

19 May 2020

Dear parents and carers

Re-opening school to Year 6 pupils

We sent out a parent survey last Friday asking whether you intended to send your child back to school when we re-open. Thank you to those who have replied. We all know this is a difficult decision. As promised, I am now writing to tell you about where we are in planning to re-open.

The Government guidance has made it clear that class sizes will be reduced to encourage social distancing as best as possible. However, it is worth pointing out that the Department for Education guidance of 11 May states:

“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. Schools should therefore work through the following hierarchy of measures:

- avoiding contact with anyone with symptoms
- frequent hand cleaning and good respiratory hygiene practices
- regular cleaning of settings
- minimising contact and mixing

They go on to say “It is still important to reduce contact between people as much as possible, and we can achieve that and reduce transmission risk by ensuring children, young people and staff where possible, only mix in a small, consistent group and that small groups stay away from other people and groups.”

Regarding the need for high levels of hygiene the following has been agreed, as follows:

- A rigorous clean of the whole school, before re-opening to Year 6
- Regular cleaning of surfaces throughout the day
- Regular handwashing for at least 20 seconds – **liquid soap and hand moisturiser will be available for washing in the classrooms and toilets**
- Lidded bins in all classrooms
- The Government states that PPE such as masks are unnecessary.
- Closing of water fountains – **please send a refillable water bottle in with your child**
- A reduction of personal possessions in school – **no PE kits**, pupils to have their own pencil cases – **if your child brought this home for home learning please send it back in with your child. Packed lunches are allowed and will be kept in classrooms.**

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Pupils will be given staggered times to arrive and leave. Pupils will wait outside the school gate and staff will be on duty to supervise at the start of the day. Parents and carers cannot enter the playground or school building. There will be no breakfast or after school provision (no after school clubs or Suffolks tea-time club). Monday-Thursday will operate as “full days” with staggered times, but on Friday pupils will have lunch and leave at 12.30pm to allow teachers time to prepare and plan lessons and for thorough cleaning to take place ready for the following week.

Pupils will be in groups of 15 maximum and:

- Children in each class will remain with their group (their “protective bubble”) with the same members of staff throughout the day including playtime and lunches. They will not be playing or interacting with other groups.
- Groups will enter the building by different labelled doors.
- Children will be spaced wide apart at individual desks.
- Lots of lessons to take place outside.
- Children should wear clean uniform every day.
- Mobile phones will be placed in named envelopes and kept securely in the classroom.
- The Pantry will supply packed lunches for those who pay or for those who are entitled to Free School Meals. By week 3 The Pantry are hoping to move to providing hot meals. If your child comes to school and has been receiving free school meal vouchers, **these will stop**.

Given all of these plans and whilst they cannot guarantee a 100% protection, the Government believes that there is high scientific confidence that children have less severe symptoms than adults if they do contract Covid 19.

Other considerations for you, are if you have a child or a family member who is clinically extremely vulnerable please follow advice from your GP. If you look on our website further information about vulnerable groups is available.

For Year 6 pupils who do not attend school, light touch distance learning will be provided through SeeSaw or paper copies. As teachers will be planning and teaching, we will make more use of the Government’s Oak Academy lessons, BBC Bitesize and other online resources.

The first couple of weeks in school will concentrate on re-establishing routines, PHSE lessons to reassure pupils, physical exercise and English and Maths lessons.

Despite the obvious operational difficulties involved in your children returning to school, we will be glad to see them again and to be able to spend some time acknowledging their time at Carterhatch Juniors whilst at the same time preparing them for their move to secondary school.

I hope it gives you a sense of how we have been busy planning to re-open after half-term. If you haven’t filled out the parent survey we sent out, please do so by the end of Thursday. If you change your mind once you have completed the survey, and decide, for instance, that you would like your child to return, please let us know at enquiries@carterhatchjunelt.org or by phone. We would require at least two days’ notice. The school is closed at half-term but office staff will be in on Monday 1 June. If you do decide against a

return to school, the Government has said you will not be fined, nor referred to the Educational Welfare Service.

We cannot give a specific date for when we can re-open yet. As you know, the Government has an intended date in mind but this will be reviewed at the end of the half-term break. As soon as we have set a date, we will contact you and give you more details, including staggered start and finish times.

After half-term the school will continue to be open for pupils of key workers and those identified as being vulnerable.

Stay safe, keep healthy and look after yourselves and your family.

Yours sincerely

H. McGovern
Headteacher