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22.5.20

Dear Parents and Carers,

I apologise for the length of this letter but am writing to outline some very important points about the gradual return to school most of which I am required by the LA and DfE to communicate to you.

On Monday 8th June, the school will be re-opening to the Reception, Year 1 and Y6 children who are coming back. At present these numbers are very low and we have enough staffing to cover them.

We will be operating a class 'bubble' system which means your child will stay in a set group of no more than 8 for the foreseeable weeks ahead. This bubble is your child's new school family group. It will not mix with other bubbles or have lots of different adults coming in and out of it. It will have everything it needs to be safe and self-sufficient with rotas for staggered outdoor times, assigned toilets, cleaning times and kits, first aid and PPE equipment, selected toys, games and resources and its own entrances/exits etc. Your child will have their own equipment such as pens, pencils, paint brushes, scissors, glue etc. just for their sole use. All bubbles of children will follow a programme of learning based on their home-learning packs and supplemented with a lot of outdoor educational non-contact activity, fitness, story and games. We do not need children to bring in book bags but may send home books in new wallets with instructions for use at home and when returning.

Since operating in this new way means adults do not mix bubbles wherever possible, the only way to give my teachers time to do their statutory planning, preparation and assessment and for them to provide the work for all other children not in school is to close the school to Reception, Y1 and Y6 on Wednesdays for the time being. This means these year groups will do a 4-day week, not a 5-day week. If many more children in these year groups decide to return to school, we will then need to review this offer and create more or different bubbles. As we are short of space, this may mean that the Y6 offer of time in school may have to be reduced or withdrawn as the DfE's order of priority for places is key worker and vulnerable children first, followed by our youngest before Y6. A shortage of physical space and enough staff to supervise means this could be a possibility for Y6, but not if numbers stay low or none return yet. It is a constantly evolving situation!

Please note the Key Worker bubble will still come on Wednesdays (as long as this is needed by families and agreed)



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The Key Worker bubble currently has just infants in it and will operate from Tiger Class with minimal staff on a rota basis to prevent cross contamination from adults. Key worker children may come 5 days a week as required by the DfE (unless there is a reason why we cannot and we will contact you if so). We have been receiving a few Key Worker children through the lockdown period and this has worked well with no illnesses, so we hope that this gives you confidence that we have systems in place and experience of being with children at these strange times! Key Worker children need a packed lunch, drink bottle, sun hat and sun cream. You will need to walk them into the playground round the side gate into Tiger Class. Someone will be there to advise you but please remember to keep your distances! This bubble opens at 8.45 and closes at 3.15pm. Please try to be prompt to minimise crossover with other bubble parents and carers dropping off at other times.

From 8th June, the Reception/Y1 bubble will grow to include some more non-Key Worker children but still be staffed by Mr Wheeler and his team. If this bubble grows more, we will open up another small one based in the log cabin.

The Year 6 bubble will be in Jaguar Class with Miss Sparkes. Please come through the fire exit entrance, opposite the main road. Drop off is at **9.00**, pick up is at **3.00pm**. At the time of writing, no Y6 are due to begin on 8th, but some may be thinking about it so I give the details here for you all.

If using the cycle rack, please take care to place cycles one at a time waiting at a distance until others have walked away.

All children will need a home packed lunch if not ordering one from the office and a drink bottle, sun hat and sun cream. We should be able to order NORSE school packed lunches with a menu of filling choices available to you from 8th June onwards. If you pay for school lunches, this must be done by BACS payment only.

It is understandable that many of you feel concerned about health and safety when your child comes back into school, or for those who have sent their children throughout lockdown, there may be new concerns about what will happen when more children join us. It is important that we keep each other safe and we want to assure you about the measures that we have put in place in order to minimise the risk of transmission of COVID-19 and are asking for your support with this effort.

We only follow trusted sources of information as we respond to COVID-19, the NCC Health, Safety and Well-Being team are keeping our arrangements up to date in line with PHE and DfE requirements. We have conducted a full risk assessment and amendments to essential policies and procedures are complete and others currently underway. There is a lot of information in the public domain that is not based on



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evidence and this can cause increased anxiety which is why we are ensuring that our response is appropriate.

This letter summarises our arrangements and details how you can help us by working together. If any significant changes happen to the arrangements, we will keep you informed about them. Please ensure we always have your current contacts if they have changed.

