



Dear Parents and Carers,

I am writing today to give you all more details about our plans to further open schools in line with the government's recent announcements. I want to say a huge thank you to parents that have responded to the short survey earlier in the week, which was very informative. This is a long and very detailed letter but I know many of you have been clamouring for more information of how to we go forward together.

I was particularly struck by the supportive comments that you made and the high levels of trust that you have in school. Thank you!

This has, without doubt, been the most stressful time of my career as the issues are so crucial and there have been considerable amounts of discussion, deliberation and debate amongst school staff, governors and other colleagues in the City in addition to the thoughts and ideas contained in the responses from you to the survey.

You will be aware that Newcastle has had a united approach to children returning to school. We have been bombarded with updates and advice from the government – the week before half term the guidance underwent 41 changes. At the same time that the Prime Minister was announcing that it was safe for children to return to school four of their SAGE panel cautioned against it – so it has been difficult to be certain about what action to take.

Be assured that what we are doing takes into account the recommendations from the government, health professionals, Local Authority and Trade Unions.

Any plans we make are ultimately informed by medical data and are highly subject to change. In the event of a major COVID 19 outbreak at the school or confirmed diagnosis of key staff with the virus then the school may need to fully or partially close with immediate effect and parents should always bear that in mind as more children and staff begin to return to the school site.

From Monday 8th June we will be opening to Y6 children and we hope to open to Year 1 pupils from Monday 15th June. We will continue to offer the care provision for the children of key workers, those with an Education Health Care Plan and vulnerable families as we have done since March 23rd. At this point in time we cannot offer any on-site education for Reception children though this will be reviewed.

Children returning to school where at all possible should not use public transport but consider options for walking or cycling.

We fully understand that the key worker group may grow as more people return to work. The key worker registration form should be completed if you require a place in the coming weeks. Currently we have around 60 children attending daily and our detailed planning means that we can take a maximum of 72 children within this group to adhere to the national guidelines. If our numbers go above this, then it will have an implication on what we may also be able to offer for children in Year 6 and Year 1.

I want to out-line for you all what school will look like and how we intend to move forward this summer term. It also indicates what changes will need to be made from Monday June 1st as school changes.

I would also like to reiterate that with a plan of this complexity we must all stick to the rules and we cannot and will not enter into endless special arrangements for individual families. The current government slogan is appropriate; "If one person breaks the rules, we will all suffer".

KEY WORKER EMERGENCY CARE PROVISION

This provision will run, as it has since the rest of the school was closed, on March 23rd. Places must be booked weekly using the online form which is now up and running and helping us to manage and staff the provision safely.

This provision runs from Monday to Friday 8.30 am to 4.30 pm. Places can be booked for the full week or just for specific days.

From Monday children accessing this provision must come to school between 8.30 am and 8.45 am. This is to reduce the number of parents in the school grounds and social distancing measures will be in place to queue to enter the school building.

Access will now be through the main gates and entry to the building will be via the Year 3 yard and then up the stairs to the 6 Year 3 and Year 4 classrooms. Each group will now be a distinct group or 'bubble' of children with dedicated staff. Our classrooms can only hold a maximum of 12 children and hence the notional upper limit of 72 children in this provision without impacting on other classes. In line with the national guidelines we need 18 dedicated members of staff to run this provision who will not teach any other children in the school.

From Monday June 8th children using this provision will only be allowed to come to school with a coat and a water bottle. School uniform is not required for this care provision and clothes should be washed daily. Children will not be allowed to bring their own packed lunch from Monday June 8th. All children from Monday will have a packed lunch provided by the school. This is to reduce queueing and infection risks in the dinner hall. This will need to be paid for by parents who normally pay for school meals and will be free to those children on Free School Meals.

YEAR 6 EDUCATION

From Monday June 8th Year 6 will be welcomed back to school. It remains parental choice if you wish your child to return and their place is available all term as they can return at any point. We have made provision for all children in the year group to return so parents may change their mind at any point.

For Y6 school will have to look very different. The restrictions and procedures are not what we would ever want to impose on children. Our classes will only take a maximum of 12 children to maintain the required social distancing. Each class will become a 'bubble' and those children are not allowed to mix with another bubble. For this reason children will have to arrive, have breaks and lunch and leave at the end of the day at different times – and these must be strictly adhered to.

Each bubble will have a teacher and a member of support staff allocated to it – and they will not mix with other bubbles either. There will be regular and intense hand washing and cleaning of areas in school. Children will have to stay at their table and only use the resources that we provide for them. It is very likely that some children will be in a different room to their normal classroom and that they will not always be taught by their former class teacher. They will not necessarily be in a bubble with their immediate friendship group.

