

WAKEFIELD METHODIST (VC) J, I & N SCHOOL



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20th May 2020

Dear Parents & Carers

Potential wider reopening of school beginning on 1st June.

I just want to say before I begin this letter that I hope you and your families are all safe and well. We have remained open during lockdown to care for children of critical workers and vulnerable children but we have missed seeing so many of you.

As you know the Prime Minister announced his plans for a phased reopening of schools from 1st June. Primary Schools have been asked to start preparing in order to welcome back, initially children in Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6. This is still under review and will only happen as planned if we receive confirmation based on scientific advice that it is safe to do so.

Groups of children, including vulnerable children and children of critical workers of all year groups, who have been eligible to attend whilst school has been closed will continue to be able to do so. If you think your child is in this group, you need to contact me as soon as possible should your child require a place from June 1st as this care has to be pre-arranged.

The government have produced some guidance which we have followed rigorously as part of our planning process. We have been working hard to risk assess, evaluate our staffing levels and make decisions about the key spaces in school that we will use. As you will appreciate we need to consider a multitude of factors to ensure school is as safe as we can make it for children, staff and parents & carers.

As a staff team there is nothing we want more than a return to normal, however, we know that this is not possible at the moment and the impact of COVID-19 means that we need to ensure stringent safety measures are applied in school. All our lives and society itself has been changed and if children return to school I need to be completely honest with you about the fact that school will not be the same as it was when children finished in March.

These significant changes will be detailed on the next 2 pages of this letter and I urge you to consider them carefully when deciding if you would like your child to return to school (parents will not be penalised for not sending their child to school). I also hope that they reassure you that we are doing 'all we can' to try to keep everyone in our school community safe.

Within our initial plans, in order that everyone understands the new routines and procedures, we are going to plan a gradual staged reopening for the stated year groups.



What will have changed in school, how will school be different for children, parents and carers?

- Children will be organised into small groups (bubbles) of no more than 15 depending on the size of the room they will be working in. They may not be working in their usual classroom.
- Each bubble will have their own teacher and teaching assistant which will remain constant. This may not be your child's usual teacher or teaching assistant.
- Children will play out and have lunch with their bubble of children to limit contact with others in school, therefore before and after school care will not be possible.
- The government guidance states that schools 'should tell parents when they can drop off their children and this should happen at the **school gate**'. Some children may find this challenging at first so you will need to talk to them about it to limit upset when they return to school. You will not be permitted into the playgrounds or school building and if you need to contact a member of staff you will need to phone the school office, email us or send their teacher a Dojo message. There will be 4 designated drop off and pick up gates. One parent will need to bring children and adhere to social distancing as you queue towards the gates (being considerate of residents). All bubbles will be allocated a gate to drop off and pick up children and their start and finish times will be staggered. Details of these will be sent to you closer to the time your child may be returning.
- Children will use sanitising gel on arrival at school, then they will wash their hands when they enter their bubble room. Hand washing will be encouraged hourly, before and after playtimes and lunchtimes.
- Children of critical workers, vulnerable and children in years 1 and 6 will be sat at tables 2 metres apart. Children in nursery and reception will play with toys that are spaced 2 metres apart in the provision to ensure social distancing.
- At all times children will be encouraged to stay 2 metres away from each other and adults.
- Children of critical workers, vulnerable children and children in years 1 and 6 will have their own set of stationery and resources to use in school. This will limit the number of contacts on resources. Children in nursery and reception will play with toys that can be easily cleaned, once they have finished playing with an item it will be placed in a bucket to be cleaned, again to reduce the number of contacts on resources.
- We have been advised to remove items from classrooms that cannot be easily cleaned so soft furnishings, dress up outfits, soft toys, soft dolls, playdough and sand etc will be stored away.
- The government have advised schools that shared resources such as books should be limited and not sent home. Children will still have access to 'Bug club' for online reading.
- Children will need to wear normal school uniform but this needs to be washed daily.
- Children will need to bring their own full water bottle to school each day, this will stay with their designated resources during the day. The water fountain will not be used in school as this would be a congregation point and a place where limiting contact would be difficult. If required, bottles can be refilled in classrooms by children.
- Children may bring a packed lunch to school or if they usually have a school lunch children will be able to choose from grab bag options. These will be prepared and then left outside bubble rooms so children can eat their lunch in their classroom. They will have a designated lunch time supervisor.

