

Dear parents,

This is a lengthy letter but I urge you to read it all.

Following the government's announcement that schools will reopen on 1st June 2020, over the course of the last week the DfE has issued 15 separate non-statutory guidance documents to support the gradual reopening of schools. In addition, Liverpool City Council and all of the teaching unions have also issued numerous additional non-statutory guidance documents. All with the common aim of ensuring the safety of our children and our staff.

The SLT and I have immersed ourselves in each of these documents, including one titled Overview of Scientific information on Coronavirus. This has helped us to carry out a full Risk Assessment and develop a Recovery Plan to support us in gradually reopening.

The DfE's Overview of Scientific Information states that there is a high degree of confidence that the severity of the disease in children is lower than in adults. It also states that there is no evidence or low confidence to suggest that children are less susceptible to the virus or transmit it less. In other words, children may very well catch and pass on the virus at the same rate as adults and there isn't yet the scientific evidence to suggest otherwise. This in turn, would lead to adults in school and at home who do suffer more severe symptoms, being quite exposed. I have a duty to safeguard everyone in the building and will therefore pay very close attention to the scientific evidence, particularly that which is published for schools by the DfE.

Many parents have contacted the school to say that, whatever the plans for a phased return, their child will not be returning. Whilst many of these parents have not given a specific reason for their decision, it is fair to say that there are very mixed or unclear messages from ministers and those who advise them around the safety implications for schools at this moment in time. Today scientific advisers warned ministers that schools should not be further opened until contact tracing is up and running and deemed to be successful.

I am an educator, not a scientist and it is not my place to convince you that the school is safe; it is the job of the government. We will use our best endeavours but you should know that the choice is yours and should you choose to keep your child at home, you will not be fined and they will still be able to access remote learning

Every aspect of school will change, including the environment and the curriculum. Staff will require training on all aspects of the plan and lots of school policies will require modifications or Covid-addendums.

This plan has been approved by Governors and shared with the wider school team, who have begun to carry out the necessary actions required to ensure that the phased reopening of the school is completed safely.

TIMETABLE FOR GRADUAL FURTHER OPENING

The school has maintained the regular building checks whilst closed. Before opening all of the building related systems will be reviewed:

- Site security
- Water systems: Drinking water: Hot water services
- Ventilation
- Fire safety
- Catering equipment
- **FIRE AND LOCKDOWN PROCEDURES:** These will be updated in response the re-organisation and shared with staff and children. A drill will be scheduled.

WEEK BEGINNING 18TH MAY: Over the rest of this week, teachers will be modifying the curriculum and changes will be made to the environment. Among other things this will include modifying classrooms and removing lots of the contents of these rooms, putting up signage and marking out areas of the playground.

22ND MAY: ALL LIVERPOOL HUBS WILL CLOSE PERMANENTLY

WEEK BEGINNING: 25TH MAY: Next week is half term and staff need a break. They have not stopped working, 21 of our staff have supported 5 Hubs across the City; staff have also been home schooling their own children and caring for elderly relatives. Members of our school community have also been ill, or had close family members who have been ill, and there have been subsequent bereavements in the close family members of some staff. With the wholesale changes that we are implementing, they need the opportunity to switch off and spend time with their families. The school has identified staff wellbeing as a high risk and our Recovery Plan, which was agreed by our Governing Body, will not be successfully implemented if staff aren't able to work due to stress and anxiety.

WEEK BEGINNING 1ST JUNE SCHOOL WILL REOPEN TO VULNERABLE AND KEY WORKER CHILDREN ONLY

Please note that although our school was timetabled to have a two week half term we will be returning in line with other schools. The school will meet its legal obligations with regards to staff pay and conditions through a rota system across the weeks beginning 1st June and 8th June.

A sensible and gradual approach will give the best opportunity to implement the considerable number of actions and have the confidence that they are effective.

