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Information for parents on the safe return to Blackawton Primary School

This is a rather long letter - please take time to read the important information it contains to help us open and return to school in as safe a way as possible. We are grateful for all the input that we have had from the whole school community.

We welcome back to school the children in Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6, as the government has advised. We have risk assessed and planned for a safe return through implementing the guidelines by being mindful of our unique school. We have worked closely with the shared services and leadership team in Education South West, the school community and staff. This plan will apply for the first two weeks in June and will be regularly reviewed as the children return to school.

In line with government guidance we will be:

- **minimising contact with individuals who are unwell by ensuring that those who have coronavirus symptoms, or who have someone in their household who does, do not attend childcare settings, schools or colleges**
- **cleaning 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**
- **ensuring 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**
- **minimising contact and mixing by altering, as much as possible, the environment (such as classroom layout) and timetables (such as staggered break times)**

We are only offering spaces to Nursery children who will be transitioning to the reception class in September 2020.

We are sending this letter out to all families, so that everyone can have an understanding about how we are implementing the guidelines.

If you have let us know that your child/children will be returning to school on Monday 1st June, you will receive a letter letting you know your child's teacher and the class they will be in. Your child may be in a different classroom and may be taught by a different teacher than previously.

If you do not receive a letter, then you have indicated that your child will not be returning to school at this time.

If you have told us that your child/children will not be returning to school, but you would like to review your decision, then please let us know as soon as possible. We respect the views of all parents of children in Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 and we will make spaces in school, so children can return.

However, please give the school at least 24 hours notice, either by email or phone, if you want to update your decision, so that we can make any necessary alterations to classes.

We will be making a short film, that will be uploaded onto Tapestry, to accompany these notes - this will be ready for you on Thursday evening. Please watch the film with your child so they can see how the school is ready for their return. It will also explain the drop off and pick up place for your child.

To start with: from June 1st

We have split the year groups into smaller groups, these are pods of between 10 to 12 children, most classes have 10 children. This is the maximum number we can accommodate in a classroom whilst observing social distancing principles.

In the first two weeks children will return to school in these groups.

Nursery will be open on **Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday** in the Nursery Hut with Pam, Chloe and Mrs Scott.

Class 1 - Reception will be open on **Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday (morning with** Mrs Burris, Mr Sullivan and Iris

Class 2 - Reception and Year 1 **Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday (morning) with** Mrs Llewellyn and Helen D (mornings) and Rachel M (afternoons)

If we need to open an additional class, then Mr Lemmings will open Class 3 for Reception and Year 1.

Year 6 and key worker children will be split into two “pods” and will be taught in either Class 4 or Class 5 on **Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday (morning).**

Class 4 – Pod 1 – Karen and Mr Lemmings/Tiggy

Class 5 – Pod 2 – Mrs Buckle and Becky

The school will close at 12.00 on Friday for cleaning and allow teachers to have planning and preparation time. Our cleaner will be in school throughout the day, every day, to ensure that surfaces, door handles and equipment are kept clean, as well as emptying bins and supporting the whole school team.

There will be no mixing of the pods, this is so social distancing can be maintained and contact between children can be minimised. Some children who have been attending throughout the lockdown will continue to attend and they will be accommodated with either their year group or the most appropriate class group in school.

What your child will need:

- Coat, book bag, sun hat, sun cream, **filled water bottle**, change of clothes in a plastic bag for younger children.
- Lunches for all children will be provided as previously. These children can either have a school packed lunch or a packed lunch from home. All children will eat their lunch in their classroom. All waste will be sent home. You will be sent the menu and children can choose each day.
- Children should wear their usual clothes and it is recommended that regular washing of clothes takes place. At present we will not be running Forest School sessions.

What will happen in the morning?

NO PARENTS WILL BE ALLOWED IN THE SCHOOL BUILDING.

We will have to stagger the arrival of children into school. It is very important that you arrive with your child at the correct time so that we can avoid a bottle neck and we can ensure children are into classes promptly. Please then leave the playground as quickly as possible. We recognise that this will all feel very strange for the children at the start of the return to school but with all our support we hope the children will adapt to this new way of transitioning.

