



20<sup>th</sup> May 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

## Planned Reopening of Sir Thomas Abney

I would like to thank all those of you who completed the initial survey about the school reopening. Your responses and comments have helped us to make more detailed plans for the provision when we return to school. The government has indicated that this should be no earlier than 1st June.

The initial survey has indicated that approximately 50% of parents and carers would like their child to return to school; although we understand that this number may change over the coming weeks. We have had many questions from you and we hope that the detailed information provided below will help you to make an informed decision.

Please note that any initial plans are subject to change and the school is continuing to consult the staff, union representatives and the local authority. A detailed risk assessment has been drawn up and again this is constantly being kept under review.

We need to be clear that as restrictions have been placed on the numbers of children we can work with, we will not be able to open to all of the selected year groups on 1st June. We have carefully considered the health and safety of the children, our families and our staff. We have taken into account staff numbers and those who are able to come to work. We have committed to a gradual increase in pupil numbers over the coming weeks as we believe this is the safest course of action for everyone.

We plan to invite the children into school in the priority order outlined below:

Week beginning	Year groups
1st June (please note that 1 <sup>st</sup> June is a staff training day (INSET) and the school is closed to all children on this day)	Increased numbers of vulnerable children and children of essential workers from all year groups
8th June	Increased numbers of vulnerable children and children of essential workers from all year groups
15th June	As above and Year 1 (subject to review)
22nd June	As above and Reception (subject to review)
29th June	As above and Nursery (subject to review)
6th July	As above (subject to review)
13th July	As above and Year 6 (subject to review)

Parents who have responded to the email for them to request Key/Essential Worker children placements and those who are being offered a place under the DfE's vulnerable children category are expected to resume attending school after the half term break from Tuesday 2nd June. These parents will receive an email on Thursday 21st May outlining the plans and advising of the changes relating to the structure and timings of the week.

Following the half term holiday, parents and carers of children in Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 will be advised of arrangements.

### **Structure for each week**

Given the number of children who wish to return, the increased numbers of essential workers requiring places for their children and in order to socially distance, we will be splitting the children into small groups and operating the school as outlined below for all pupils:

- Staggered school start to operate from 8.30am to 9.30am.
- Staggered home time to operate from 2.30pm to 3.30pm.
- School closing for half-day on Fridays – staggered closing between 12.00pm and 1.00pm to allow for site adjustments and thorough cleaning.

On return to school, all parents and carers will be asked to strictly adhere to school drop-off and collection times.

### **Grouping and Staffing**

There will be a maximum of 12 children in each group. The government guidance is 'up to 15 per group'. However, having considered the size of the classrooms, for maximum social distancing we need to restrict this to no more than 12.

Each group will be led by two members of staff (one teacher and one member of support staff). As the government guidance states, staff have to stay exclusively with one group of children and as some of our staff are not available to work, it will not be possible to guarantee your child is with their class teacher.

We want the children's return to school to be positive and as settled as it can possibly be and we know that they will be anticipating to see their friends. However, the priority will be group size and safety. It will not be possible to accommodate requests for children to be moved to different groups. Please do not ask for changes to be made as the logistical implications of this mean it will not be possible or safe. We are unable to provide group lists and their allocated staff.

For maximum social distancing, the government guidance is that each group will operate as a "bubble" within school and will not have contact with any other staff or children. They will play exclusively with each other in a zone in the playground and will eat lunch in their allocated classroom or weather permitting, outside. This group will have some of its own shared resources, which will be frequently cleaned and the children will have individual bagged resources e.g. pens and pencils which will remain in school. Children must not bring any equipment or resources from home.

Vulnerable children and the children of essential/key workers will be taught in age specific groups as outlined above.

## **Social Distancing/PPE**

From the Department of Education:

**“We know that, unlike older children and adults, early years and primary age children cannot be expected to remain 2 metres apart from each other and staff. In deciding to bring more children back to early years and schools, we are taking this into account.”**

While the fixed groupings outlined above will support us to follow the Department for Education’s social distancing guidelines, We want to be very clear with parents and carers that enforcing a 2 metre distance between the children will be almost impossible.

