



# Preston Candover CE Primary School

Preston Candover, Basingstoke, RG25 2EE

Telephone: 01256 389278

Email: [admin@prestoncandover.hants.sch.uk](mailto:admin@prestoncandover.hants.sch.uk)

Headteacher: Mrs. Simrit Otway

14<sup>th</sup> May 2020

## Planning for phased reopening of school for some year groups

Dear parents and carers,

I hope that you and your families are in good health. Thank you for your continued support at this challenging time. Your thoughtful emails and comments have really helped to lift morale. We do appreciate this.

I recognise there will be a mixture of feelings about any plans – ranging from those in our school community who will be relieved and pleased that schools may start to make a phased return, to those who will be anxious and concerned about what this means for the health of their children and families. As headteacher I will do my best to make decisions that are right for the school community based on sound advice and guidance.

The local authority is also currently working to clarify government guidance some of which is updated daily and they are working with professional associations to support headteachers with advice. As we understand it, the plan for wider opening is dependent on the science. If it is deemed safe, then wider opening can happen from the 1<sup>st</sup> June for some year groups.

Our planning involves significant logistical and resourcing matters to be considered. Our risk assessments will determine how many children we can safely take should we reopen. Any plans need to be built around the highest safety standards so that we can do everything in our power to reduce the risks to all members of our community.

We hope you will be able to complete a short parent survey linked in the email so that we can gather your views.

We thought it would also be helpful for parents to read some of the government guidance and our initial responses. We are aware that things are updated often on a daily basis but we thought it would be useful. Please excuse the length of this document.

Sections in the following blue text below are from, 'Coronavirus (COVID 19): Implementing Protective Measures in Education and Childcare settings', 12<sup>th</sup> May 2020, Department for Education.

Our response to the DFE guidance and initial thinking is in black text.

As we heard from the Prime Minister on Sunday:

*From the week commencing 1 June at the earliest, we will be asking primary schools to welcome back children in nursery, reception, year 1 and year 6, alongside priority groups.*

The DFE is updating its information regularly. However, we are striving to make plans for the phased and staggered return of our children in Year R, Year 1 and 6 this term.

As part of our planning, we will need to continue to operate a split team approach. A team of colleagues will be working in school to facilitate face-to-face education, whilst others continue to plan and work from home on learning activities. Alongside this, we continue to have provision for children of key workers and this will require additional staffing. This may put a significant strain on resources owing to the reduced class sizes and number of

**Love Hope Justice**



colleagues who will be needed in school. We therefore ask for your understanding as we, like other schools, do our best to meet this challenge. It may be that in the near future, your child's home learning activities are developed/communicated by a different teacher. We have now set up Google Suite and are discussing how we can utilise this for learning in the safest way possible for pupils and staff. It appears to be more appropriate to Key Stage two but we will let you know.

#### *DFE-Shielded and clinically vulnerable children and young people*

*For the vast majority of children and young people, coronavirus is a mild illness. Children and young people (0 to 18 years of age) who have been classed as clinically extremely vulnerable due to pre-existing medical conditions have been advised to shield. We do not expect these children to be attending school or college, and they should continue to be supported at home as much as possible. Clinically vulnerable (but not clinically extremely vulnerable) people are those considered to be at a higher risk of severe illness from coronavirus. A small minority of children will fall into this category, and parents should follow medical advice if their child is in this category.*

As an important element of our partnership with parents, we will liaise with you on an individual basis with respect to your child's needs.

#### *DFE-Living with a shielded or clinically vulnerable person*

*If a child, young person or a member of staff lives with someone who is clinically vulnerable (but not clinically extremely vulnerable), including those who are pregnant, they can attend their education or childcare setting. If a child, young person or staff member lives in a household with someone who is extremely clinically vulnerable, as set out in the COVID-19: guidance on shielding and protecting people defined on medical grounds as extremely vulnerable guidance, it is advised they only attend an education or childcare setting if stringent social distancing can be adhered to and, in the case of children, they are able to understand and follow those instructions. This may not be possible for very young children and older children without the capacity to adhere to the instructions on social distancing. If stringent social distancing cannot be adhered to, we do not expect those individuals to attend. They should be supported to learn or work at home.*

Please let us know via the parent survey. We will liaise with families on an individual basis in due course.