The agreed plan for the return of Year 6 is as follows:

- **The school week will run Monday to Thursday only.**
- Work will be provided for Year 6 pupils to complete at home on Friday
- There will be three groups with different and staggered start and end times to the day. Entry to school will be through the Breakfast club and after school gates and Year 6 staircase. Children will need to queue at 2m intervals until they are admitted into the school by a member of staff.



Only one parent is allowed to accompany their child to school and will exit the school grounds via a one way system which will be clearly marked and signposted.

- Parents will not be allowed to enter the school building.
- 6W (Miss Ward's former class) will be taught by Miss Ward (Y6) and Miss Jordan (Y5). Their entry time to school will be from 8.45 to 9.00 a.m. Their school day will finish at 2.45 pm and all children in this group must be collected and off site by 3 pm. There is now no late room provision and any children not collected will have to wait outside in a designated area.
- 6S (Miss Smith's former class) will be taught by Miss Smith (Y6) and Mr Mansfield (Y5). Their entry time to school will be from 9.00 to 9.15 a.m. Their school day will finish at 3 pm and all children in this group must be collected and off site by 3.15 pm. There is now

no late room provision and any children not collected will have to wait outside in a designated area.

- 6M (Mr McGrath's former class) will be taught by Mr McGrath (Y6) and Mr Rimmer (Y5). Their entry time to school will be from 9.15 to 9.30 a.m. Their school day will finish at 3.15 pm and all children in this group must be collected and off site by 3.30 pm. There is now no late room provision and any children not collected will have to wait outside in a designated area.
- From Monday June 8th children in Year 6 will only be allowed to come to school with a coat and a water bottle. School uniform must be worn and should be washed daily to prevent the spread of infection.
- Year 6 children will not be allowed to bring their own packed lunch from Monday June 8th. All children from Monday will have a packed lunch provided by the school. This is to reduce queueing and infection risks in the dinner hall. This will need to be paid for by parents who normally pay for school meals and will be free to those children on Free School Meals.
- In the classroom each child will have their own dedicated tray of resources on a designated table to comply with social distancing rules. The curriculum taught will be a modification of our planned national curriculum with an emphasis on greater outdoor learning where appropriate and a focus on well-being in this unusual situation.
- Throughout the day there will be regular opportunities for hand-washing and there will be an enhanced cleaning routine across the school for all areas including toilets and shared spaces.
- Ipad, if used, will be dedicated to each child and cleaned after use. There can be no shared resources, no group activities, and no team sports.
- This provision and routines will remain in place until we are informed by the government of any permissible changes.



YEAR 1 EDUCATION

From Monday June 15th Year 1 will be welcomed back to school. It remains parental choice if you wish your child to return and their place is available all term as they can return at any point. We have made provision for all children in the year group to return so parents may change their mind at any point.

For Y1 school will have to look very different. The restrictions and procedures are not what we would ever want to impose on children. Our classes will only take a maximum of 12 children to maintain the required social distancing. Each class will become a 'bubble' and those children are not allowed to mix with another bubble. For this reason children will have to arrive, have breaks and lunch and leave at the end of the day at different times – and these must be strictly adhered to.

Each bubble will have a teacher and a member of support staff allocated to it – and they will not mix with other bubbles either. There will be regular and intense hand washing and cleaning of areas in school. Children will have to stay at their table and only use the resources that we provide for them. It is very likely that some children will be in a different room to their normal classroom and that they will not always be taught by their former class teacher. They will not necessarily be in a bubble with their immediate friendship group.

Year 1 returning to school will be dependant on the successful return and implementation of the agreed plan for Year 6.

The agreed plan for the return of Year 1 is as follows:

- **The school week will run Monday to Thursday only.**
- Activities will be provided for Year 1 pupils to complete at home on Friday
- There will be three groups with different and staggered start and end times to the day.
- 1W (Miss Whitten's former class) will be taught by Miss Whitten (Y1) and Mr Snelders (Y2). Their entry time to school will be from 8.45 to 9.00 a.m. Their school day will finish at 2.45 pm and all children in this group must be collected and off site by 3 pm. There is now no late room provision and any children not collected will have to wait outside in a designated area.
- 1B (Miss Byatt's former class) will be taught by Miss Byatt (Y1) and Mrs Edwards (Y2). Their entry time to school will be from 9.00

to 9.15 a.m. Their school day will finish at 3 pm and all children in this group must be collected and off site by 3.15 pm. There is now no late room provision and any children not collected will have to wait outside in a designated area.

