

GIG MILL PRIMARY SCHOOL

Together we care, together we succeed



20th August 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

As you are aware, the government has now released its guidance for the full opening of schools to all year groups, and subsequent guidance in August. We look forward to children returning to school full time from the beginning of the autumn term (Thursday 3rd September). Our new Reception children will be coming in for transition sessions from Monday 7th September, with Nursery starting from Monday 14th September onwards.

Last term we supported over 200 children returning safely to school, either in Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 or for children of keyworkers. The same principles that were applied across these 5 months will be followed for a September 2020 start.

Health and safety

As a school we prioritise health and safety and we have revised the way our school runs to help reduce contact between children and to maximise distancing in our school community, whilst minimising the potential for transmission of the virus as far as is reasonably possible.

At Gig Mill Primary School we have completed a detailed risk assessment and formulated our plans for reopening by implementing the Public Health England 'system of controls' which will help reduce the risk of transmission. Essential measures include:

- Minimising contact with individuals who are unwell by ensuring that those who have coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms, or who have someone in their household who does, do not attend school.
- **Please do not send your child to school if they have any symptoms, or if the household is quarantined due to holiday abroad.**
- Cleaning hands more often than usual - washing hands thoroughly for 20 seconds with running water and soap and drying them thoroughly or using alcohol hand rub or sanitiser ensuring that all parts of the hands are covered.
- Ensure good respiratory hygiene by promoting the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach. ☑ Introducing enhanced cleaning, including cleaning frequently touched surfaces often, using standard products such as detergents.
- Ensuring that children and young people are in the same groups each day - creating 'bubbles'.
- Actively engaging with NHS Test and Trace.
- Managing confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) amongst the school community and containing any outbreak by following local health protection team advice.

Safeguarding

Our Designated Safeguarding Leads Mrs Hannaway, Mrs Garratt, Mrs Powell and Mrs Suchomski will be on site daily so any safeguarding concerns raised can be reported through the normal processes. They will then follow our safeguarding procedures, if you wish to discuss any concerns, please contact the school office, either through email or telephone.

Headteacher: Mrs A Hannaway

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Pupil groups

Consistent groups reduce the risk of transmission by limiting the numbers in contact with each other. Maintaining distinct groups or 'bubbles' that do not mix makes it quicker and easier in the event of a positive case to identify those who may need to self-isolate.

At Gig Mill Primary School we will operate as year group 'bubbles' with allocated classrooms, designated staggered arrival and collection times and a timetabled break and lunchtime with specific play areas. Whilst this organisation means that the children will spend most of the day within their class group, they will be able to mix with their year group friends during break and lunch, as well as allowing for mixing of same year group classes for learning purposes.

In addition to the above our 'bubbles' the following changes to school routines will be in place:

- Avoiding large gatherings such as assemblies or workshops.
- Making adaptations to our classrooms to support distancing. This may include seating pupils side by side rather than face to face.
- Pupils will have their own items that cannot be shared e.g. pens and pencils, these will be provided by school to minimise contact from home.
- Classroom based resources, such as books/games shared in class will be cleaned regularly, along with all frequently touched surfaces. Many of the resources will only be used by the class and not across the whole year group bubble.
- Resources that are shared between bubbles, such as sports, art and science equipment will be cleaned between use by each bubble, or used in rotation after 72 hours.
- Staff maintaining distance from pupils and other staff as much as possible - avoiding close face to face contact and minimise time spent within 1 metre of anyone.
- We recognise that younger children will not be able to maintain social distancing, and it is acceptable for them not to distance within their group, subject to good respiratory hygiene and handwashing.

We have also had to make some amendments to our school day to allow time for hygiene and health and safety procedures and to minimise mixing, and allow sufficient staff to be on duty with staggered starts and finishes. These are set out below. Please note that in order to ensure the effective supervision of everyone on the school site, children cannot arrive or be dismissed at differing times other than that set out in the timetable below.

Year group	Drop off	Pick up	Location
Reception	8.45	3.00-3.05	Broadway silver gate one way via School field, exit via carpark
Year 1	8.40	3.05-3.10	Broadway silver gate one way via School field, exit via carpark
Year 2	8.30-8.50	3.05-3.10	Broadway main entrance Exit KS1 playground & via carpark
Year 3	8.30-8.50	3.10-3.15	Broadway main entrance Exit KS1 playground & via carpark
Year 4	8.30-8.50	3.10-3.15	Enter Heath Farm Road gate Exit one way KS2 playground
Year 5	8.30-8.50	3.15-3.20	Enter Heath Farm Road gate Exit one way KS2 playground

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Year 6	8.30-8.50	3.20-3.25	Enter Heath Farm Road gate Exit one way KS2 playground
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Minimising contact between large numbers of children and adults is challenging, and therefore parents must adhere to above times and be punctual. We cannot allow parents to arrive earlier than their time and wait on the pavement/at the gates or accommodate latecomers as this will cause more people to mix with other bubbles. Punctuality is of the utmost importance.

