

Wednesday 27th May, 2020

Dear Parents,

Information for year groups returning on 2/6/20 (N, FS, Y1, Y6 and Key Worker Childcare)

Following our newsletter on Friday, a couple of parents sent in queries so we thought it would be useful for everyone if we shared some of these questions with you in this letter. We understand that parents may be anxious about sending their children back to school and over this week we are working hard to ensure that our environment is conducive to learning whilst keeping our staff and children safe. We are aiming to send pictures via Google Classrooms or Tapestry by the 1st June so that children are prepared for their 'new look classrooms'.

The government guidance for reopening schools states the following:

While we recognise that full social distancing may not be possible, our guidance sets out a range of measures to protect children and staff. This includes:

- *reducing the size of classes and keeping children in small groups without mixing with others*
- *staggered break and lunch times, as well as drop offs and pickups*
- *increasing the frequency of cleaning, reducing the used of shared items and utilising outdoor space*

We have been following this guidance in our planning and the letter sent to you on Friday provided you with our start and finish times to help you begin to plan your child's return. Play and lunchtimes will also operate staggered start and finish times. As I am sure you understand, the school day and learning within classrooms is going to look quite different from what everyone is used to but please rest assured, the safety and well-being of your child is our main priority and certainly in the first week, we will be paying particular attention on rebuilding relationships with each other and familiarising the children on the new ways of learning with social distancing.

Who will be teaching my child?

We are pleased to let you know that Year 6, Year 1 and Nursery classes will be taught by one of our teachers. Additional Year 6 classes will be taught by a teacher from Year 5 and Year 4. Year 1 classes will be taught by a teacher from Year 2 and Year 3. Reception will be taught by all members of our Reception team, overseen by Natalie and Sian. At the moment, the number of children returning in Reception is very low. You will be made aware who these teachers will be in the newsletter sent to you on the 1st June.

How will groups be organised?

We have divided each class into groups of 15. However, the results from the recent survey sent to parents indicate that class sizes will be smaller than this - especially in the lower years. As much as possible we will be ensuring your child is with a friend/friendship group but again, this is dependent on who is returning. Please note, that once your child is allocated their group, these groups will not be changed. We have to maintain strict social distancing rules and so we cannot swap between classes.

How will social distancing be maintained?

Each class will do the majority of their learning within their allocated classroom or outside. As much as possible, we will tailor learning activities so that they can take place outside. Classes will not mix with each other. We will be reminding the children about keeping 2 metres apart however with the best will in the world, we cannot guarantee that this will always happen - especially with our younger children who just want to play with each other. If this happens, we will gently reinforce appropriate social distancing practice.

What teaching and learning will take place?

Information about this will be provided in the newsletter on the 1st June - the teachers are just putting the finishing touches to their planning.

Will the National Curriculum for Y1 and Y6 be followed?

Teachers will focus on the key objectives for reading, writing and maths. They will be reviewing the learning from the end of the Spring Term and building on the skills required to move children forward. This may be presented in different ways to usual and recording of work may also be in different formats. Teachers will be making use of the outside space more with their groups and there will be access to both art and P.E. In Year 6, there will be the usual focus on preparing children for secondary school.

1:1 learning

We will continue to support children who have 1:1 support as best as we can whilst maintaining social distancing however this may not always be with the adult who normally provides the support. 1:1 reading sessions will not take place for the first week at least but reading will be taught in other ways. Please help your child by continuing with 1:1 reading at home.

What if a child is unwell in school?

We will not be routinely taking temperature checks of any of our children. We do however ask you to make sure your child does not come into school if they are displaying any symptoms. We will take the temperature of children who say they are feeling unwell. If a child is displaying any symptoms, we will ask you to pick up your child straight away and your child must self-isolate for 7 days. You must then arrange for a test to be taken. We appreciate that this is tricky for our children who may be experiencing hayfever symptoms similar to the virus but as we are not doctors, we have to be strict and follow the rules we have been given.

If the child's result is negative, the child can return to school as usual. If the test confirms the child has coronavirus, all adults and children in the confirmed case group are to go home and self-isolate for 14 days. The group's household members do not need to self-isolate unless the child they live with in that group subsequently develops symptoms.

Everyone will be informed if there is a confirmed case however, due to the fact that each group will be isolated, we will only close access to school for that group for the 2 week period.

Can my child return on a part-time basis?

A child coming to school for only part of the week will mean significant disruptions to their learning. We therefore request that if you want your child to come to school, they do so for the entire week.

Will I receive a fine if I choose not to send my child to school?

No. We have been told that parents will not be fined for non-attendance if you are concerned about possible risk to your child.

I originally said that I didn't want my child to attend school but have now changed my mind. What do I need to do?

For the first week, we have accounted for all those we have heard from saying 'yes' as well as those who didn't respond to the return to school survey and unless you have told us otherwise, we are expecting those children into school.

If in the future, if you change your mind and would like your child to return to school, you just need to let us know by phone or email office@gilesbrook.co.uk. Please note however, so that we can organise the learning for your child, your child can only return to school the following Monday from when you decide. You will need to let us know by the Friday before if you want your child to attend school the following Monday.

What if my child does not want to go into school when we arrive?

We understand that coming back to school may be worrying for your child and they may refuse to leave you to go into their classroom. If this is the case, we will do our best to encourage your child into school but we cannot intervene. It may be best to take your child for a walk and talk to them about their concerns and then try again. If your child still refuses, take them home and contact the school to arrange a telephone meeting with their teacher where an alternative plan can be devised.

What should my child wear?

If your child is in a year group returning to school, they should wear uniform or something similar. Guidance was given in the newsletter last Friday. If your child is attending Key Worker childcare, no uniform will be required.

Can I speak to my child's teacher before school or at the end of the day?

Usually our teachers are available on the playground at these times to share any bits of news. However, for the time being, this cannot happen. If you need to speak to your child's teacher, please phone the school office to arrange a telephone appointment and they will get back to you at the earliest opportunity.

Will the school office be open?

The school office will be open but we will not be allowing any parents into the building without prior arrangement. If you need to contact any member of staff, please email or telephone and one of us will get back to you.

Are Key Worker children able to order a school lunch?

Yes all children can order a packed lunch, using Parentpay and ordering by Tuesday at midnight the week before. We will only be supplying packed lunches at this time. Chartwells are currently updating their menu online, but if you require a ham sandwich packed lunch, please order a main meal, if you would like a cheese sandwich packed lunch, please order the vegetarian option.

At Giles Brook School, we pride ourselves on our relationships with the children and our parents. This new way of working is going to feel very alien to us and yourselves we are sure. Please help us by following our new procedures - we will do our very best to maintain communication with you. In the first week or so, there maybe a few hiccups as we adjust to a socially distant environment but as ever, I have confidence in the great team we have, our wonderful children and our supportive parents and together we can overcome any challenges that may arise.

You may have more questions to ask that have not been covered in this letter. However, we advise you to wait until the 1st June where more information pertinent to your child's year group will be provided. If after that, you have anything else in which you are seeking clarification, then please drop us an email.

The announcement to open schools is expected to be made tomorrow but from what I have seen it is looking more and more likely. Once again, I would like to thank you all for your support and I hope that you enjoy the rest of your half term.

With best wishes

Claire
Headteacher

Angie
Deputy Headteacher

Debbie
Assistant Headteacher