timings for drop off and pick up – please make sure you stick to these so that we can ensure social distancing takes place.

If you are a key worker and have children in two different bubbles, for example Sycamore and Silver Birch, you can drop them off at the earliest time of 8.45 and pick them up at the latest time of 3.15.

Children still need to go to their separate entrances – we suggest you take and collect your youngest child first as you can explain to your eldest child that you might be a little late coming to get them. Staff will be aware of this.

If entering by the Willow and Sycamore gate please wait until a member of staff is at the gate before letting your child enter. Thank you.

Class	Entrance to be used	Drop off time	Pick up time
Willow Bubble	Entrance by the side of the Village Hall (we call it their secret entrance!). Signs are in place and staff will be there to guide you on the first day back. Staff will come and meet children at the gate.	8.55am	3.05pm
Horse Chestnut Bubble	Main school entrance. Please wait outside rather than coming into the main reception area	8.55am	3.05pm
Sycamore Bubble	Please use the Willow Class entrance by the side of the Village Hall. Children will then walk through the gate to access the Sycamore classroom door that leads off the school field. Miss Dunn will meet the children at the Village Hall gate and Miss Craven will meet the children at the gate beside the field.	8.50am	3.10pm
Lime Bubble	Lime classroom door – accessed from the playground.	8.50am	3.10pm

Silver Birch Bubble	Silver Birch classroom door – accessed from the playground	8.45am	3.15pm
Hawthorn Bubble	Hawthorn classroom door	8.45am	3.15pm

When dropping off and collecting, we ask you to be considerate of others and to follow social distancing. There will be some signs to remind you of this, however, we can't put signs and markings everywhere so please take personal responsibility for this, for you and your child.

Please leave the school site as soon as you have left your child in the care of a member of staff. We will operate a one-way system on our school grounds (there will be signs and markings to guide you). If you are bringing a child into school, please walk down the pedestrian path. When you are walking back out of school grounds, please walk down the drive to the large gate. The gates will be partially closed so no vehicles should be moving at this time, however, we advise you to hold your child's hand/keep them near you, as a precaution. We usually discourage walking along the drive but need to have this arrangement in place at the moment, so we don't have people travelling in two directions along the narrow pedestrian path.

Any communication with the school must either be by telephone or email. If the phone isn't answered, you can leave a message and we will ring you back as soon as we can. Unfortunately, teachers will be unable to take messages at drop off and collection times and parents/carers must not call into the school office to leave messages.

What does my child need to wear to school?

Children do not need to wear school uniform. We ask that they wear comfortable clothes, e.g. jogging bottoms, leggings, shorts and footwear that will be suitable for any sporting or active sessions they may take part in (children will not be getting changed for PE so do not need a kit in school).

Children must wear clean clothes every day please. If your child cannot tie shoelaces independently, they shouldn't wear trainers/footwear with laces.

What does my child need to bring with them to school?

Your child can only bring a coat, packed lunch (if they need it) and a water bottle (marked clearly with their name). These must be washed thoroughly at home every night. Children must not bring any bags or reading books and reading records will not be going back and forth between home and school.

Children should wear sun cream (applied at home please) and bring a hat, if the weather is sunny.

What are arrangements for lunches?

The school kitchen will provide packed lunches for all children who usually have a school dinner. If children are bringing packed lunches from home, it is helpful if they can be in bags that can be disposed of, after eating, rather than packed lunch boxes that go to and from school. Also, please bear in mind that packed lunch items should be things that children can open themselves, to minimise staff having to handle a range of food items.

Lunchtimes will be staggered across school and children will eat in their classrooms.

What are arrangements for playtimes/outside time?

Children will go outside to play within their bubble in separate demarcated zones. The use of large fixed play equipment will not be allowed, as we do not have the capacity to clean this regularly on top of all the additional cleaning that has to take place in school.

Each bubble will have smaller equipment to play with that they can share, e.g. hoops and skipping ropes.

