

14/05/2020



Dear Parents / Carers,

The Government have now published what they expect to happen in the next few weeks including guidance for parents <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers/reopening-schools-and-other-educational-settings-from-1-june>

From 1<sup>st</sup> June we may be welcoming back Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 in addition to the "vulnerable" and "critical worker" children. However, the return is dependent on national conditions being met and could be changed by the Government at any time.

In our survey, there is a lot of concern about re-opening school and what we need to consider. Given your concerns, I think it is only right to detail what measures we are taking. No apologies that this is a long letter – people want to know the detail. Many people have asked whether I can guarantee that the environment is safe if we re-open and of course I cannot guarantee that. All I can say is that we will do everything in our power to make it as safe as possible. I think I have been as clear as I can be in detailing below what our measures are and where the "pinch points" are.

Parent / carers must not however send children to school if their child, or anyone in their household is displaying symptoms of Coronavirus, or if their child is "extremely clinically vulnerable". If there is someone in the household who is "extremely clinically vulnerable" or your child is "clinically vulnerable" (definition here <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19>) please discuss this by ringing me at school on 01902 558575 as a matter of urgency, to see whether we can facilitate a return via "stringent social distancing". The Government have said they expect everyone to attend, but our survey shows that there is a lot of dissent and worry about that.

**Please email [claregateprimaryschool@wolverhampton.gov.uk](mailto:claregateprimaryschool@wolverhampton.gov.uk) by Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> May** to say whether your Nursery, Reception, Year 1 or Year 6 child will return on 1<sup>st</sup> June.

**WE NEED TO KNOW** so we can plan staff, class organisation and meals! We are also stipulating that your child is either "back" or "not back" full time. We cannot organise day-to-day opt in and out, or we will be moving class furniture and equipment every night.

As per Government guidelines, staff will not routinely be wearing masks or protective clothing unless they are engaging in routine personal care. We are however looking to source this on the open market with someone even making masks for us.

The school will have been cleaned thoroughly before 1<sup>st</sup> June during half term when we are closed and surfaces, chairs and common contact points will be cleaned every night with disinfectant. We

do have plenty of soap and paper towels. We use Wolverhampton Local Authority cleaning services and they have vast expertise in this area. In Early Years and Year 1, we will be removing non-essential soft furnishings. However, it is impossible to remove or clean every toy, book, crayon, paintbrush etc. As far as possible therefore, we will set procedures to avoid sharing equipment such as pencil cases and colour coded equipment per table, but it is giving false reassurance to say that children will not forget and pick up the equipment of others. If you wish to send younger children with pencil cases with their own identifiable equipment please do – Y6 have these. However, keep equipment brought to school to a minimum – pencil case, lunch box, PE / Games kit (in school every day).

From 1<sup>st</sup> June, due to the lengthening of the school day, the obligation to provide enhanced cleaning and to be able to get overdue maintenance planned during lockdown done, we will close school, after their lunch on Friday afternoons for all children until further notice. We understand that this causes inconvenience for working parents, but the challenges are unprecedented. Pick up times are below.

Nobody, including the Government, is claiming that it is possible to guarantee social distancing of 2 metres at all times. The younger the child, the less likely it is that they can keep social distance (just try keeping two 4 year olds apart even in your own living room). However, we need to do everything possible to minimise the risk and for that reason we will take the following precautions.

### **Nursery**

We think it is unsafe to have 29 pupils together in the Nursery and it is not fair to educate them in another room. They need their own toilets and changing facilities, their favourite toys, staff that they know and a familiar and secure environment. Classrooms in other parts of the school do not have the correct facilities. We therefore may run a rota for Nursery and we will let you know once the emails about uptake come in.

### **Staggered start to the school day**

We could have 220 children and parents 2 metres apart, which would cause a queue of 2.2 kilometres at each gate, so we need to stagger the start to the school day. We request that you stay at least 2m apart from other families, and “drop and go” without lingering. If you want to chat to each other, please move away from school to a place where you can distance. If your younger child is reluctant to come, we may ask that you take them to another part of school so it doesn’t hold up the entry for others. The table below shows what time your child will start and finish school, alphabetically by the first letter of your child’s surname (last name or family name) and which gate they need to be delivered to in the morning. In the interest of reducing numbers, Year 6 should not be brought right to the gate by an adult. Two members of staff will be on duty at both entrances and staff will be there to guide the children across the playground, through the corridors and into class.

