

Fordley Primary School  
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Headteacher: Mrs C.L. Withers (BA QTS Hons, NPQH)

## **What will Fordley Primary School look like from 1<sup>st</sup> June?**

Dear Parents and Carers,

Following the Prime Minister's announcement about the government's plans to re-open schools to priority year groups (Nursery, Reception, Y1 and Y6) from 1<sup>st</sup> June, at the earliest, it was important that we, as a school, considered very seriously and carefully how we could gradually bring more children into school whilst aiming to minimise the risk of infection to children and families, and school staff.

These discussions could not happen overnight and have taken significant amounts of planning (as well as having to take into account many new guidance documents from the government) in order to get to a position where we could communicate with you our plan from the 1<sup>st</sup> June. This has been completed in consultation with the full Fordley team and governors, as well as taking into account the concerns many of you shared in the initial parents and carers survey. Our main aim has been to identify how this will work not only to keep your child as safe as possible, to keep you as parents safe on site but also to protect and keep my staff safe.

## **Will school look the same as it did before the pandemic?**

**The simple answer to this is: no**

School will need to be set up in a very different way to reduce the risk to children, families and school staff.

As a school, we have communicated openly and honestly with you, our Fordley Family, and I will continue to do just that. On the next page, in order to help you make a decision whether you would like your child to return or not this term, there is a list of the changes we have had to make (following government guidance to schools).

As parents and carers (of children in priority year groups first) this information will help you to make an informed choice as to whether you feel it will be the right thing for your child to return



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to school this term. Please be aware that you have the final say; they are your children. We will support your decision either way. The government have also been clear that there will be no penalties for non-attendance for the rest of this term.

### **Can school ensure children maintain social distancing?**

Do we want our lovely children back at school and back to normal? We want this more than anything. Our school staff work in our school because they value the time they spend with your children and want nothing more than aiming to provide the best experiences at all levels. We miss our Fordley Family enormously!

However I am not going to tell you we can achieve social distancing and guarantee total safety in a school. In a Department for Education (DFE) document, the government themselves have stated:

**'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.'**

(Implementing protective measures in education and childcare settings, page 6)

We can make things safer and reduce the risk by following measures such as frequent handwashing, good hygiene practices, avoiding contact with anyone with symptoms and regular cleaning of resources, surfaces and equipment. We also need to minimise the interaction and mixing of children and adults by reducing contact between people as much as possible. For example by ensuring children and staff only mix in a small, consistent group and that this small group stays away from other people and groups.

### **So how can school minimise the risk of infection?**

At this stage, I want to share the plans we now have in place in order to support you in deciding if you are happy to send your child back to school, if they are in one of the priority groups, or if



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you are intending on keeping them at home for the remainder of this term.

These plans have been formulated following the advice and guidance provided by the government taking into consideration our individual school layout, pupil numbers and staffing numbers as well as a full and detailed risk assessment supported by North Tyneside Council's Health and Safety Team.

Plans include:

- Children will be sorted into what the government is calling 'bubbles' of no more than 10 children at a time (this is all we can fit into classrooms with desks 2 metres apart)
- These 'bubbles' will enable us to split children up into smaller teaching groups with the same children and adults at all times. Your child may not be with the teacher they had in March or in the same classroom they were in.
- Once we know how many children are returning in a class/year group we will allocate a 'bubble' - it is likely that children will not be with all of their friends and they will have to try to remain at least 2 metres apart from others at all times
- 'Bubbles' will be allocated a classroom and they will remain in that classroom with the exception of any outdoor time, which will be timetabled. 'Bubbles' cannot mix with the groups of children or staff in other 'bubbles' to reduce the risk of infection.
- Classrooms have been set out for social distancing; avoiding contact with other children and adults as much as we possibly can. Children will need to sit at desks 2m apart
- Children will need to remain at their desks when they are in the classroom
- Each child will have their own set of equipment in a plastic folder
- Classrooms have had all unnecessary furniture removed or covered
- Excess equipment and resources, including soft furnishings, have been removed and secured in cupboards in order to follow government guidance (small items and soft furnishings are more difficult to sanitise therefore can't be accessible in classrooms)
- Cleaning of classroom surfaces (desks, tables, door handles etc) will take place continuously throughout the day and bins will be emptied regularly
- Windows will need to be open to ensure the room is well ventilated and internal classroom doors will need to be wedged open to prevent touching of door handles
- Outdoor time will need to be timetabled across the session so that each 'bubble' in school



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can access the outdoors across the day. There will be a set of outdoor resources allocated to each 'bubble' and these will be regularly sanitised.