What is the school doing to ensure infection protection and to control/minimise the risk of infection?

• *Any child with symptoms of COVID-19, or living with someone who is displaying symptoms of the virus, must not attend school. This is also the same for staff.*

• Extra soap and hand sanitiser have been ordered in preparation for the re-opening of the school. Children will wash their hands, in accordance with Government guidance, on entry into school. This routine will be repeated when the children return from morning and afternoon break, before they eat their lunch, on return to the classroom after their lunch break and before they leave school.

• The Government protocol of ‘catch it, bin it, kill it’ will be followed rigorously and hands washed after any coughs and sneezes. We have new lidded bins in school to ensure any germs are contained. We will have tissues in school, but it would also be helpful if you could send your child into school with a packet of tissues.

• We recommend that children also wash their hands thoroughly when they get home and change their clothes.

• Frequently touched surfaces around the school, e.g. door handles, taps and desks will be cleaned frequently throughout the day. Working hours of our caretaker and cleaner have been amended and increased to support this.

• Where necessary, markings will be placed around school to assist with social distancing at pinch points.

• The day will be arranged to ensure minimal movement throughout school.

• Furniture will be rearranged to help promote social distancing. Soft furnishings, such as cushions, will be removed and the range of toys available to younger children will be reduced (there will still be enough for them to have fun though!)

• Windows will be kept open as much as possible to ensure maximum ventilation and, when feasible, internal and external doors will be too.

• PPE equipment will be available for staff use in certain circumstances e.g. administering first aid, providing intimate care or caring for a child who is unwell or who develops virus symptoms.

• If a child presents with symptoms of Covid-19, they will be isolated (we have a room ready for this) and parents will be contacted to come and collect them immediately. A staff member will be with them at all times. Testing will be available to children displaying symptoms and their families. Please get in touch with school if this is the case. If a staff member presents with symptoms of COVID-19, they will go home or be driven home immediately. In the event of a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19, we will take guidance from Public Health England and act accordingly.

What will curriculum coverage be like in school?

The National Curriculum remains suspended. However, wherever possible we will be following as much of our usual curriculum, with adaptations appropriate to the length of time school has been closed. Teachers will be planning broadly the same activities for home learning and for learning in school. Staff will use their professional judgement to balance learning and wellbeing; this is especially important when children first return to school and given the unusual times, we have all been living through recently.

What if my child needs any medication to be administered during their time at school?

If your child requires any form of medication (other than children on medical plans with inhalers already in school) please contact the school office, via phone or email.

We can discuss whether we can accommodate this and, if we can, will make arrangements for the hand-over of medicines and to complete necessary documentation.

What can I do to support and prepare my child for their return to school?

• As with anything, present it in a positive, reassuring way (even if you are feeling a little anxious yourself). Remind them how exciting it will be to be back in school and to see some of their friends! Also, remind them how much staff are looking forward to seeing them! It is natural that children will be a little anxious after such a length of time away from school. Please be reassured we will do all we can to help them settle in again.

- Speak to your child about things they might have to do at school, e.g. wash their hands, and how school might look a little different. We have added some resources to our school Facebook Page to support with this, for example photos and videos of the way school looks and a story about social distancing/bubbles.

I am sure that the parents of children already in school will agree with me that the staff have made the school a welcoming and safe place to be. As I am sure you can imagine, a lot of work has gone into this. We would be very grateful if you can help us to continue to keep our school a safe place by following all the procedures detailed above.

And finally, whilst the school experience will be a little different for any children returning, I can assure you the warmth and care shown towards them will be the same. All staff are committed to help them settle back into school and to help them start enjoying their school experience again!

I hope this covers all questions you might have. However, please contact school on aycliffevillage@durhamlearning.net if you have any further questions and we will do our best to answer these.

Thank you for your continued support and understanding.

Mr David Tait (Acting Head Teacher)

Mrs Anne Brown (Deputy Head Teacher)