We will encourage the 2 metre distancing when children are inside and we will position the desks in Year 1 and 6 to allow for this. There will be a one way system (as much as is possible) in place throughout school and children will be encouraged to follow 2 metre distancing when lining up and moving around the building. The toilets will be monitored to make sure there is only a certain number of children inside at any one time and all handwashing will be supervised.

In Reception and Nursery, while we will encourage social distancing, the 2 metre distancing may not be possible as the curriculum and activities do not support this.

The children may play freely with the children in their group “bubble” when outside at lunch and playtimes. We will try and discourage any hand holding or games which involve contact such as tag. Although our experience in running our key/essential worker and vulnerable children provision since school closed tells us this will be extremely challenging.

By introducing “bubbles” of no more than 12 children, we are limiting the social contact of the children and the staff.

All of the above will be done in a sensitive and age appropriate way and we will use child friendly resources to promote this. Signage across school will be child friendly. The children will be reminded of the rules each day and you will receive a copy of the powerpoints to be shown to the children so you can support us in reminding the children how they can stay safe.

We ask that parents and carers consider this carefully when deciding to send their children back to school. By sending your child back to school, you are consenting to them mixing in this way. You will be asked to agree to a code of conduct which is attached. If you decide you do not want your child to attend school, you will not face any penalties relating to their non-attendance.

We have been asked about children and staff wearing masks when in school. Government guidelines are that any kind of PPE is not required. If you wish your child to wear a mask in school, this is your choice but you should train them in its proper use and understand that the staff will not be able to enforce them to wear it. Staff have been given the option to wear a mask and/or face shield if they choose to do so.

The school has purchased PPE for staff to wear should a child become unwell with symptoms of Covid-19 and they need to care for them before they are collected by a parent or carer.

Staff who will be providing intimate care and first aid will be provided with PPE.

## **Drop Off/Collection**

In order to maximise social distancing, we will be operating staggered drop off/collection times and drop off/collection points at both sets of school gates - the main gate into the school and the KS1 entrance. There will be socially distanced markers for children/parents and carers to wait on outside the gates. The staff will welcome the children in at the gates and they will wait in zoned off

areas until the rest of the group has arrived before being taken into their classrooms. Parents and carers will drop off and say goodbye at these points and will not be able to enter the school playgrounds. Upon collection, parents and carers should wait on socially distanced markers outside the gates. The children will be handed over individually.

The drop off/ collection times of each group will be at staggered intervals. The first groups will be at 8.30am and the last at 9.30am. Collection will be from 2.30pm to 3.30pm (and from 12.00pm to 1.00pm on Fridays). In order for this to work we ask that you do not come to school much before your allocated time slot. The first group into school will be the first group to leave to ensure the children are all in school for the same length of time.

As our cloakrooms are small enclosed spaces, the children should not bring anything to school other than a named water bottle/ packed lunch and a coat or sun hat if required. Children bringing scooters or bikes would need to store them independently and without adult assistance.

For children in Year 6, we encourage parents and carers to accompany their children to and from school to ensure they do not congregate together and break social distancing rules to and from school.

It is very important that parents and carers do not break social distancing guidelines when dropping/collecting their children at school. Please drop/collect your child and leave the school vicinity maintaining a 2m distance between each other. We ask that only one adult comes to school to drop off/collect. Where there are siblings in different groups we will ensure drop off and collection times are at the same time as much as possible.

## **Lunches**

Children will be expected to bring a packed lunch to school each day. However, we will be providing packed lunches for the children in Reception and Year 1 in line with the Universal Free School Meals' scheme, as well as for children entitled to Free School Meals (subject to more information regarding the Free School Meals' voucher scheme).

These will be delivered to each classroom. This will remove the need for children to gather in larger groups in the dining room and will mean there is no accidental sharing of cutlery and cups.

## **Infection Control**

If any child or any member of their household displays symptoms of Covid 19, they should NOT attend school. The government has announced testing will be available to all children and members of their household and staff. If a child or member of staff tests positive then the school will take all necessary actions to limit the spread of Covid 19, including the possibility of closing the school to all pupils at short notice.