PLEASE TRY TO OBSERVE SOCIAL DISTANCING

- If your child is in the **Nursery**, the start time is **9.15**. Staff will be there to meet your child and bring them into the classroom.
- If your child is in **CLASS 1**, the start time is **9.00**. Please bring them to line up in the top playground around the 2m markers. Mrs Burris and Mr Sullivan will take the children in to the classroom.
- If your child is in **CLASS 2**, the start time is **8.45**. Mrs Llewellyn will meet the children and they will go straight to their allocated space in Class 2.
- If your child is in **YEAR 6**, they will enter the school through the front door and walk up the stairs to their classroom. The start time is **8.40**.
- Children who come to school on transport will be met by Mr Lemmings and will be taken to their classroom.

AS YOU WALK TO AND FROM SCHOOL, PLEASE TRY TO OBSERVE SOCIAL DISTANCING.

Where will the children be taught?

We have adapted the classes to ensure social distancing as much as possible. To allow for as many children to attend school and to minimise social contact we have changed some of the classes. Reception children will either be taught in Class 1 with Mrs Burris and Mr Sullivan with Iris or in Class 2, alongside the Year 1 children, with Mrs Llewellyn with Helen D and Rachel M. Year 6 children will either be in Class 4 or Class 5.

The children will not be using any part of the downstairs areas – hall, library or music room.

What will the children be taught?

Once we are settled into our new routines, children in school will be taught with an adapted Blackawton Curriculum topic. The children in Years 2, 3, 4 and 5, and the children in the other year groups who are not back in school yet, will continue to be provided with a range of learning opportunities through Tapestry. The whole school topic for the rest of the summer term will be “Water.” More details on the curriculum activities will be sent out at the beginning of term.

What will a typical day in school look like?

- Your child will go to their classroom
- When they arrive, they will wash their hands using soap/sanitiser
- Children will be reminded of social distancing principles
- Children in Classes 4 and 5 will have an allocated seat in the classroom. They will sit way from their peers – classes have been arranged so that children sit at a 2m distance away from each other.
- Children in Classes 4 and 5 will be allocated their own equipment/resources for learning that will not be shared - no pencil cases to be brought in from home.
- Reception and Year 1 children will have a restricted collection of toys to play with due to the issues with ensuring cleanliness. Those toys used will be cleaned during and after each session.
- Classes will have staggered play times so all pods groups are separated; we will use the field as much as possible. - Lunch times will also be staggered, and children will eat their lunch in the classrooms.
- We will use outside spaces as much as possible in line with the social distancing guidelines.

The end of the day:

- **Nursery** will be collected at **2:45** - Nursery parents should line up in the top playground and your child will be brought to you. Please leave the playground promptly to allow for the next group of parents to arrive and observe social distancing.
- **Class 1** children will be collected at **3:00** – Reception parents should line up in the top playground and your child will be brought to you. Please leave the playground promptly to allow for the next group of parents to arrive and observe social distancing.
- **Class 2** children will be collected at **3:15**. Reception/Year 1 parents should line up in the top playground and your child will be brought to you. Please leave the playground promptly to allow for social distancing.
- **Year 6** children will be collected at **3:20**. Year 6 children will leave school from the front door and will meet you in the playground. Please leave the playground promptly to allow for social distancing.
- Children who go home on school transport will be taken to the bus by Andrea or Tiggy.

NO PARENTS SHOULD ENTER THE SCHOOL BUILDING AT ANY TIME.

Helen will be in the office every day apart from a Monday afternoon. Letters etc that need to be dropped off, can be left in a box which will be in the front entrance. As much communication as possible should be conducted via email or telephone

How will the school support the children in the new routine?

The first few days:

- The first few days will be very gentle.
- Children will need time to re-establish relationships with their group
- Children will need time to be helped to learn new ways to interact with their friends
- Children will need time to get used to moving around the school in a safe way
- Children will need time to get used to break times and lunch times
- Children will need time to get used to new routines such as regular handwashing
- Children will need time to get used to looking after their possessions
- Children will need time to get used to new ways of learning, with teachers having to be further away

We recognise that children may have had very different experiences of lock down. For some it will have been easy, and their learning will have been continued. For some, there will have been difficulties and trauma. Learning may have been interrupted and inconsistent. Children may have very different emotions around their return to school – we are all individuals.