- Children will not be allowed to bring a book bag or other belongings to school so lunch money will need to be put in the boxes that will be placed at the gates.
- Playtimes and lunch times will be staggered to limit the number of children moving around the corridors and to limit the number of children on the playground. The playground and field will be zoned so children know where they can and cannot play. The trim trail will not be used as it cannot easily be cleaned.
- Children will go to the toilets one at a time so they remain socially distant.
- If children require first aid or personal care this will be administered by a member of staff who will wear an apron, gloves and face covering as the 2 metres social distancing will not be possible.
- If a child shows symptoms of COVID-19 they will be taken to a well-ventilated isolation space where they will be cared for by a member of staff wearing an apron gloves and face covering until you arrive at school. Your child would then need to be tested or the household would need to isolate for 14 days. If a child or staff member tested positive the rest of the group they have been working with will need to isolate for 14 days. The symptoms are a new continuous cough, a high temperature, a loss of, or change in, your normal sense of taste or smell.
- If your children display symptoms at home they must not be brought to school and I would appreciate it if parents could closely monitor children to ensure they are not being sent into school if they are displaying any symptoms of COVID-19.
- Extra cleaning will take place in classrooms, common touch points and toilet areas during the school day to ensure we are doing all we can to try and keep everyone safe.

Staged re-opening

Our decision on a staged re-opening means we are able to ensure all safety procedures are running smoothly and that we have staff capacity to manage the next stage. The safety of our school community must not be compromised.

Stage 1 of wider re-opening 2nd June

Lower Foundation/Nursery

Lower Foundation/Nursery children are invited to return on Tuesday 2nd June, pending the government's decision that it is safe to open all schools in England.

These children will be working in the 'Giggles and Scribbles' portacabin so they will have their own designated toilets, indoor and outdoor space. Depending on numbers, this will be on a part-time or full-time basis depending on if we will need 1 or 2 bubbles. We will communicate this with you once we know how many children want to return to school. Once we know the number of children that will be attending we will let you know what your drop off and pick up time is and which gate you need to use. The staggered times will avoid congestion and allow all to adhere to social distancing. We will be ensuring that staff are also adhering to social distancing rules from you and your child when they receive them on a morning and at pick up time. This is to protect everyone.

School will close after lunch every Friday to ensure a deep clean of school both inside and out.

I would ask that if you are a parent of a Lower Foundation/Nursery class child and you intend for them to return to school on 2nd of June could you please email me at headteacher@methodist.wakefield.sch.uk by 10.00 am on Friday 22nd May. I do understand that you may change your mind and if so you need to email me as soon as possible. If you do not email me, you will not be able to just arrive on the 2nd June as we must plan children into bubbles and staff them accordingly.

We all recognise that for all of you it is an incredibly difficult decision. Parents will not be penalised should you make the decision that you do not wish to send your child to school during this period.

Stage 2 of wider re-opening 4th June

Upper Foundation/ Reception

Upper Foundation/Reception children are invited to return on Thursday 4th June, pending the government's decision that it is safe to open all schools in England.

These children will be working in 2 bubbles in the main school upper or lower foundation stage rooms. Each bubble will have their own designated toilets, indoor and outdoor space. Once we know the number of children that will be attending we will let you know what your drop off and pick up time is and which gate you need to use. The staggered times will avoid congestion and will allow all to adhere to social distancing. We will be ensuring that staff are also adhering to social distancing rules from you and your child when they receive them on a morning and at pick up time. This is to protect everyone.

School will close after lunch every Friday to ensure a deep clean of school both inside and out.

I would ask that if you are a parent of an Upper Foundation/Reception class child and you intend for them to return to school on 4th of June could you please email me at headteacher@methodist.wakefield.sch.uk by 10.00am on Friday 22nd May. I do understand that you may change your mind and if so you would need to email me as soon as possible. If you do not email me, you will not be able to just arrive on the 4th June as we must plan children into bubbles and staff them accordingly.

We all recognise that for all of you it is an incredibly difficult decision. Parents will not be penalised should you make the decision that you do not wish to send your child to school during this period.

Stage 3 of wider re-opening 8th June

Year 1

Year 1 children are invited to return on Monday 8th June, pending the government's decision that it is safe to open all schools in England.