#### *DFE-Shielded and clinically vulnerable adults*

*Clinically extremely vulnerable individuals are advised not to work outside the home. We are strongly advising people, including education staff, who are clinically extremely vulnerable (those with serious underlying health conditions which put them at very high risk of severe illness from coronavirus and have been advised by their clinician or through a letter) to rigorously follow shielding measures in order to keep themselves safe. Staff in this position are advised not to attend work. Read COVID-19: guidance on shielding and protecting people defined on medical grounds as extremely vulnerable for more advice.*

*Clinically vulnerable individuals who are at higher risk of severe illness (for example, people with some pre-existing conditions as set out in the Staying at home and away from others (social distancing) guidance have been advised to take extra care in observing social distancing and should work from home where possible. Education and childcare settings should endeavour to support this, for example by asking staff to support remote education, carry out lesson planning or other roles which can be done from home. If clinically vulnerable (but not clinically extremely vulnerable) individuals cannot work from home, they should be offered the safest available on-site roles, staying 2 metres away from others wherever possible, although the individual may choose to take on a role that does not allow for this distance if they prefer to do so. If they have to spend time within 2 metres of other people, settings must carefully assess and discuss with them whether this involves an acceptable level of risk.*

As headteacher, I am aware of the wider requirements of our whole school community. A number of our teachers and support staff fall into the above category.

**Love Hope Justice**



### *DFE-Personal protective equipment (PPE) including face coverings and face masks*

*Wearing a face covering or face mask in schools or other education settings is not recommended. Face coverings may be beneficial for short periods indoors where there is a risk of close social contact with people you do not usually meet and where social distancing and other measures cannot be maintained, for example on public transport or in some shops.*

*PPE is only needed in a very small number of cases including:*

- if a child, young person or other learner becomes unwell with symptoms of coronavirus while in their setting and needs direct personal care until they can return home. A fluid-resistant surgical face mask should be worn by the supervising adult if a distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained. If contact with the child or young person is necessary, then disposable gloves, a disposable apron and a fluid-resistant surgical face mask should be worn by the supervising adult. If a risk assessment determines that there is a risk of splashing to the eyes, for example from coughing, spitting, or vomiting, then eye protection should also be worn.*

We ordered PPE several weeks ago and we are still waiting for its arrival. Staff may wear PPE during the start and end of the school day when there are other adults. We expect social distancing to be carefully observed by all parents during drop of and collection for their own and others safety.

### *DFE-Class or group sizes*

*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. Schools should therefore work through the hierarchy of measures set out above:*

- avoiding contact with anyone with symptoms*
- frequent hand cleaning and good respiratory hygiene practices*
- regular cleaning of settings*
- minimising contact and mixing*

*It is still important to reduce contact between people as much as possible, and we can achieve that and reduce transmission risk by ensuring children, young people and staff where possible, only mix in a small, consistent group and that small group stays away from other people and groups.*

*Public Health England (PHE) is clear that if early years settings, schools and colleges do this, and crucially if they are also applying regular hand cleaning, hygiene and cleaning measures and handling potential cases of the virus as per the advice, then the risk of transmission will be lowered.*

*Where settings can keep children and young people in those small groups 2 metres away from each other, they should do so. While in general groups should be kept apart, brief, transitory contact, such as passing in a corridor, is low risk.*

All of our classrooms have sinks to facilitate frequent hand washing.

We are also working on a number of different visual representations of marking out 2 metres and planning a one-way system for access and corridors, most of which are narrower than 2 metres. We are planning to keep to small consistent groupings. We will be reorganising learning environments to allow for 2 metres distancing.

*DFE-For primary schools, classes should normally be split in half, with no more than 15 pupils per small group and one teacher (and, if needed, a teaching assistant). If there are any shortages of teachers, then teaching assistants can be allocated to lead a group, working under the direction of a teacher. Vulnerable children and children of critical workers in other year groups should also be split into small groups of no more than 15. Desks should be spaced as far apart as possible.*

**Love Hope Justice**



We will work on the principle of small groups. This means that with small groups of children returning in three year groups, we would need at least 6 teachers/teaching assistants to be available to work. It is likely that your child's usual class teacher may not be the adult covering the group if/when they return before summer.