Time	Surname Initial	No of pupils	Gate
08.15 to 08.25	A and B	24	Crossland Crescent
	C, D and E	29	Chester Avenue
08.25 to 08.35	F,G and I	28	Crossland Crescent
	J, K and L	21	Chester Avenue
08.35 to 08.45	M, N and O	18	Crossland Crescent
	P, Q and R	19	Chester Avenue
08.45 to 08.55	S, T and U	34	Crossland Crescent
	V, W, X Y and Z	25	Chester Avenue

So to explain:

- If your son's name is Norman Castle, he can come at 08.15 to 08.25 via the Chester Avenue gate.
- If your son's name is Albert Ross, he can come at 08.35 to 08.45 via the Chester Avenue gate.
- If your children have different surnames, use the surname of the youngest child.

Using this method, families drop all of their children off at one time. If we staggered by year group you would have to wait around outside for other siblings to come out e.g. Year 1 have 12 siblings spread throughout Nursery R, 1 and 6.

If for any reason you arrive early, please stay in your car or keep a distance from all school entrances until your allocated time to avoid queuing up at the gate. This will help to avoid queues. At the gate, please keep at least 2 metres away from other adults or children and **"drop and go"**; there will be a 2 metre queue behind you and extra kisses or calling them back will delay the entry for others. All children and adults wash their hands on entry to the building.

### Staggered exit by Family Groups

Time	Surname Initial	
14.40 (12.10 on Friday)	A-B	Simply wait by the Chester Avenue side gate 2 metres away from other adults, in your own space. We will line the children up on two sides. Walk through and call your child to you. Keep walking in the same direction and leave as soon as possible via the Crossland Crescent gate. This is a one-way walk through and walk around system which is the least we can ask given the risks. The walk may do you some good and don't blame us if you don't bring an umbrella! This will not work unless everyone is on time. If you are late it may take time to fetch your child from class.
	C-E	
14.50 (12.20 on Friday)	F-I	
	J-L	
15.00 (12.30 on Friday)	M-O	
	P-R	
15.10 (12.40 on Friday)	S-U	
	V-Z	

For Nursery pickup, please queue between the posts going onto the Infant playground and we will call them to you. Exit by going through the Reception playground to avoid two way traffic at the blue gate nearest to school. At the blue gate near the road please exercise distancing rules. Someone will be there to guide you for the first few days.

## **Lessons and Learning**

If emails show that we have a lot of children returning, we will split classes into units of no more than 15 per room. Reception will be taught in Reception and Year 1. Year 1 will move to Year 3 and 4, and Year 6 will be taught in the upstairs classrooms. Pupils allowed to attend from other year groups will be taught in Year 2. This means moving books and equipment between classrooms. We may need to buy extra equipment e.g. so they can reach the sinks. This is why you need you to tell us by email if your child is returning – we may not need to do this and we could be moving classrooms for no reason if only half of the pupils are back. We will not ideally be mixing groups, desks will not be shared for Year 1 and 6 and we will minimise staff changes as much as possible. There will however be some other staff visiting the base to help individuals catch up, or to cover the class if their teacher is not present. Teachers will also need to visit the classrooms where support staff are supervising. Early Years pupils do wander and we cannot limit them to staying in one seat

The survey showed that we should provide a balance of basic academic skills as well as emotional support and Personal Social Health and Emotional education. When we return, we will focus on basic skills in writing, spelling and grammar as well as the basics in number work until we are sure that the children have re-gained their basic competence. Year 6 may also be undertaking individual project work and activities based around transition to secondary school. We will lower our expectations of concentration with quicker turn-around of activities. We will plan more outdoor exercise and learning, because we believe that the children having been denied freedom, need the chance to run, jump and enjoy themselves regaining some fitness along the way.

The Local Authority have advised us not to send anything home from school, so reading book systems will not be reintroduced yet.

There will be no national testing for Reception, phonics for Year 1, or SAT's for Year 2 and 6. We may give Y6 a go if papers are released, however they will not be used for any purpose other than to find gaps that we, or the next school can work on. We will be assessing children based on what we know about their abilities and we are already working on end of year report formats. Our Teacher Assessment judgements will no doubt be moderated and standardised.

We will continue to provide online learning via the website with some improvements identified in the survey. It will be possible to plan catch up lessons for some pupils who return to school and we will be able to provide 1:1 support where children are entitled through an Education Health and Care Plan.

## **Around school**

We already have a one way system where children walk on the left, but we will put physical barriers down e.g. chairs to keep children to the left and the right.

Toilet areas are problematic because in many, even if 2 children are using them at the same time there will not be 2 metres distance. Entrances are narrow, urinals and basins close together and they are only supervised remotely. We will try to stagger their use, but keeping distance is not enforceable and 1 child at a time not logistically possible.

We will again teach the children how to wash their hands properly and re-establish the good practice that we built up before lockdown.

Where possible, we will use outside doors and walk in the outdoors to avoid corridor congestion.

We will keep as much natural ventilation as the outdoor temperature allows.

