

Covid-19 update from The Headmaster

Dear Parents,

I hope that you are all well and that your children have made a good start to this final week before half-term.

I want to update you on planning for the reopening of the school to more pupils from the start of June, since I last wrote to you at the beginning of last week.

While I am very much looking forward to being able to welcome more children back on site, it is entirely natural that some of you may be concerned about sending your children back to school. Of course, all of us at Gad's Hill are also profoundly determined to ensure consideration is given to every aspect of site safety.

I don't doubt that those of you with children in KN, KR, K1, Remove and Lower Five will wish to understand all aspects of our provision for the coming weeks, along with all the precautions we are taking, so that you are in an informed position to make a decision about whether to send your child back to school. For that reason, I am now pleased to share with you (attached) the School's risk assessment which documents our implementation of the Government guidance, along with that issued by Kent County Council.

Additionally, leaders of the relevant division of the school will share with you by the end of this week the exact arrangements and timetabling for your child's return, if they are in one of the eligible year groups. These documents will set out specific start/end times, entry points into the school, required equipment and so on.

However, I can summarise now some of the main points of in-school provision from 1st June, in accordance with the guidelines we are committed to following.

- There will be no classes larger than 15 pupils in size. Where existing classes are larger than this, they will be divided into smaller groups.
- Nursery sessions will have capped numbers and parents will be given the opportunity to book these, with priority given to the children of critical workers.
- Lower Five pupils will be invited to attend three, weekly 3-hour face-to-face sessions with their core and option subject teachers, to complement distance learning. The year group will be divided in half to reduce mixing.
- Provision for children of critical workers not in the eligible year groups will continue via the usual weekly booking schedule.
- It is not expected in the Government guidance that young children will be able to maintain 2m distances from each other. Social distancing will instead be achieved by preventing these small teaching groups from mixing with each other during the day. Older children who spend longer at their desks during lessons, will be spread out further in their classrooms.
- Start, break and end times will be staggered to reduce busy periods in the car park or on the playground and groups will use different entrances.
- Entry to the school reception for parents will be by appointment only.
- Pupils will be asked to bring their own nut-free packed lunch – there will be no kitchen service in the dining hall.

- Children will be asked to come to school in PE kit to remove the need to use changing rooms before exercise and to allow for easier washing. Masks and PPE are not recommended in schools, except for staff in a small number of specific cases.
- Unnecessary furnishings and resources will be removed from classrooms to create extra space for distancing and to aid cleaning.
- Learning will frequently take place outside.
- Each Kindergarten and Junior group will have separate toilet facilities.
- One way systems will be in operation around the site.
- Increased cleaning provision will take place during and after the school day.
- Children will frequently be reminded to wash their hands thoroughly and between each change in activity.
- The usual curriculum may be altered to reduce the number of teachers who work with each group on a daily basis.
- Procedures for self-isolation in case of symptoms or a confirmed case of coronavirus will be strictly enforced. **NOBODY MAY ATTEND THE SCHOOL SITE WITH SYMPTOMS OF CORONAVIRUS.**
- Wellbeing of children will be prioritised – the school day will allow opportunities for children to socialise and interact safely with each other as well as to continue their learning.
- The School's safeguarding and welfare teams will be on site to provide support to all pupils who may need it.
- We will be unable to offer pre-and-post school wraparound care and there will be no school bus service.

Distance Learning will continue for all year groups who are not currently eligible to return to the school site, and for pupils in L5 to complement the face-to-face provision. Teachers will continue to provide learning resources for pupils who are in year groups eligible to attend but who are shielding at home. For these pupils, work will continue to be marked after it is submitted, but some teachers may be less present online during school hours, if they are teaching in school. Where appropriate and possible, responsibility for delivering distance learning will be passed to teachers not involved in delivering in-school teaching.

With the measures detailed in the Risk Assessment in place, I am satisfied that the school will be following all guidance provided to us by the Department for Education and Kent County Council for reopening to more pupils. I cannot, of course, make guarantees of complete safety. The most important thing which I urge of all of you again is please not to attend the site or allow your children to attend school with symptoms of coronavirus. Please inform the school if your family is required to self-isolate for these reasons.

With a week and a half remaining before 1st June, plans could yet change again, and the return to school for more children on that date will depend upon a number of factors, including the national/local infection rate and our continuing ability to staff classes and keep groups small. Updated guidance could result in minor or even significant changes to the Risk Assessment, which is a live document undergoing constant review.

Equally, I appreciate that your own family circumstances could change. What would be most useful to us, however, **IF** you have children in the eligible year groups **OR** if you are a critical worker **OR** if your child is eligible as 'vulnerable', would be for you to complete the very brief Form which [you can access here](#), indicating your child's name, year group and whether you currently anticipate that they will return to school from 1st June. Please complete this by 9am on Monday 25th May. This will help us for planning purposes and is not a commitment on your part.

I hope that this email and risk assessment helps give something of a clearer picture of how the school will look after half term. I am sure that you may still have questions and I hope that the further detail from Mrs Grant, Miss Long and Mr Tyler later in the week will go some way to addressing these. If you have any questions that you wish to put to me, please do so.

Kind regards
Paul Savage