A great deal of thought has gone into the above arrangements. We have explored the idea of siblings waiting in school until their older sibling finishes and have looked at a staggered start and collection times based on surnames. However, logistically this is not possible from a staffing and spacing perspective, as well ensuring that year group bubbles are not mixing.

In September only one parent may bring/collect a child to/from school to minimise congestion at Broadway and Heath Farm. During the phased re-opening our existing Reception and Year 1 pupils did brilliantly and quickly picked up the new routines for drop off and collection, additional support will be made available for those children who were not able to return in June / July. At drop off times in the morning, only parents of our new Reception intake, and Year 1 will be able to enter the school grounds. Pupils for all other year groups will be admitted at the Broadway entrance, or the Heath Farm Road gate.

End of day arrangements are as follows:

- Parents of children in Years R/1/2/3 will come on to the school site. We will operate a one-way system for parents collecting children
- Reception, Year 1 through the silver gates on the Broadway entrance and onto the school field, exiting through the second silver gate, out onto the path and down through the car-park.
- Years 2 and 3 please follow path into the KS1 playground, and exit onto the car-park.
- Years 4,5,6 on entry through Heath Farm Road gate turn right in the one way system, and round in a loop to collect your child before exiting the Heath Farm Road gate. A member of staff will be on duty to facilitate safe entry and exit.

Whilst waiting and whilst on school premises, you will be asked to wait at a socially acceptable distance until your child can be released to you safely.

Year 6 children may be given permission to walk home independently, if this is the case please email the school office, and children will leave via Heath Farm Road gate. A member of staff will also be available at the pedestrian gate to see the children safely off the school site.

We must also ask that you do not stop and chat with other parents or a teacher apart from a 'hello' as our aim is to ensure a safe but swift entry and exit from the school site.

Uniform and equipment

All pupils will be expected to wear school uniform as normal. School uniforms do not need to be cleaned any more often than usual, nor do they need to be cleaned using methods which are different from normal.

The only difference to this is that on the day that your child has PE we are asking that they come to school in their PE kit (proper school PE kit expected) – we will advise you of PE days by the end of week 2, there will be no swimming lessons at present.

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Please ensure that your child brings a waterproof coat, this is essential due to changed routines.

Children will only require a named packed lunch (if provided by home), a named water bottle (we are not able to provide these in school), a healthy snack (for children in Years 3 – 6, these may be kept within their lunch box), and a school book bag. **Large bags will not be permitted.** The children must not bring any toys from home and if sun cream is required this must be applied at home. If your child is in Years 6 and walks to and/or from school independently you may wish for them to bring their mobile phone. This must be handed to the class teacher on arrival.

Break and lunchtimes

Break/lunchtimes will be timetabled across the school and bubbles will be allocated a playground area that may be rotated for the benefit of the children. This time will be supervised by our staff.

At lunchtime, children will eat in their classroom (apart from Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 who will use the dining room in their separate year groups) and will then have 30-40 minutes allocated in an outside space for play. Each year group bubble will have their own set of lunchtime equipment.

We will be providing a packed lunch initially for all children in Reception, and Years 1 and 2 as part of universal free school meals, along with children from other year groups who are entitled to Free School Meals (This will be changed to hot meals as soon as new routines are established). For children in Years 3 - 6 a packed lunch will be the only option available or children will need to bring in their own packed lunch. All children must bring their own named water bottle.

Behaviour expectations

As a school we will continue to have the highest expectations for behaviour. If a child behaves in a way that is unacceptable and causes a risk to other children or staff (either physical or unhygienic i.e. licking, spitting) then you will be contacted by a member of staff to discuss their behaviour and our school behaviour policy (as amended for COVID) will be followed.

Attendance

It is vital that all children return to school to minimise as far as possible the longer-term impact of the pandemic on children's education, well-being and wider development.

School attendance will therefore be mandatory again from the beginning of the autumn term. This means from that point, the usual rules on school attendance will apply, including:

- Your duty to secure that their child attends regularly at school and on time.
- Our responsibilities to record attendance and follow up any absences.
- The school's availability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices for poor attendance.

First Aid

- If a child hurts themselves (minor bump, graze) then we will treat this within our bubble as a 'caring parent' would.
- If they require anything more detailed, then staff will call the office and we will direct an adult to bring the child to the first aid area which will be manned by a designated adult with PPE equipment. If a child requires an ice pack these will be used with a disposal bag which can be thrown away.
- Please note that we will send you a text message from September rather than a letter. Any more serious matters/injuries will result in a phone call to you as per our current practice.

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Pastoral care and Curriculum

A welcome letter from your child's new teacher has been shared in July – children can also visit our school website to view a story from their new class teacher. 'Handover' arrangements to discuss new classes have already taken place, staff briefings have planned our curriculum for the first few weeks which will balance how we support pupils' emotional well-being and mental health on their return as well as promoting core curriculum skills.