These children will be working in 2 bubbles in classes 1 and 2 in school. Each bubble will have their own designated toilets, indoor and outdoor space. Once we know the number of children that will be attending we will let you know what your drop off and pick up time is and which gate you need to use. The staggered times will avoid congestion and will allow all to adhere to social

distancing. We will be ensuring that staff are also adhering to social distancing rules from you and your child when they receive them on a morning and at pick up time. This is to protect everyone.

School will close after lunch every Friday to ensure a deep clean of school both inside and out.

I would ask that if you are a parent of a Year 1 child and you intend for them to return to school on 8th of June could you please email me at

headteacher@methodist.wakefield.sch.uk by 10.00am on Friday 29th May. I do understand that you may change your mind and if so you would need to email me as soon as possible. If you do not email me, you will not be able to just arrive on the 8th June as we must plan children into bubbles and staff them accordingly.

We all recognise that for all of you it is an incredibly difficult decision. Parents will not be penalised should you make the decision that you do not wish to send your child to school during this period.

Stage 4 of wider re-opening 11th June

Year 6

Year 6 children are invited to return on Thursday 11th June pending the government's decision that it is safe to open all schools in England.

These children will be working in 2 bubbles in classes 5 & 6 in school. Once we know numbers of children that will be attending we will let you know what your drop off and pick up time is and which gate you need to use. The staggered times will avoid congestion and will allow all to adhere to social distancing. We will be ensuring that staff are also adhering to social distancing rules from you and your child when they receive them on a morning and at pick up time. This is to protect everyone.

School will close after lunch every Friday to ensure a deep clean of school both inside and out.

I would ask that if you are a parent of a Year 6 child and you intend for them to return to school on 11th June could you please email me at

headteacher@methodist.wakefield.sch.uk by 10.00am on Monday 1st June. I do understand that you may change your mind and if so you would need to email me as soon as possible. If you do not email me, you will not be able to just arrive on the 11th June as we must plan children into bubbles and staff them accordingly.

We all recognise that for all of you it is an incredibly difficult decision. Parents will not be penalised should you make the decision that you do not wish to send your child to school during this period.

Stage 5 of wider re-opening

The government has not made any announcements about the next stage of opening since the initial announcement last week. As a school we would also have to ensure that the previous stages had worked well and if numbers were to increase further that it would not increase risk. It is important that we try to move forward as safely as possible for everyone.

Care of critical workers and vulnerable children

School is closed next week in order to prepare for opening on 1st June. However, from 1st June, the provision for the care of critical worker and vulnerable children will continue for those who are not part of the staged re-opening plan. These children will be kept within bubbles and cared for in the hall and Year 4 room depending on numbers. Ultimately, we have to ensure that the group size is manageable and aligns with our staff to child ratios, it is **strictly only open to children within the categories stated** in the government guidance.

School will close after lunch every Friday to ensure a deep clean of school both inside and out.

Please contact me as soon as possible at headteacher@methodist.wakefield.sch.uk if you feel you require care but definitely before **10.00am Friday 22nd May** if you have not already done so in the last week. You will not be able to arrive on the 1st June without prior arrangement.

Curriculum

This is the government guidance on the curriculum for **critical workers** and **vulnerable** children.

‘We understand that these are extraordinary times. The most important thing is that children of critical workers, and vulnerable children, are supervised and properly cared for in education settings. Schools have flexibility to provide support, activities and education in the way they see fit at this time’.

‘No school will be penalised if they are unable to offer a broad and balanced curriculum during this period. The same applies for the Early Years Foundation Stage.’

This will mean where possible children will be accessing the lessons provided online by their year group teacher.

The children in the staged return to school years will be supported by the class teacher to access the online learning that is provided by their year group teacher. We will also aim to support children’s emotional well-being and assess where they are in their learning. This may prove challenging in some cases as we have to adhere to social distancing but as with all aspects of this plan we aim to follow the guidance we have been provided with.

Home Learning from 1st June

We aim to continue to set home learning for all year groups so children remain supported whether they are in school or not. Please note, however, that all teachers will be working hard in school so feedback on activities may be less detailed and less often than it is now.

I hope this letter has provided you with enough information for you to make a decision about your child’s return to school. It is important that you email me by the dates stated if your child will be returning to school. I understand that this has been a very difficult time for us all and I would like to thank you for all the wonderful words of support you have given to our team during this time. If you have any further questions do not hesitate in contacting me by email.

Kind regards

Mrs Clark