A Risk Assessment of the school house, indicates that, due to its unique age, size and layout we could not use either the upstairs Music Room and Phyzz Lab, both of which can only be accessed by the one stair case and neither of which have access to toilets. These rooms will not therefore be considered as part of our phased return plan. There would also be issue with ensuring social distancing in the staffroom were it to be used either as the base for a group or by staff. Consequently, the school house will not be included in the phased return plan and the staff room will become the dedicated isolation room.

Given the configuration of our Reception classrooms it would be very difficult to ensure social distancing so these rooms will not be used as group bases.

The Dining Room will be zoned as the staff room.

This means that we will have 12 classrooms to use as bases as part of a phased return.

UNIFORM

It is important that children and staff come to school in clean clothes every day. This is stipulated in the guidance. Clothes that cannot be machine washed should be avoided. We are happy for the children to wear their own clothes if this is easier for parents. Football kits and PE Kits can be worn. Shoes must be sensible and safe. Trainers can be worn but no open-toed summer sandals please. The children should not bring anything to school other than a coat in a disposable bag.

EXTENDED SCHOOL PROVISION

Individual schools cannot provide cover from 7.00am – 7.00pm. The hubs that were designated to provide this cover were supported by staff from up to 7 other schools.

Neither can the school provide Breakfast and After School provision as we cannot meet the Gov.UK guidelines with regards to this: schools should not run breakfast and after school clubs if they are not able to keep children within the groups they are in during the day or safely distanced.

THE SCHOOL DAY

As per the guidance, the school day will be staggered with different drop-off and pick up times for different year groups starting at 8.30 for children in the vulnerable and critical worker bubbles. There will be allowances for parents with more than one child in different year groups.

The home time routine will begin at 3.00pm.

DROP OFF AND PICK UP

The beginning and end of the school day are the busiest times for children and adults congregating together in one place and maintaining safe distances within normal arrangements can be a challenge. We have implemented the following measures for when pupils return to school. Parents will be required to maintain social distancing during these processes; markers/cones will be used to support this.

There will be no cars in the car park; staff will park in the Church car park.

DROP OFF: 8.30am – 9.00am

Parents and children will enter the school grounds via the vehicle gates

A member of staff will be positioned at the children's entrance to check children against the register.

Once registered, children will use the hand sanitiser available and go to their allocated classroom. Younger children will be met and escorted.

Parents will exit via the pedestrian gate

PICK UP: 3.00pm – 3.30pm

Parents will enter the school grounds via the vehicle gates.

A member of staff will be positioned at the children's entrance and will ring through to the appropriate class for the child to come to the entrance.

Parents and children will exit via the pedestrian gate

All non-cleaning staff will be off the premises by 4.00pm to allow for cleaning staff to begin cleaning at 4.30pm. The virus can be contracted from surfaces and objects but it is also an airborne virus. It is a commonly held view that 30 minutes affords enough time for it to dissipate in a well-ventilated room in order for cleaning staff to enter and clean every bubble.

BUBBLES

WE HAD BEEN INFORMED THAT APPROXIMATELY 10 OF OUR CHILDREN HAD ATTENDED A HUB SINCE SCHOOLS CLOSED.

WE HAVE HOWEVER RECEIVED EMAILS REGISTERING 82 CHILDREN FROM ACROSS RECEPTION TO YEAR 6.

WE WILL ESTABLISH 7 "BUBBLES" FOR THE RETURNING 82 VULNERABLE AND KEYWORKER CHILDREN

THIS WILL USE UP 7 OF OUR 12 AVAILABLE CLASSROOMS

Based on the evidence we will be establishing 7 "Bubbles". Each Bubble will contain a maximum of 12 children.

We have tried to set up a classroom for 15 children, which is the maximum number contained in the DfE Guidance but the size of our classrooms did not support this.

Each Bubble will have a designated staff member on a weekly rota, this may not be your child's teacher and may be an LSA. We do not have the staffing capacity to allocate 2 staff members as some members of staff have been told to shield by the NHS or a clinician until 30th June at the earliest.

Although there will be distancing within a bubble, it is accepted by the DfE, that it is not possible to maintain a 2m distance at all times of the day.