What we know about COVID-19

Based on current evidence, COVID-19 affects children fairly mildly in most cases. Older people and those with specified pre-existing medical conditions are more likely to develop serious illness.

There are two routes by which COVID-19 can be transmitted:

- infection can be spread to people through close contact with infected individuals and respiratory droplets generated during coughing and sneezing.
- direct contact with infected tissues, body fluids or indirect contact with contaminated surfaces such as door handles and then touching their own mouth, nose, or eyes.

To reduce the transmission of the virus a combination of approaches is required, starting with minimising face to face contact with other people to the absolutely essential tasks only, applying social distancing measures as much as possible where contact is needed and keeping close contact to short durations. The governments stay alert approach with schools being open to a limited number of children supports this. Where interaction with other people is necessary, excellent universal hygiene measures must be maintained. Our schools are implementing all of these measures.

What we are doing to protect and support children and staff?

Social distancing

We have assessed all activities in the school and changed them to ensure that we follow the social distancing requirements that are needed wherever humanly possible. We will carry out activities outside where we can, and we will open windows to increase ventilation inside the building when it is safe and appropriate to.

Where close contact will still happen, for example with our younger children and those who need additional care, we will maintain excellent universal hygiene standards by handwashing more regularly and following the arrangements that are detailed in this letter.



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We have new arrangements in place to ensure that only essential visitors come onto site and it is safe when they do, for them, our children and our staff; for example, to carry out essential maintenance for the safe running of the school.

Universal hygiene

Staff are implementing these universal hygiene measures and encouraging our children to do the same:

- Washing their hands (thoroughly with soap and water often following the [NHS guidance](#). Only using alcohol-based hand sanitiser gel if soap and water isn't available. Everyone should wash their hands, on arrival at school, before eating, after coughing or sneezing, after visiting the toilet, before and after playtimes and at other regular intervals throughout the day as required.
- [Catch it, Kill it, Bin it](#) - Covering their mouth and nose with a tissue or sleeve when sneezing and putting used tissues in the new lidded bins straight away. Always washing their hands well afterwards
- Avoiding touching the eyes, nose or mouth if they haven't washed hands.
- Self-isolating if they or a member of their direct household has a new, continuous cough and/or high temperature/fever.
- Going home quickly if they develop virus symptoms, no matter how mild.
- Wearing a clean set of clothes daily (or bagging for 72 hours before re-wearing) will be required by all staff and we ask all children to do the same (they do NOT need to wear school uniform) to ensure we are doing everything to minimise cross-contamination.

Cleaning

We have put many additional cleaning measures in place, this includes regular daily disinfecting of all contact points that are touched regularly such as tables, door handles, toilet flushers, toilet doors and seats, educational equipment such as keyboards and taps. Where items that we use for education are difficult to disinfect such as soft or intricate toys, we don't use them at the moment and have taken them out of use. We have a steam cleaner and variety of disinfectant/virus-killing products to use and our cleaner has training in infection control and will come in each evening and do a thorough additional clean to the ones staff do throughout the day.

PPE

All staff are being issued with a PPE kit for use in emergencies such as first aid which requires close contact and if a child is taken ill and needs accompanying more closely than 2m. We have suppliers and a full stock should be with us by 1st June. Staff will have received training in its use but will not, as a matter of course be wearing PPE such as masks, unless they have a medical vulnerability and have decided, through risk assessment that this is best for them. In such a case it must be ensured that it



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any PPE is used safely and hygienically and that the children are comfortable with it and understand the reason for it.

All other staff and children must remove any home-brought in face masks or coverings before entering the building. They must be stored in a sealed plastic bag until the end of the day when they can be used once out of the building again.

Educating and supporting

Children can become advocates in infection prevention at home and in their community by talking to others about how to prevent the spread of viruses, so we are going to be educating them in a gentle, honest, and age appropriate way.

We are very mindful about the anxiety and confusion some children may have experienced (or may yet experience or exhibit), and we are planning to carefully support them all and encourage them to talk. It is natural that they may have completely different reactions to each other and that some may need to talk to their teachers and to you about how they are feeling and others not. We will take time to build up relationships, routines and take into account their feelings and sensitivities around their lockdown experiences and school as it is now.

