

20th May 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

Re-opening of school for more pupils from the week beginning 1st June at the earliest

Thank you to those of you who have contacted the office in response to the letter dated 15th May 2020. Some of you have asked for a little bit more information on what school will look like for those children who might return, before making a decision on booking. Many of you are going to wait a while to see how things feel in a few weeks. The government has set the week beginning **1st June as the earliest date** that schools can re-open to children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 6. This date may change, and the school will only open to these year groups when the government's scientific tests are met.

The measures we will have to put in place, to reduce risk, will significantly change the look and feel of school. We understand that this will be a challenge for many children, but especially those children who struggle with change. Children will not necessarily be with their friends or their class teacher. **With this in mind, please consider carefully whether a return to school is right for you and your child.** Parents/carers do not have to accept any place offered for their child and there will be no fines issued.

Measures to reduce risk include:

- children not attending school if they or a member of their household are unwell with symptoms of coronavirus
- increased hand cleaning throughout the day
- regular cleaning of frequently touched surfaces throughout the day
- the removal of unnecessary or hard to clean objects from classrooms (eg toys, soft furnishings etc)
- minimising contact and mixing between people in school by creating 'bubbles' of no more than 15 children
- spacing tables in classrooms 2m apart, limiting the number in our classrooms to groups of 7 or 8 children (2 groups can join when outside in a 'bubble' of up to 15)
- shortening the school day so that we can stagger the arrival and departure of children
- asking parents/carers to only use the front gate to school and queue 'supermarket style' down the path at an allocated time whilst remaining socially distanced
- keeping 'bubbles' separate at break and lunchtime by having breaks at different times or in different areas of the school
- children having their own desk with their own stationery so that they don't share with others
- delivering school lunches to classrooms rather than children eating in the dinner hall
- not using the corridors other than to visit the toilet

The government guidance is clear that 'early years and primary age pupils cannot be expected to remain 2 metres apart from each other and staff' (DfE, 12th May 2020). We will do all we can to maintain social distancing rules but this cannot be guaranteed.

Based on our classroom sizes, site layout, staff availability and our risk assessments, we will be limited to how many children can attend if schools re-open for more pupils. The government has asked us to prioritise places in the following order:

1. Children of key workers
2. Children with Education, Health and Care Plans and those with a social worker
3. Children in Reception
4. Children in Year 1
5. Children in Year 6
6. Other children currently attending school part-time who we have been supporting because they would benefit from some continued educational provision

As we have limited spaces, please only book a place if you are going to commit to taking up the place **full-time**. If you are not sure, it is fine to wait and see. We will be asking again in a few weeks and will reorganise the groups if needed.

If your child is in one or more of the six pupil groups listed above, you need to decide whether you wish them to attend full-time and let the office know by email. We will check in with our current key worker families to see if they wish to continue. For new key worker bookings, please fill in the application form in the 'letters' section of the website and send it to the school office.

So that we can start to organise in more detail, you must make your decision on booking by **midday on Friday 22nd May 2020** if you would like us to organise a place for your child(ren). We will plan our provision based on this and will not be able to initially add children to the groups. We will offer parents/carers another opportunity to book a place after the first 2 weeks back so please don't worry about having to make up your minds straight away. We are fully aware that there is currently a lot of debate about whether opening schools at this time is the right thing to do.

If you apply for a place, further information and details will follow once a government announcement is made. We have been informed that the government announcement on schools is due to be made at the end of the half term holiday. If the decision is to open schools further from the 1st June, we will use the first 3 days after half term to move our staff back onto site, organise the spaces, notify our catering team and communicate with those who made a booking by the deadline. We are therefore giving 4th June as the earliest date for welcoming back children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 6. Provision for key workers and vulnerable children will continue from the 1st June.

Thank you for your help, support and understanding. If you have any questions or specific uncertainties, please send an email to the office and we will try our best to respond as quickly as we can.

Yours

Ben Tull
Headteacher
Arbury Primary School