Each Bubble will be allocated a classroom, a toilet and an area of the playground. The toilets will effectively become unisex and will be used on a one-in one-out basis.

There will be additional staff in school who will supervise handwashing and cover staff breaks.

Toilet breaks for each group will be timetabled.

A member of staff will accompany children to the toilets and ensure that hands are washed.

Toilets will be cleaned regularly throughout the day

Children will be reminded to wash their hands regularly, after using the toilet and before eating

Children will be reminded how to wash their hands properly

There will be a hand sanitiser outside every classroom and children will be reminded to use them

CURRICULUM

The curriculum will look quite different and you should not expect a return to our full curriculum offer. Children will be taught key skills and there will be a focus on mental health and emotional well-being. Hygiene underpins all of the guidance and we will build hygiene sessions into the day.

To minimise the number of pupils and staff assembling for periods of time there will be no whole school assemblies. When the weather allows outdoor learning will be maximised through timetabling

CLASSROOMS

The DfE has admitted that primary pupils cannot be expected to follow distancing rules. In order to reduce contact between children and staff as far as possible we will:

- Put children into small groups with a dedicated adult who will stay with that group for the week.
- Reorganise classrooms to maximise distances between individual children. Children will not sit in groups. All tables will be positioned to face the front and there will only be one child on each table.
- Reorganise classrooms to reduce the number of items that could be contaminated e.g. soft furnishings
- Every child will be given a freezer bag with their name on it. The school will provide pencils etc. The children will store these in their named bag and these will remain in school.
- Not send books used in school home or accept books from home.
- Not mark work completed on paper or in books; verbal feedback will be given. We are looking at the best way to use resources that are both essential and hard to clean, such as books. It will probably involve some sort of resource-quarantine.
- Clean classrooms during the day
- Organise school systems, timetables and routines so as to minimise contact between groups
- If it is safe to do so, classroom doors and outside doors will be wedged open so as to reduce the need to use the handle

LUNCHTIMES

We recognise the importance for all pupils to have a break from learning and to enjoy time outside during the school day. Reconnecting with friends will be an important aspect of pupils settling back into school life, but we have had to make the following adjustments to break and lunch times.

- The children will stay in their bubble during lunchtime and eat their lunch in their classroom.
- No packed lunches or water bottles can be brought into school. The school will provide each child with a bottle of water each day.
- Children will remain with their group in their base for lunch and remain in their seats
- Children will have a picnic lunch; this will include a choice of sandwiches or pasta, a piece of fruit, a slice of cake or a biscuit and a carton drink
- The picnic lunches will be brought over to the groups in paper bags
- An adult will remove all rubbish whilst the children remain in their seats
- The children will then stay in their groups for a range of activities

PLAYGROUNDS

Timetabling and rotas will be used to ensure that, **wherever possible**, one bubble will never cross paths with another bubble, even when outside.

Drinking fountains will be sealed off.

Both playgrounds will be used

Children will play in their bubbles in their designated area

Specific rules for play will be shared with all children

Lunchtimes will be reduced to 1 hour.

Children will be supervised at all times and adults will lead structured games/activities

EXPECTATIONS INCLUDING BEHAVIOUR

We will share our COVID CODE OF CONDUCT with our children. This will be posted on our website next week.

It is absolutely essential that all children follow these rules, which include expectations on walking around the school, hygiene and hand washing, playtimes and use of equipment. Before your child returns I ask that you go through these rules with them so that they are clear from day one. If children wilfully break the rules, this may impact on them being able to attend school.