Parents and carers would need to contact the school to report any absence due to sickness immediately.

Children who have or live with a household member who has a shielding letter MUST NOT attend school.

Children identified as vulnerable due to health conditions such as asthma would require an individual risk assessment in order to determine whether they may return to school, and parents and carers considering a return are asked to email the school to discuss individual circumstances.

Children will be supervised washing their hands regularly. This will be done when the children arrive, before and after each session, play and lunchtimes and before they go home. In addition we

have alcohol based hand sanitiser across the school site and children can bring their own if they wish.

Children should not bring any items from home with the exception of a named water bottle and coat, sun hat, packed lunch if required.

### **Cleaning**

The whole school site has been deep cleaned during the lockdown. As per government guidance all excess furniture, soft furnishings and high risk resources which are difficult to clean (such as soft toys) will be removed from classrooms.

All classrooms and shared equipment will be cleaned thoroughly every day and regular cleaning of corridors, toilets, doors, handles, etc, will take place throughout the day.

### **Wrap around care**

In order to maintain social distancing between staff and children and maintain the integrity of the groups, it will not be possible to offer any wrap around care. Therefore Breakfast Club, After School Play Centre and other after school clubs will not be running for the rest of the academic year.

### **Home learning**

We will continue to run Google Classroom for all year groups across school. This will allow for any child not attending school to access home learning. However as all the teachers will be required to run the groups in school, the contact between the teachers and children in all age groups may be reduced. Allocating two adults per group in school may enable the teachers to be released to check on Google Classroom activities but they will not be responding in the same way as they have been during the closure. The learning on Google Classroom will mirror the activities which are happening in school. We urge all parents and carers to ensure that their children are completing their work on Google Classroom. Paper copies of work are still available to be collected on request as are school iPads to support online learning.

### **Curriculum**

As much as possible, we will continue to deliver the curriculum the children are usually taught in school to all year groups. This includes English, Maths, Phonics, IPC, Spanish, PE and Music. We are also aware of the increased need to promote mental wellbeing and our curriculum will continue to take this into account. We can see that many of the children have already made excellent use of our new wellbeing classroom and many of the Summer Term IPC units will focus on the children's personal development.

In Early Years we will continue to deliver the EYFS curriculum including daily phonics sessions and continuous provision.

Year 6 will work on transition and getting ready for secondary school. We are awaiting further information on secondary transfer, but do not currently believe that secondary schools will be offering transition sessions on their sites. If parents and carers have any concerns relating to their child's secondary school place, they can email the school office.

### **Parent Contact**

Our office will be open, however we will not be able to welcome parents into school. You will be able to phone the school office and speak to members of staff and continue to email, but it will not be possible for any face to face contact to take place. If your child arrives late, you should press the

buzzer at the main gate or telephone the school office, but it may not be possible for your child to gain entry to the school.

## **Uniform**

It is expected that all children attending school will wear the school uniform.

## **Year 6**

We know that some parents and carers in Year 6 are choosing to send their children back to school so that they get to say goodbye to friends and teachers. We appreciate this is a difficult time and we want to assure parents and carers that we will be marking the occasion with a leavers' book and 'virtual' farewell.

We ask that you read the above carefully and make the final decision on whether you wish your child to return. We will be in contact with the parents and carers of particular year groups in the coming weeks.

We appreciate that the above may not be how parents and carers had envisaged their children returning to school. Children and staff will find the changes difficult too. However, we believe these measures are essential in order to bring the children back to school in the safest way possible and we know all the school staff will carry out these measures in a sensitive and child friendly way.

We hope that we have clearly set out the arrangements and that they help you to make a decision regarding your child returning to school.

Thank you for your ongoing support.

Best wishes

*G Fitzmaurice*

Geraldine Fitzmaurice  
Headteacher

This letter should be read alongside the documents below

[DfE Guidance for Parents/Carers regarding the Re-opening of Schools after the May Half Term Break](#)

**Home School Agreement – Code of Conduct during Re-opening of School**

Instructions for children:

**Return to Sir Thomas Abney EYFS**

**Return to Sir Thomas Abney Years 1-6**

