



Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> May 2020

## Alexandra Primary School Planning for Extending School Opening

Dear Families,

We are sure that following the announcements in the news last week, you will have many questions and concerns about the school's approach to reopening and what that will mean for you and your family. The Prime Minister announced his plans for Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 to return to schools from the provisional date of 1st June, alongside the children of critical workers and vulnerable groups. The government has released guidance for schools and parents. While some of this is helpful, there are still many issues which need clarification and serious questions which we need them to answer.

This letter is to explain to you the school's initial planning for re-opening as it stands at present. Our primary responsibility as school leaders is to ensure health and safety; safety for our staff, safety for our pupils and safety for all our families. This is at the core of our provisional plans and will be at the core of our final plans for re-opening. We cannot guarantee no exposure to the virus in school, but we will do our utmost to mitigate the risks. We have a duty to explain to you what provision will look like for your child when they come back to school, as it will not be in the form that they are used to. You, as parents, must have a full picture to make an informed decision about whether you choose to return your child to school or not.

### What is the situation at the moment?

At present, there is no change to the provision we are offering. School remains open only to the children of critical workers and those in 'vulnerable' groups with pre-booked places. The overall message remains that it is safer to stay at home.

### What is the current government guidance?

The government has provided some guidance; however, there remain contradictions and ambiguities that need to be resolved, and we are hoping for more clarity on those issues over the coming days and weeks. We are taking advice from Haringey and working closely with other local primary schools. This week we have discussed our plans with other Haringey Headteachers, our Chair of Governors and our school Senior Leadership Team. We have also taken views from our staff and families within the identified year groups. We are drafting our first plans towards a phased return, based on the latest government and union guidance. We cannot finalise any plans until we are sure we are doing the right thing for our children, staff and families, and that we are confident we are adhering to every safety guideline. The Department for Education has informed us that the governments five tests must be met before extending school opening. We are unlikely to receive confirmation of this until Friday 29<sup>th</sup> May, which makes the possible wider opening on 1<sup>st</sup> June **provisional** at this stage.



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## What will school be like if my child returns?

It is essential that we are clear that school will look and feel very different for returning children.

This section aims to help you understand what will be in place.

Social distancing simply cannot be observed in school at all times for children, particularly younger children. Staff have also been advised by the government not to use any PPE such as masks or gloves, unless for first aid or intimate care purposes.

The government guidance suggests that we halve class sizes to 15, but also that we have a 2m distance wherever possible between desks. On average, our classrooms, when set up this way, can accommodate only ten desks (ten children) safely per classroom.

The guidance suggests that one adult stays with the small group at all times. This means it is very possible that your child may not be with their class teacher, and may not be in their usual classroom. Each group will be led or supervised by a teacher. We have several members of staff who are shielding or come under the 'clinically vulnerable' category; those people are advised not to come into school. This may leave us with a shortage of staff to adequately plan for increasing children's numbers significantly.

Children will be organised into small groups; within their year groups (on average in groups of 10), and these groups will not be allowed to mix with other groups. This means that, although your child's friends may be in school, if they are in another group, they will not be allowed to socialise with them. They will have separate breaks and eat separately at school.

We are limited on the resources we can use in school. We have been advised to remove all soft furnishings and any toys that cannot be easily cleaned. For our younger children, this will limit the resources they have to play with and use during the day, including reading books, which we will not be able to send home.

Children will be unable to use any PE equipment or playtime equipment, including the climbing frames.

The school will operate staggered start and finish times, using designated entrances. You and your children will have to use these designated entrances at the time slot given to you for all drop offs and picks ups. Any late arrivals will not be permitted onto the school site for that day.

The school will operate staggered break and lunchtimes; children will not mix with other groups. Children will require a packed lunch and will eat with their group within their classroom.

Only one parent may accompany their child to school, and social distancing outside the school must be observed at all times.

Stringent cleaning and hygiene practices will remain in place for all adults and children.

In addition to a phased return, teachers will still provide home learning for children who stay at home.

We have prioritised Year 1 as the year group to be included initially in the phased return.



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### Can you guarantee my child's safety from the virus at school?

No. We will observe every safety suggestion from government, Public Health England and unions to reduce risk but exposure to the virus is possible; at present, there is a lack of guidance and clarity on transmission from children to adults in the government guidance on this.

### What will happen if my child or someone in my child's group becomes unwell?

Guidance is that all children showing symptoms should be sent home immediately and self-isolate for seven days, while their household self-isolates for 14 days. In this instance all children and adults within this group will be expected to self-isolate at home until the results of a COVID- 19 test are returned with a negative result. Symptoms include showing a temperature, or presenting with a persistent cough while they are at school. If a temperature is recorded at school, and a child is subsequently sent home. If a child tests negative, they can return to school along with their group.

### My child is in Y2/Y3/Y4/Y5, and I need to go back to work. Can I send my child to school?

No, not at present.

### What will happen next?

We are currently preparing more detailed plans for extending opening. The school environment will need to be prepared for the proposed return and wider opening of school initially for children in year 1. We provisionally target the week of 8<sup>th</sup> June (with a staggered start to allow us to iron out any unforeseen difficulties).

There will be no penalties for non-attendance, should you decide to keep your child at home.

We will keep you informed as planning develops including our regular calls home and updates on the school website.

Kind Regards

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