Supporting well-being: Pupils will be experiencing a variety of emotions in response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, such as anxiety, stress or low mood. We will support the pupils in understanding that these are normal responses to an abnormal situation and have already planned work for the children's return to school around feelings and emotions. Some of our children may need support to re-adjust; others may have enjoyed being at home and be reluctant to return. Others however will not be experiencing any challenges and will be keen and ready to return to school.

We will therefore base our first few weeks' provision on pastoral activities designed to:

- Support the rebuilding of friendships and social engagement.
- Address and equip pupils to respond to issues linked to coronavirus (COVID-19).
- Support pupils with approaches to improving their physical and mental wellbeing.

Health and hygiene

Key message: Do not come to school if you, your child or members of your household have coronavirus symptoms <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/> or have tested positive in the last 10 days.

We will explicitly teach and supervise health and hygiene arrangements such as handwashing, tissue disposal and toilet flushing. We will therefore ensure we practise (and instil in the children):

- Cleaning our hands more often than usual – either with running water and soap and drying them thoroughly or using sanitiser.
- The appropriate and safe use of hand sanitisers.
- Using the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach.
- Avoid touching our mouth, nose and eyes.

As a school we will:

- Ensure we remind everyone to clean hands on arrival at the setting, before and after eating, and after sneezing or coughing.
- Think about ways to modify our teaching approach to keep a distance from children in our class as much as possible, particularly close face to face support (noting that it's understood that this is not possible at all times, which is why hygiene and hand cleaning is so important).
- Help our classes to follow the rules on hand cleaning, not touching their faces, 'catch it, bin it, kill it' etc.
- Prevent children from sharing equipment and resources (like stationery), where possible.
- Keep our classroom door and windows open if possible for ventilation and to limit use of door handles.

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- Limit the number of children from our classes using the toilet at any one time. Children will also have timetabled slots to visit their designated toilet.
- Limit our contact with other staff members.
- Put in place a cleaning schedule that ensures cleaning is generally enhanced and includes: more frequent cleaning of rooms/shared areas that are used by different groups; frequently touched surfaces being cleaned more often than normal; and cleaning toilets more regularly.
- Ensure each classroom will have sanitiser available. This will be supervised for some of our younger children. We have additional sanitising pumps located at various points around the school for both staff and our older children.

Use of PPE equipment

We will follow current DfE guidance which is subject to change (current DfE guidance which advises wearing a face covering is not required either for pupils or adults). PPE should only be needed in a very small number of cases, including:

- Where an individual child or young person becomes ill with coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms while at school, and only then if a distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained.
- Where a child or young person already has routine intimate care needs that involves the use of PPE, in which case the same PPE should continue to be used.

Sickness in school

If anyone becomes unwell with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature, or has a loss of, or change in their normal sense of taste or smell, staff will contact a senior member of staff who will co-ordinate the child being sent home and advise them to follow the COVID-19: guidance for households with possible coronavirus infection guidance. This guidance states that they must self-isolate for at least 10 days and should arrange to have a test to see if they have coronavirus (COVID-19). Other members of their household (including any siblings) should self-isolate for 14 days from when the symptomatic person first had symptoms.

Whilst the child is awaiting collection from school, they will be moved to a room where they can be isolated, depending on the age of the child and with appropriate adult supervision. PPE will be worn by staff caring for the child while they await collection if a distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained (such as for a very young child or a child with complex needs).

Any members of staff who have helped someone with symptoms and any pupils who have been in close contact with them do not need to go home to self-isolate unless they develop symptoms themselves (in which case, they should arrange a test) or if the symptomatic person subsequently tests positive (see below) or they have been requested to do so by NHS Test and Trace.

Public Health England is clear that routinely taking the temperature of pupils is not essential, however the school does plan to take the temperature of all children and adults in September as a matter of routine and reassurance. Daily checking has been part of our normal practice for a number of months and can be facilitated quickly and effectively.

We completely appreciate that many of you will feel anxious about the full return to school, particularly for those parents whose children have not been in school since March or who have been shielding. Please be assured that the health, safety and well-being of your children, the staff working within the school and the wider community remain our most important priority. I do hope this information letter provides you with some reassurance about September 2020 and our plans moving forward. (Please see website for the risk assessment). Please bear in mind that plans put into place last term changed frequently due to new guidance and our ongoing evaluation of emerging needs, this is our starting point for September, but we know that there will be changes. We will continue to monitor local and national developments and, if changes are required before the 3rd September then we will be in touch again.

[Government campaign launches to get children 'back to school safely'](#)

Thank you for your ongoing support and understanding. We look forward to welcoming you all back to school once again in September 2020.

Regards,

Mrs A Hannaway
Headteacher

Mr D Edgar
Chair of Governors