### **Morning and Afternoon Break**

Morning and afternoon playtime - we will stagger these so children go out in year groups, but different classes go to a different playground e.g. 1JC to the Junior playground and 1SB to the Infant playground. Reception will use the Forest Area so spacing is maximised.

### **School Meals and Packed Lunch**

Lunchtimes in the hall are usually staggered and sandwiches are eaten in class. We will increase the time between school meals in R and Y1, so many will have finished eating before the next class come in. It is difficult to predict how quickly children will eat and therefore impossible to know distances. However we will adjust when we see how this is going.

If you are entitled to Universal Free School Meals in Reception or Year 1, or Free School Meals, these will be available as usual. Payments for school meals are as normal. If you have been receiving food vouchers, these stop for everyone over half term and will stop if your child returns to school, but will carry on for Year 2 to 5 children not in school. We are unclear whether you will still receive vouchers if you choose to keep your child at home and are seeking guidance on this.

Lunchtime staff will thoroughly clean tables and equipment before other children sit down.

### **Lunchtime Play**

It is fair to say that this is the time when ensuring social distance is the most difficult. Ratios of children together and movement increase and it becomes "free play". There will be a small window of time when 180 children will be out together. However, if in school for the morning, Nursery will have gone home, Reception have the whole of their playground and the Forest School Area if the weather is OK, Year 1 have the Infant playground and bark areas and Year 6 the whole of the Junior playground. If the weather is fine then children can eat sandwiches outdoors and Y6 can go on the field leaving Y1 with the Junior playground as well.

### **BAT Club** (before school) **and CAT Club** (after school)

Mrs Bailey who owns the clubs will re-open if there is demand, but is waiting to see how many children will return and then want places. Please add to your email if you need place. Normal notification and registration rules will apply and they will have their own procedures for managing through the crisis. **Your notification on your email to school will not constitute booking a place, it is simply for research purposes.** If the clubs do re-open, we will deem the normal school day to be 08.35 to 15.00 and pass them on accordingly. Registration, what time you bring your child, or pick your child up, will be between you and the clubs.

### **General school rules**

School uniform will not be required, but is permitted if that is your preference. Some parent / carers will want to wash clothes every day and not having to have the same clothes ready for the next day should really help. However, safety rules on footwear i.e. no open toed sandals or high heels and jewellery still apply. If you have a mask and want your child to wear it, send it in. It is unlikely that they will keep it on throughout the day, but a little protection may be better than

none and some research is not conclusive about their effectiveness. Similarly, if you want to send named hand gel and accept the risks - that is allowed, but hand washing will be encouraged because it is more effective.

Children who show any signs or symptoms of Covid-19 will wait in the RIB room (which is spacious) until their parent / carer comes to collect them. Parent / carers were brilliant before we broke up and all people attended as quickly as possible. **It is essential that this continues.**

All other school rules apply and there will be no amendment to the Behaviour and Anti Bullying Policy. Our safeguarding policy will remain the same and this policy is on the website.

### **After that ...**

The Government have said that they want to re-open schools to all children for a month before the summer holidays where feasible. At this point true social distancing will be impossible, but we will use the Risk Assessment written at the beginning of the crisis to minimise risk. That includes forward facing seating plans, open doors to avoid contact with handles, hand washing and education about sneezing and coughs et al.

### **To support you**

Friday May 22<sup>nd</sup> 09.00 to 12.15 p.m. will be a "ring your teacher day", when Nursery, Reception, Year 1, Year 6 and pastoral staff will be in school to take phone calls, so you can discuss pastoral matters and things that we need to know e.g. bereavement, anxieties, home circumstances and learning. This will be particularly important for children with Special Educational Needs, vulnerable children or those with "protected characteristics". Not all staff will return to work for this time, or after 1<sup>st</sup> June, because some are vulnerable themselves or are shielding vulnerable people at home, but we will have enough staff to cover. If you cannot ring or you just want us to know something and don't need a conversation just email us.

This is to make the "drop and go" system successful and avoid the need for conversations at the door.

### **Things to do**

- Email us by Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> May if you are, or are not sending your child back to school on 1<sup>st</sup> June. Tell us if you require a CAT club or BAT club place. Email us if you change this decision in subsequent weeks.
- Note the new time and place of arrival to and departure from school.
- Ensure that your morning routines are sound and that you arrive to school on time and you pick your child up promptly.
- Watch out for messages on the MarvellousMe app for changes to arrangements. The Local Authority and Government may make last minute changes which affect our plans.
- Let us know by email if there is any detail that we have missed, or things that you think we need to clarify and we will follow up with more guidance as we go through the next couple of weeks.

If you are worried about a serious safeguarding issue about any child at the school, contact Miss Evans who is the Designated Safeguarding Lead, use the Worry Box on the website, or in the school holidays the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub can be contacted on 01902 555392. If you need immediate emergency assistance, please ring 999.

