



The Acorns Primary  
& Nursery School  
www.theacornsprimary.co.uk

Pooltown Road  
Ellesmere Port  
Cheshire  
CH65 7ED

0151 355 1546  
adminjunior@theacorns.cheshire.sch.uk



Executive Headteacher  
Mrs Hannah Broom BA(Hons) NPQH

Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

Following on from the Government's announcement that schools may open to more pupils from June 1<sup>st</sup>, we received instruction from the Local Authority last night 'strongly advising' schools not to return before the 8<sup>th</sup> June, in order to have a county-wide approach to re-opening. We will therefore be aiming to re-open our doors to eligible pupils on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> June.

I am writing to share with you the arrangements we intend to implement in order to minimise any risk to your children, our staff and our community, based on the DfE guidance (which can all be found online). These plans are based on the outcome of a thorough risk assessment and will be put into place when the Government confirm national conditions have been satisfactorily met. These plans therefore remain subject to change over the next 9 days, if we are directed otherwise by the DfE or the Local Authority.

## Classes

The Government have highlighted Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 pupils as being the priority for attending school. We are therefore continuing to run our Key Worker and Vulnerable provision full-time, whilst also providing full-time schooling for those in Reception, Year 1 and Year 6. Nursery pupils will be continuing to do their normal amount of hours, although these hours may be at a different time of day.

The Government guidance acknowledges that social distancing in Primary Schools, particularly with our youngest children, is not possible. Therefore we will be endeavouring to keep each class in a 'social bubble'. This is likely to follow the following pattern:

- Each class will contain a maximum of 15 pupils and the same staff daily (a 'bubble')
- The bubble will have staggered play times and lunch time, so there is no contact with another bubble
- Each bubble will be staying in their classroom and playground more than before and not accessing other areas such as the hall, the library or different toilet facilities
- Pupils will eat their lunches in their classrooms before going out to play. Therefore, initially, lunches will be in the form of a packed lunch in a disposable bag, for those requiring a school meal
- Pupils will be accompanied by an adult from their bubble whenever they need to leave the classroom
- Pupils will be supported and supervised to carry out good hygiene routines; thoroughly washing their hands several times a day for at least 20 seconds, including at the beginning and end of the day, before and after food, before and after toileting (or changing) and when moving between activities
- Year 6 pupils will be encouraged to socially distance where and when appropriate

Initially, we are able to accommodate the majority of those pupils returning in their usual class and with familiar staff, although as numbers rise, this may not remain the case. If you have agreed to your child returning to school on June 1<sup>st</sup>, please find enclosed detailed instructions as to where your child will be and who they will be with.

## **Environment**

As you would expect, the classroom environments have been altered to accommodate our returning children and ensure they and the staff are as safe as possible. Some of the changes are as follows:

- Less tables and more spaced out, ensuring pupils can sit with some space between them (Y1 and Y6)
- Some resources have been removed if they are not easily washable, such as cushions and fabrics
- Not all resources will be available every day, as they were previously, but may be on a rota to ensure items are cleaned and quarantined, if necessary
- Classrooms will have a greater emphasis on hygiene and cleanliness with more handwashing equipment, hand sanitiser, tissues and lidded bins to 'catch it, kill it, bin it'
- Windows will be open, where feasible, to allow for additional ventilation
- More hours of cleaning will be taking place in each classroom daily, with additional cleaning taking place throughout the day by school staff of hard surfaces

## **Beginning and end of the day**

As you may have seen, the guidance does not allow parents and carers to congregate on the playground or come into the school building, unless by prior arrangement with staff. Therefore, in order to ensure the safety of all our families:

- The start and end time for school is different for each bubble
- Each bubble also utilises different entrances and exits than we would normally use
- Only 1 adult should accompany the child to school, as far as possible
- It is ESSENTIAL that our families follow the guidance and socially distance during your journey to and from school and whilst you are dropping off and collecting your children
- Our entrances and exits are being labelled with a one-way system and lines for social distancing
- Children will not be able to bring items in from home or take items from school home (except snack and possibly a lunch box)
- Any communication with staff must be done at a social distance or over the phone, by calling the office

We have done everything we can to support and facilitate this and would appreciate your full cooperation during these potential 'pinch points' during the day. Again, if you have agreed to your child returning to school on June 8<sup>th</sup>, please find enclosed detailed instructions as to what your drop-off and pick-up arrangements are.

## **Other information**

- Our pupils are still required to wear their school uniform, although we are aware there will need to be some level of flexibility due to the challenges around securing new uniform currently
- Staff will not be wearing PPE unless they are carrying out intimate personal care or first aid (we have had some child-friendly masks made to ensure we reduce any possible upset to the children)

- Children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 will need to bring a snack in from home as we will not be providing toast or bagels at this time
- Reception, Year 1, Year 2 (Key Worker and Vulnerable pupils) and any Key Worker or Vulnerable pupils eligible for Free School Meals, will continue to receive a meal in school
- Those eligible for Free School Meals may continue to collect your weekly hamper on a Monday, unless your child is now attending school and therefore accessing their free lunch daily
- We are not going to be able to offer wrap-around care during the summer term, due to the protection of the 'bubbles'
- Home learning will continue to be provided for all our children. For those in Year 1 and Year 6 who have chosen to remain at home, this may look slightly different as the teachers will now be back in school teaching daily, and not working from home full-time on this aspect any more
- SCHOOL WILL BE CLOSING AFTER LUNCH ON A FRIDAY in order for teachers to have their allocated planning time and for school to undergo a 'deep clean'. This is with the exception of our Key Worker and Vulnerable group of pupils, who will finish on Friday afternoon, as normal. If your child is in Nursery, Year 1 or Y6 and will need Key Worker or Vulnerable provision on a Friday afternoon, please email me directly: [head@acornswhitleyfed.cheshire.sch.uk](mailto:head@acornswhitleyfed.cheshire.sch.uk)

It may be the case that over the next few weeks, we are asked to consider our capacity to allow more pupils to return to school. Please be assured that any changes will be risk assessed thoroughly and the safety and well-being of our community will be of paramount importance and any decisions made will reflect this.

We are also aware that many of you, for a variety of reasons, are continuing to remain in isolation. The Government have stated that they will not issue penalties for families in this situation over the summer term.

We understand that this is a worrying time for everyone and these small steps towards returning to a 'new normal' may feel uncomfortable and provoke anxiety, but please know that we are here for all of our families and ready to work through any challenges as a team. We are looking forward to welcoming some of our pupils back to school and want you to know that their emotional well-being is our main priority and will be addressed at all times by our staff teams. As and when the children are ready, aspects of a 'normal' curriculum will be re-introduced.

If you have any questions or queries, please email me: [head@acornswhitleyfed.cheshire.sch.uk](mailto:head@acornswhitleyfed.cheshire.sch.uk) Additionally, if your child is in Nursery, Reception, Year 1 or Year 6 and you have previously said you will not be sending them back, but have changed your mind, please let me know as soon as possible.

Kind regards,

*Mrs H. Broom*

Executive Headteacher