



WANSBECK PRIMARY SCHOOL



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Dear Parents and Carers

Proposed Reopening of Schools (Earliest date 1st June)

I am writing to update you on the current circumstances and the implications this has for us at Wansbeck. Firstly, we are all missing you all and we hope you are staying safe and well. I know from speaking regularly to all the staff at Wansbeck they are working hard to keep in touch and provide work and support throughout this challenging time. I apologise on the length of this letter but it is essential you have all the information.

After the Prime Minister's announcement on Sunday 10th May 2020, we are once again entering uncharted territory. The government are asking schools to begin wider opening of schools from 1st June 2020. They have suggested that in the first instance, children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 will be strongly encouraged to attend school.

The government have provided comprehensive guidance to schools. Unfortunately, the guidance is somewhat contradictory and gives us, as leaders some grave concerns about the ability to adequately safeguard children and staff under their guidance. What is really important to note is that what we have been provided with is guidance, not statutory. The guidance also clearly states that:

"Each setting's circumstances will be slightly different. Any setting that cannot achieve these small groups at any point should discuss options with their local authority or trust. This might be because there are not enough classrooms or spaces available in the setting or because they do not have enough available teachers or staff to supervise the groups."

To that end, we need to carefully plan what we can offer at this time to ensure in our context we can keep the children, families, staff and the community safe. Following an audit of classroom spaces we can not fulfil the Government suggestions of 15 children in a group - In our classrooms we can safely have between 8 and 10 children.

There is some important information I would like you to know prior to thinking about your child's return to school.



Groups of Children

- It is important you know that it is highly likely your child **WILL NOT** have their class teacher. This may be owing to the fact that they cannot yet return to work or that they are working with another group of children in the school.
- Groups (which we are calling 'bubbles') will have no more than 10 children and the groups may not be formed from their own class.
- Once established these groups **WILL NOT** change. They will work with the same children and group of adults until we are given an updated directive.
- The groups **WILL NOT** be allowed to mix with others in the school.
- As the children are unable to mix, start times, playtime, lunchtimes and pick-up times will have to be staggered as much as possible.
- Children will be using the same toilet facilities as other groups although they won't be in the toilets at the same time
- Should staffing levels become too low at any point some classes may be asked not to be in school and this could be at short notice

Infection Control

- The guidance states that where possible children should stay 2m apart but "do not need to be 2m apart" (**You can see how it is inconsistent**)
- Social distancing **EVEN** with 10 children will be extremely difficult, we will not be able to keep children in a group of 10, 2m apart at all times. I think it is important that you have this information and that we are honest and transparent.
- We will ensure cleaning of hands more often than usual - wash hands thoroughly for 20 seconds with running water and soap and dry them thoroughly or use alcohol hand rub or sanitiser ensuring that all parts of the hands are covered.
- We will minimise contact with individuals who are unwell by ensuring that those who have coronavirus symptoms, or have someone in their household who does, do not attend.
- Should anyone develop symptoms in your child's group, we will be asking all within that group to remain at home and self isolate until a test has been taken and a negative result is received. At this point the group will be allowed back into school.
- We will ensure good respiratory hygiene by promoting the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach.
- Cleaning frequently touched surfaces often using standard products, such as detergents and bleach.
- Children **WILL NOT** be able to share anything between groups though children within groups may be using the same equipment.
- We **WILL NOT** send anything home from school; and nothing can be brought into school from home. Pack lunches need to be in a disposable carrier bag that can be thrown away at the end of lunch time
- Access to the school grounds and buildings will be severely restricted to anyone other than staff or children. Where possible, we intend to operate a no-contact system.



Education

- The learning environment will have changed entirely. Children will have been used to working with partners on the carpet or in groups, moving around to help each other; this **WILL NOT** be possible.
- Children will sit one to a table with the next person two metres away at location in the room. This setup will require us to utilise classrooms that the children would not normally work in.
- Children working on the carpet will have their own space which will be clearly marked out for them.
- Although the teaching style will have to change, learning will still be taking place at some level. It is likely the children in school will be doing the same or very similar work to that which will be sent home for those continuing with Home Learning.
- We will aim to spend more time outside with the children (weather permitting!)

Transition

- There will be limited transition from Year 6 to Year 7 and any there is will be done remotely. The usual things that Year 6 do at this time of the year will be impossible to do in the structure schools need to follow. The school will remain a learning place with children sat at desks 2m apart and small groups for Year 6 also. Year 6 children, like other groups, if they return will not necessarily be in groups with their friends or class teacher.

Travel

- Children need to be accompanied to and from school to ensure they adhere to regulations. We recommend only one adult accompanies a child or sibling groups.
- If you need to use public transport, please refer to government guidance on using this.
- We are advising parents to walk on their own and not stand with other parents on drop off and pick up. Outside will be clearly marked with cones on where individual parents will stand.

Lunches

It is the intention to provide a meal for any child attending. However, the following things need to be highlighted:

- Initially there will only be a pack up style lunch available that children will eat in the classroom or in their allocated outside area
- Free School Meals will be provided, however at the point your child returns to school or indicates a return to school **the current voucher system will stop for your child on the day you return.**



From reading these guidelines I am sure you will agree with me that our school will be changing significantly. Our school is based on relationships, care and love in everything we do and these measures take the heart out of what we stand for. Never in my teaching career have I ever looked at a school set up with complete sadness. You may also see how some children will find it extremely difficult to understand this and we want to work together to ensure children understand that these changes are not that we don't care about them but something we have to do. We will appreciate your support in preparing your child for what school will be like. Our staff are currently working on a phasing back into school curriculum looking at ensuring childrens emotional needs are met when they return to school.

We would like to reiterate that the government are strongly encouraging children in the mentioned year groups that the school can facilitate to attend from 1st June 2020. As a trust we would also add that this is **an individual families choice and you should not feel pressured either way on making a decision**. If a family decide to keep their children at home, your school will be respectful of that choice.

Proposed Phased Opening at Wansbeck Primary

Therefore, at Wansbeck we are doing a phased opening of the school so we can maintain safety and monitor the opening carefully. We propose when the Government moves to the next step (at the earliest 1st June) we will initially open for **FOUNDATION 2 ONLY** (Miss Deggs and Mrs Clixbys class) This will happen the first week. Following this in the next stage, when we believe it is safe we will return Year 1 children. At this stage these two year groups are the only plans we have made for reopening but throughout the process we will be monitoring and evaluating what we do next. If you child is in Foundation 2 or Year 1 please fill in the following form so we can plan and allocate children into their groups.

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/39V52KP>

Please note the provision for key workers and vulnerable children will continue as it has been doing so far.

School now has a skeleton staff within the school building so if you have any questions in regards to this please contact us by email, phone or send your class teacher an email and we will be in touch. You can also send us a message through our Facebook page.

Yours Sincerely

Sam Bullen
Headteacher