We recognise that all children will be anxious, as will their parents. We will be closely observing children, listening and understanding and, where necessary, offering more support to children and their families. Our SENDCO, Sarah Simnett will be on hand to support with this.

We want children to feel safe and for their parents to feel reassured that we are doing all we can to keep them feel safe. However, we want school to feel as much like the school the children know and love.

As always, if you have any questions, please ask. We're here to make this work for everybody.

How you can help prepare your child for returning to school

Talk about the relevant contents of this letter.

Explain to your child that they will be asked to wash their hand many more times and that they need to do this for 20 seconds. We will be ensuring that the children wash their hands between all transitions.

Explain to child what social distancing means - staying 2 m away from others. We recognise that this will be very difficult for our youngest children, however we will establish routines for the children and limit numbers who can play in an area at any one time.

Arrive at school at the allotted time for drop off and collection.

Do not gather at entrances or in the playgrounds, and model social distancing so that their children learn good practice.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The hall, library and music room will be closed.

There will be no music lessons

No visitors will be allowed in the school during the hours 8.30 - 3.30

There will be no after school clubs

Children will be supported to follow the Behaviour for Learning Policy with updated guidance on following social distancing rules.

Only 2 children will be allowed in the toilets at any one time. This will be supervised by school staff.

Playing in the Nursery and the Reception Classes

It has been recognised by the government that children in Nursery and Reception Classes will find it extremely difficult to adhere to the 2m social distancing guidelines. Learning through play remains an essential part of our daily curriculum at Blackawton. The classrooms have been organised so that children will be encouraged to play in very small groups of 2 or 3 children.

It has been recommended in the guidance that we

- consider how to keep small groups of children together throughout the day and to avoid larger groups of children mixing

This will be through a key worker system in the nursery where all care and play will be carried out by one member of staff for their small group.

The classroom is organised into sections with a rotation system in place and children will be guided to change their play area to allow for regular cleaning.

In the reception class – children will have a buddy and all activities will be carried out with their buddy. They will be encouraged to play with their buddy outside.

Children will have an allocated carpet space that encourages distancing. Carpet sessions will be shortened, and more activities will be “table-top.”

- consider how play equipment is used ensuring it is appropriately cleaned between groups of children using it, and that multiple groups do not use it simultaneously

Individual pencil pots will be provided for nursery and reception children.

Books will be changed once a week and all books brought back to school will be placed in a holding box to be cleaned

Toys will be cleaned and rotated.

Nursery and the two Reception/Year 1 pods will not mix, and any shared resources will be thoroughly cleaned and if possible placed in the dish washer.

What happens if someone becomes unwell during school hours?

If anyone becomes unwell with a new, continuous cough, a high temperature or a loss of, or change in, your normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia), in the school day, they will be sent home and advised to follow the [COVID-19: guidance for households with possible coronavirus infection guidance](#).

If your child is awaiting collection, they will be moved to the meeting room where they can be isolated behind a closed door, and depending on the age of the child, with appropriate adult supervision if required. Ideally, a window will be opened for ventilation. Parents will be asked to collect their child from the meeting room door – in the bottom playground.

Staff and children will be eligible for testing if they become ill with coronavirus symptoms, as will members of their households. A negative test will enable children to get back to childcare or education, and their parents to get back to work. A positive test will ensure rapid action to protect their classmates and staff in their setting.

What happens if there is a confirmed case of coronavirus in school?

When a child, young person or staff member develops symptoms compatible with coronavirus, they will 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 the class or group within school will 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 school will not generally be necessary.

Updated Behaviour for Learning Policy

As children continue to learn at Blackawton Primary they will be encouraged to follow the principles set out in the Blackawton Way and as a Gold Rights Respecting School.

We will support the children to follow the new routines and expectations that have been set out to adhere to social distancing. Where children are finding this difficult or where they deliberately flout these expectations then we will talk to parents to find ways to support their child and the school, to ensure that the whole community remains as safe as possible.

The usual sanctions as set out in the Behaviour for Learning Policy will apply. A copy of this is on the school's website.

Thank you for taking the time to read the contents of this letter. If there are any changes to the structure to the classes, the school day or the routines we will update you.

Thank you to for all your support, we are determined to return to school and provide the children with the best possible education and learning experiences and continue to support the children who will be learning at home.

With very best wishes

**Rachel Burris
Head of School**