- 1C (Miss Condliffe's former class) will be taught by Miss Condliffe (Y1) and Mr Edwards (Y4). Their entry time to school will be from 9.15 to 9.30 a.m. Their school day will finish at 3.15 pm and all children in this group must be collected and off site by 3.30 pm. There is now no late room provision and any children not collected will have to wait outside in a designated area.
- From Monday June 8th children in Year 1 will only be allowed to come to school with a coat and a water bottle. School uniform must be worn and should be washed daily to prevent the spread of infection.
- Year 1 children will not be allowed to bring their own packed lunch from Monday June 15th. All children from Monday will have a packed lunch provided by the school. This is to reduce queueing and infection risks in the dinner hall. Costs for this lunch will be covered by Universal School Meal credits or Free School Meal credits.
- In the classroom each child will have their own dedicated tray of resources on a designated table to comply with social distancing rules. The curriculum taught will be a modification of our planned national curriculum with an emphasis on greater outdoor learning where appropriate and a focus on well-being in this unusual situation.
- Throughout the day there will be regular opportunities for hand-washing and there will be an enhanced cleaning routine across the school for all areas including toilets and shared spaces.
- I pads, if used, will be dedicated to each child and cleaned after use. There can be no shared resources, no group activities, and no team sports. The Year 1 Learning garden shared area will not be able to be used by any children.
- This provision and routines will remain in place until we are informed by the government of any permissible changes.

We absolutely realise that Social distancing and this kind of provision will be much harder for Y1 – as will sitting for extended periods at a desk and we will do our best to provide a suitable form of education.

Children must be brought to school by only one adult and entry will be via the small gate next to the staff car park one class at a time in the allocated time slots.

RECEPTION EDUCATION

Currently we do not have the space or staffing to bring Reception back on a full time basis. We are going to review how provision for Year 6 and then Year 1 goes and then make a decision about what we might be able to offer to Reception children at a future date. At most this will be some part time education in school. We will continue to provide activities and learning for children to complete at home via our school website and will inform parents of Reception children later about any possible changes.

YEAR 2, 3, 4 and 5 EDUCATION

The government have requested us not to consider providing education for children in these year groups at this point in time, other than via a continued home learning curriculum. We are acutely aware of the difficulties and stress this is creating for many families and we are looking into how we might develop our offer further with other technology options. Parents must understand that we need virtually our full team of available teaching and support staff to run the provision for key workers, Year 6 and Year 1. The government guidance clearly acknowledges this, but we are seeking a to develop our home learning further and will be in touch with parents over this as soon as possible.

We will undoubtedly have to make changes to our arrangements once they have started and will continue to communicate with you via the usual channels.

We will also add our extensive risk assessment to the website for everyone to read once staff have been fully consulted on it and it has been approved by the governing body as I know some parents wanted to see this and know how the school day will look before making any decisions.

I also want to make it clear that children can only ever be in one bubble. They cannot mix between Year 6 and Key Worker provision for example so parents will need to decide which provision is best for them. Children returning to school in Year 1 and Year 6 'class bubbles' will also not be able to access breakfast or after school provision and must start and end the school day at the specified times without exception.

Our detailed planning is all in line with government guidance and we have developed our plan to make this work for us, in our building and with our children. What we can do will not necessarily work in other schools and vice versa. The plan will only work if everyone adheres to the rules and routines which have been put in place to mitigate the risk of infection as much as possible. I want to reiterate that this is to mitigate risk; it is not a guarantee and despite many parents saying that they have great trust in what we decide to do I cannot guarantee that your child will never catch the virus in school or on the way to or from school and that they will not bring the virus into your home despite all the measures we have out in place.

We will endeavour to answer your questions as they arise and the school office will be open from Monday 8th June and we request that parents queue and allow one parent at a time to speak to staff via the safety of the glass hatch-window.

It is going to be a few very unusual days but I know the children of West Jesmond and they will adapt quick and energetically to this new school regime; I actually think some of them will like it enormously.

Yours sincerely and with my best wishes to you all

Gary Wallis-Clarke

For further background information and the published guidance that has informed our school specific planning you may wish to read:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-educational-and-childcare-settings-to-prepare-for-wider-opening-from-1-june-2020>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers/reopening-schools-and-other-educational-settings-from-1-june>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-protective-measures-in-education-and-childcare-settings/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-protective-measures-in-education-and-childcare-settings>