- Lunches will need to be eaten in 'bubbles' in their allocated classroom. Lunches will need to be a school or home packed lunch.
- Children will not need to wear their uniform - it is likely shoes and some uniform may no longer fit your child. However they will need to have a full washed set of clean clothes on every day.
- Children will need to bring their own water bottle with them from home.
- Children will not be able to bring in anything else from home. They can only bring their home packed lunch (if they need one), a water bottle and their coat. These will remain with them in their class, at their desk.
- Children will not be able to bring bikes or scooters to school
- There will be no access to breakfast club or afterschool club at this time as children from different 'bubbles' will not be able to mix for their safety
- There will need to be staggered starts to the day and staggered finish times to avoid congestions at the school gates and in the yard. Drop off and pick up times must be strictly adhered to by parents and carers.
- There can only be only one adult dropping off and collecting. All children must be dropped off and collected by an adult, including Year 6 pupils. The adult will need to wait with their child until they have been handed over at the classroom door or collected by a school adult. This is to ensure they are socially distancing in the yard but also remaining in the safe care of their parents and carers to and from school.
- Parents will not be allowed to enter the school building. Any queries, or requests to speak to the class teacher, will need to be made by phone or email.
- Children (and their adult) will enter on the path from the main gate and will follow the arrows around the outside of the building past the Nursery yard. This path will be marked to help maintain the 2m socially distancing as well as to highlight the one way system. I will be outside to support this during drop off and collection times. Adults will then leave the school yard via the gates next to the school kitchen and out of the main gate on the other path. No other gates will be open.
- External classroom doors for Reception and Year 1 will need to be used for children entering and exiting the building in their 'bubble.'
- Toilet breaks will be timetabled across the day. Toilets and sinks will be regularly cleaned





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with soap and hand towels regularly replenished and bins emptied.

- Our main corridor has been marked with 2m guides to support social distancing for children and school staff.
- PPE must be worn by my team if they are dealing with first aid or if a child becomes unwell whilst on site. Our staff may also choose to wear PPE themselves outside of these times.
- If at any point any child displays any symptoms of the infection, we will contact a parent or carer who must come and collect the child immediately. This will be a school decision and we will follow the government guidance for schools on what to do if this occurs.

While I write this, I am very aware that these plans do not make for easy reading and I can only apologise for the factual approach I have had to use to list the above changes to normal school practice. It is not our usual relaxed and friendly way of communicating with you but the circumstances mean I must be clear.

These measures are what will be needed to keep everyone as safe as possible and to prevent, as much as possible, the risk of illness to all. Following government guidance, these measures are very similar to what other primary schools are also implementing, whilst acknowledging each school is very different. We all have very different sites, buildings, number of classrooms, numbers of pupils and numbers of staff.

### **Which year groups will be returning to school first?**

The government guidance expects school to prioritise Nursery, Reception, Y1 and Y6 children first (not necessarily in that order).

We will start with children in Y1 and Y6 and, if this is successful, we will widen it out to Reception and then Nursery.

In order to start with lower numbers to ensure we can manage the risk appropriately for children, families and school staff, we will be following a phased entry approach.



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Children will have 4  $\frac{1}{2}$  days (Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday full days with a half day on Friday) in school on their allocated week and then will not be in school the week after. The half day on Friday is so that our cleaning team can deep clean all areas of school used that week before a new group of children start on the following Monday.

An example of this would be:

- week 1 - half of Y1 (split over three separate classrooms) and half of Y6 (split over two separate classrooms)
- week 2 - the other half of Y1 and half of Y6 as above

If week 1 works successfully, we will look at bringing half of Reception back in week 2 (followed by the other half in week 3) and will make sure we communicate this to Reception families as soon as we can in week 1.

Once we have Reception, Y1 and Y6 settled into a routine, we will contact Nursery parents about possible plans for their return.

### **My child is in Y1 or Y6, what happens next?**

Now it is hopefully clear what school will look like over the rest of this term, we would be very grateful if you could email school [office@fordleyprimary.org.uk](mailto:office@fordleyprimary.org.uk) to let us know whether you would definitely like your child to return or not. If we do not hear from you over the next two days either myself or Mr Maule will contact you by telephone. It is vital we know which children will return so that we can then confirm drop off and collection times with families. If we do not hear from you, or we cannot get in touch with you, we will assume you do not want your child to return this term.



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### **What are the arrangements for Critical Workers and Vulnerable Children?**

For those children and families who have been accessing this from the start of lockdown, this will continue as before. These children will operate in their own separate 'bubble' for their safety and the safety of others.

### **Will there still be learning packs/online learning if I keep my child at home**

Remote learning will also continue for all year groups. This includes for those year groups not eligible to attend or for those pupils in year groups who are eligible to attend but where parents or carers choose to keep their child at home with them. Online learning and 2Dos through Purple Mash will continue, Reception teachers will continue to post activities on Tapestry for Reception children and weekly work packs will be available from the main entrance of the school between 11am-12:30pm (when I will be available to hand them over).

Finally, I appreciate that times continue to be very challenging for all of us. Things can, and do, change on a daily basis depending on the scientific advice, daily government briefings and the guidance documentation being issued to schools and regularly updated.

I can't stress how much we are all missing each and every one of you and we are looking forward to when we can have everyone back in school.

In the meantime, if you would like to talk through your personal situation with regard to this, please feel free to email school or give us a ring. Please take care, stay safe and I hope that we get to see many more of you over the coming weeks.

Mrs C.L. Withers

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