We will also need adults to continue to support children in other year groups who have continued to attend throughout this period. As will be the case for every school, this could put significant pressure on our capacity to provide education for children at home. This is absolutely not our choice but may be a consequence of needing to adopt these measures. We ask for your support whilst we do the best we can.

I also want to add that in these circumstances, parents of pupils in the eligible year groups who choose not to send their child will not be issued a penalty notice.

Prior to the official lockdown, I wrote to families outlining the additional health and safety measures that we are taking in school. Additional measures to minimise risk as we implement any phased return will include social distancing and minimising adult to adult contact.

Also:

- Asking parents/carers to drop off and collect children at various allocated points and staggered times
- Asking that only one parent collects their child at the end of the day
- Making clear to parents that they cannot gather at entrance gates or doors, or enter the building
- We request that parents continue to email to communicate with staff during this time
- Not using volunteers at this stage and minimising numbers of visitors e.g. contractors to work outside of school hours where possible
- Share with parents/carers, resources that should be used with your children to educate them about the safety measures in place
- Older children must bring their own pencil cases to school. All children to bring water bottles and carry tissues
- Lessons requiring equipment such as computers and practical resources will have additional cleaning protocols in place
- Use the outdoor learning environment as much as possible

[DFE-What happens if there is a confirmed case of coronavirus in a setting?](#)

*When a child, young person or staff member develops symptoms compatible with coronavirus, they should be sent home and advised to self-isolate for 7 days. Their fellow household members should self-isolate for 14 days. All staff and students who are attending an education or childcare setting will have access to a test if they display symptoms of coronavirus, and are encouraged to get tested in this scenario.*

*Where the child, young person or staff member tests negative, they can return to their setting and the fellow household members can end their self-isolation.*

*Where the child, young person or staff member tests positive, the rest of their class or group within their childcare or education setting should be sent home and advised to self-isolate for 14 days. The other household members of that wider class or group do not need to self-isolate unless the child, young person or staff member they live with in that group subsequently develops symptoms.*

*As part of the national test and trace programme, if other cases are detected within the cohort or in the wider setting, Public Health England's local health protection teams will conduct a rapid investigation and will advise schools and other settings on the most appropriate action to take. In some cases, a larger number of other children, young people may be asked to self-isolate at home as a precautionary measure – perhaps the whole class, site or year group. Where settings are observing guidance on infection prevention and control, which will reduce risk of transmission, closure of the whole setting will not generally be necessary.*

As has always been the case, we will liaise directly with Public Health England and the local authority should a situation arise and will act accordingly. In order to avoid any upset for individuals during this sensitive time, we

**Love Hope Justice**



kindly ask again for your support in not using social media groups such as WhatsApp to discuss any potential cases as this could lead to misinformation being shared or fear among others. We will communicate directly with parents and families as needed.

*DFE-Should educational settings ask parents to report pupils' temperatures at the start of each day?*

*Parents, carers and settings do not need to take children's temperatures every morning. Routine testing of an individual's temperature is not a reliable method for identifying coronavirus.*

We do not require parents to report pupils' temperatures but we do ask that parents do not send in children who have a raised temperature. We have routinely used thermometers in school and will continue to do so.

*DFE-Will children and young people be eligible for testing?*

*When settings open to the wider cohort of children and young people, all those children and young people eligible to attend, and members of their households, will have access to testing if they display symptoms of coronavirus. This will enable them to get back into childcare or education, and their parents or carers to get back to work, if the test proves to be negative. To access testing parents will be able to use the 111 online coronavirus service if their child is 5 or over. Parents will be able to call 111 if their child is aged under 5.*

The phased reopening of schools is yet to be confirmed and as I mentioned at the start of this document, dialogue between professional associations, local authorities and the DFE is still taking place. However, we are working towards this plan and will communicate further with you in due course.

We thank you for your understanding.

With best wishes

Mrs Simrit Otway

Headteacher

**Love Hope Justice**