Please would you let us know if there have been any changes or difficulties in your family unit e.g. a separation, a family bereavement, a loss of a pet, severe stress or anxiety – anything which you know has upset them visibly or may have upset them but they have not yet reacted to. We really need to know such things, not to be nosy but to be well-prepared and not to put our foot in it with you or them! We want to support them and you and we will as always treat your private conversations with the integrity they deserve.

First aid

We review our first aid arrangements regularly to ensure that they are still suitable, but we have introduced a number of new arrangements and increased training so that we can be sure we have a good supply of first aiders if staff who usually provide first aid are self-isolating. We have increased all kits and equipment so each 'bubble' group has all they'd need in an emergency.

What happens if someone has symptoms while they are at school?

- We are encouraging all our children to tell a member of staff as soon as they feel ill and particularly if they have a new cough or start to feel like they have a temperature, no matter how mild it is. We are also keeping vigilant for any signs of symptoms too and reminding everyone about this regularly.
- If a child feels ill we will keep them safe and away from others in a designated place while they wait to be collected. We will not leave a child who is ill where they



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are not safe to be left and will stay them at a safe distance. In an emergency we will call the emergency services as usual, and we will continue to provide first aid for emergencies as we normally do. Please come and collect your child straight away, if we ask you to (we'll contact you if they become ill with either a temperature or a new, continuous cough, however mild). Your child should then isolate for 7 days and members of your household isolate for 14 days. We would urge you to request a test for your child and if negative, they can return to school.

- Our staff will go home immediately if they become ill at work with virus symptoms, no matter how mild.
- We will follow PHE guidelines for enhanced cleaning if someone becomes ill at the school and have all the equipment ready to do this.
- If someone becomes ill at school, other people at school do not need to self-isolate (other than their own household). Please ensure that your household follows self-isolation guidelines if this happens to your family.
- If one person becomes ill at school, it does not mean that the illness has been caused by the school as COVID-19 is widespread in communities. This is why it is important for us to follow PHE guidelines and for everyone to follow the stay alert guidance where required too.
- If there is a case of confirmed coronavirus in our schools, we will close down the class bubble and all staff and children in that bubble will need to self-isolate for 14 days.

You can report your child's absences in the same way you would normally by phoning us on the first morning of illness.

What happens if a children or staff member becomes ill while they are not in school?

- All children and members of staff who have either a new continuous cough or a temperature must not come back into to school and must follow self-isolation guidelines for 7 days. The rest of their household must also self-isolate for 14 days.
- Please ask your child how they are feeling daily before they come to school and do not bring them if you are in any doubt.

Existing health conditions

If you have received a letter to say that you or your child needs to be [shielded](#) and stay at home you must follow the information that you have been given. Please let us know if a member of your household is being shielded but your child is coming back in to school. We will need to know this and discuss it with you.

Some people may have been identified as being at an [increased risk](#) by Public Health England. Having an underlying health condition such as asthma, does not automatically mean your child must stay at home. We will therefore work with you to



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assess the specific circumstances and needs if this is the case. Please tell us if your child is at increased risk but is coming back to school so we can complete a risk assessment.

Supporting each other

Your support to help us achieve these standards in our schools is vital. Please role model the hygiene behaviours that apply when you are at home and encourage your children to follow them. Please ensure that:

- You and your household self-isolate if anyone develops symptoms for community and school safety.
- You follow stay alert guidance and not meet in social groups such as in car park/along the pavement when you are outside the premises, as children may be tempted to mix with others. We are trying hard to protect our bubble system to protect your child/ren, your family and ourselves and our families. We therefore ask that you do not allow your child/ren to mix socially outside school with other children and that you do not give lifts into/home from school to children from other bubbles.

This is a very long letter with much to take in. I have tried to remember everything you need to know now, but please contact me or the office on our email addresses (head@carletonrode-primary.norfolk.sch.uk or office@carletonrode-primary.norfolk.sch.uk) if you have a question. I will be answering and at working (from home) over the holiday.

I will shortly be issuing you with a tick sheet of questions and statements for you to read, complete, sign and return when your child comes back in.

In the meantime, I wish you and your family good health and happiness and I look forward to seeing some of you very soon.

Best wishes,

Judith Jones