PREVENTATIVE MEASURES IN ORDER TO MINIMISE THE SPREAD OF INFECTION

Prior to closure, the school had implemented the following preventative measures in order to minimise the spread of infection. As per the advice from the government, these will remain in place:

- Displaying coronavirus infection control measures information posters around the school
- Encouraging good hygiene by promoting the importance of handwashing for at least 20 seconds with warm water and soap in the following circumstances:
 - Before leaving home
 - On arrival at school
 - After using the toilet
 - After breaks and play activities
 - Before eating any food, including snacks
 - Before leaving school
- Installing alcohol-based hand sanitiser dispensers that contain at least 60 percent alcohol throughout the school
- Ensuring pupils and staff understand that they must cover their cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue away
- Ensuring frequently touched objects and surfaces are cleaned and disinfected more regularly than usual
- Calling NHS 111 if someone becomes unwell, isolating any unwell people in a dedicated room, and providing a separate bathroom, where possible
- Telling staff to stay at home for seven days if they develop symptoms of coronavirus

ILLNESS

If someone in a bubble is suffering from symptoms, the whole bubble will be sent home pending a test result. The person with symptoms will access a test. If the test is positive, the entire bubble must self-isolate for 14 days. The household of the person who tested positive should also self-isolate. The households of the rest of the bubble don't need to unless one of them shows symptoms. In this case they should access a test immediately.

CONCERNS ABOUT RETURNING TO SCHOOL

We recognise that some of you may have some concerns about your child returning to school and that for some children another change will be unsettling for them. We also understand that the past weeks will have been challenging for many families. If you would like to talk to us about your child and any concerns you have about their return to school, please – in the first instance – contact your child's teacher via the school's Business Manager; Mrs. Murray: businessmanager@ourladyshishopeton.com. If your child has an EHC plan please contact the school SENCO, Mrs. Brown, who will support you and your child with their return to school.

SCHOOL OFFICE

The School Office will be closed to parents and visitors. All enquiries must be made via phone or email.

UPTO DATE CONTACT DETAILS

It is very important that we have up to date contact details should we need to contact you during the school day. The school will only contact parents in an emergency. The school will not ring grandparents, neighbours etc.

SUPPORT FOR PUPILS AND FAMILIES

We do not underestimate how difficult the recent weeks have been for us all and we all will have been touched in some way by the coronavirus pandemic. We recognise the need to focus on pupils' emotional wellbeing as well as their return to learning. The following support is in place for pupils once they return to school.

- Safe, quiet places
- Dedicated staff

Parents may wish to seek support for themselves from the following support agencies:

- Samaritans – call free 24 hours a day on 116 123
- National Domestic Abuse Helpline – call for free and confidential advice, 24 hours a day on 0808 2000 247
- Shelter provide free confidential information, support and legal advice on all housing and homelessness issues if you call 0330 0536 083 (please note, this is not a free phone number and your call will be charged). A free webchat is available at https://england.shelter.org.uk/get_help/webchat

NEXT STEPS

Vulnerable & Key Worker Children

We will be sending messages to those parents who have requested a Vulnerable & Key Worker place.

Please note that whilst we can be flexible with regards to the placements for this group we will not be able to safely change our plans on a weekly basis.

Year 6 children

15th June: Y6 will return to school if a central review indicates that it is safe for them to do so. Y6 and Vulnerable children and Key Worker children in school. Over the next few weeks we will be writing to Y6 parents to explain how we will implement the next part of our phased return.

We anticipate that the returning Y6 will require the use of the 5 remaining classrooms.

Other year groups

29th June: Selected other year groups to return to school if the central review indicates that it is safe for them to do so and they can be accommodated on the school site

Curriculum

Children not returning to school will continue to be supported through online learning resources. These will be the same as those completed by those of their year group in school. **PLEASE SEE THE SECTION ON CURRICULUM ABOVE. THIS WILL NOT BE THE SCHOOL'S PREVIOUS CURRICULUM OFFER.**

Information with regards to the Y6 Curriculum will be sent out nearer to their return date.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank you for everything you have done for your children over the last few weeks and for the wonderful support you have given me and the team. It is very much appreciated.

Some parents have been in touch over the last two or three days that I haven't responded to yet. I know that you will appreciate the sheer time and effort and necessary attention to detail that planning to reopen a school in the middle of a global pandemic requires. I will be in touch soon.

Take care.