

Leadgate Primary School

Frequently Asked Questions

Will it be compulsory for my child to return to school on 1st June and what will happen if I choose for them to stay at home? Will parents be penalised for keeping their children off school if they personally aren't comfortable with arrangements?

No, there are many reasons why parents may choose to keep their child at home. No attendance measures are currently in place and although the Government is encouraging attendance, as a school we will not be imposing any penalty for non-attendance and fully support your decision either way given the current uncertainties.

If I decide for my child to remain at home with me and continue to home school, will the online tasks and timetable continue?

We are currently trying to determine the likely uptake of places if school does reopen in some form. If this is a partial reopening i.e. not full weeks, then on-line learning activities will continue, however we need to be mindful that staff may well be having to plan school based and home based learning tasks and we will need to manage that carefully.

Will the children be required to PPE i.e. wear masks?

Currently the advice is no PPE will be worn.

Will the teachers be wearing PPE? Are teachers and pupils expected to wear masks?

Currently the advice is no PPE will need to be worn except if a child with possible COVID-19 symptoms is being supervised prior to collection to go home or staff have to undertake more intimate care tasks. However, staff will have provision of gloves, face masks and visors should they feel the need to use them at any other time.

How many children will be in each class? Will classes be split?

Government advice is that we must try to implement social distancing of 2m if possible with a maximum of 15 children in a class. Teaching Union guidance asks for no more than 10 children in a social group. Our own classrooms vary greatly but will only allow for a maximum of 10 pupils at individual tables if at 2m. The division of classes again depends on the number of children returning, the availability of rooms and the availability of staff to cover each group. However, the guidance then states that classes should be halved and social distancing needs to be maximized even if this is less than 2m. Even if we worked on Government guidelines **we do not** have the space or staffing capacity to sustainably reduce all class sizes to meet the 2m measurement should a large majority of children return.

How many days will the children be in each week? Will school be open full time or part time? Will children be attending all together or on a rota basis? How many will be in each classroom?

This is yet to be confirmed and is dependent on the number returning. The more children, the larger the group size and potentially, as rooms run out, we will hit a point where some age groups may not be able to return at all. The government guidance talks about an 'ambition' for schools to reopen **from** 1st of June and identifies several initial year groups. However, although there are many vague elements to the guidance, it does state that local risk assessments will determine individual school decisions. We are already aware of a disparate approach across schools due to their unique nature. We are modelling our plans currently given staff availability, the need to manage pupils in isolated 'bubbles' of no more than 10 pupils in the class spaces we have, the need to continue to offer care for the children of key workers and our ability to ensure areas are deep cleaned on a regular basis. We will not be able to offer full weeks for year-groups but will be offering full days. We are currently unable to open Nursery. As the Prime Minister said himself, "baby steps" may be important to allow us to ensure we can act in as safe a manner as possible.

If school is only open part time/on a rota, will other wraparound provision be available?

It is very unlikely any additional wrap around, breakfast club or after school clubs will reopen before the summer, this is due to the need to keep pupils where possible mixing only with other children from their 'bubble'.

Will the same children be allocated the same teacher to reduce social groups? Will staff assigned to teaching groups be consistent and remain the same for full days?

Our models have pupils in one room across the day with the same adult. There are challenges to manage here, including the fact that, as with most schools, we have a number of part time staff. The adult may not be your child's regular teacher and the room may not be the usual classroom. We will endeavour to follow the guidance to ensure there is no social interaction with other 'bubbles' in school. Pupils will play out with the children in their 'bubble' at set times to avoid contact.

How will my child enter school at the start of the day, especially Early Years?

Early Years Pupils Parents will not be allowed to escort children into classrooms /cloak area for obvious reasons. In fact, our youngest children need more thought – like using Velcro or slip on shoes to limit interact and closeness to others and staff, easy close coats etc. Children should also be happy to leave their parents some 2 metres away from the door and meet the staff member waiting to greet them. Although it saddens me greatly we will be unable to coax/peel them off parents as we would normally or lead them by the hand into the building.

Will siblings be allocated the same days to attend school?

If siblings are in one of the year groups that are open, then we will try our best to ensure they will be in on the same allocated days.

If I am a key worker, can my child continue to attend school on the days I am required to be at work?

Yes – however it is likely you will need to choose between them joining their class group ‘bubble’ or remaining in the mixed age Key worker group. This may change once the number of key workers increases over the coming weeks.

Will the list of key workers be expanded now more people are required to go back to work? Not as far as we have been informed, there has been no change to key worker criteria. However, if you require access to this we would ask that you only access it if both parents are key workers and you can not provide other child care, giving the school at least 24 hours notice to ensure we can meet your need.

Can the school realistically be able to keep the 2 metres social distancing for reception children? An honest answer, no. For example neither sites have corridors to allow children to pass each other at 2 metres. The guidance accepts that young children will find social distancing very difficult. We will try our best to reinforce this and Reception provision particularly will have to look very different. Reception pupils will not be able to free flow as normal nor will they have access to the range of resources they currently have as the guidance requests that we limit resources to those that can be easily cleaned.

Will school packed lunches continue or will the school dinner hall open for hot meals? We are currently discussing this issue with our meals provider, however if your child does not return to school we will continue to provide a £15 a week meal voucher for the duration the school remains ‘open’ until the summer holiday.

How will break times/lunch times work? Where will the children eat their meals?

To avoid unnecessary movement around school, lunches will probably be eaten in class at a child’s allotted table. Break times will be staggered to avoid contact on the yards.

If children are going to attend at different times how will this be decided? (Will it be friendship groups or ability or a mixture of both?)

This will depend on the level of the demand, however we are likely to need to split classes into at least 3 groups and different drop off times for each year group, as yet the methodology behind how we do this is not fully decided.

How will drop off and collection work to limit exposure to other families? How will drop offs and pick-ups work for social distancing? There will be staggered drop-off times and pick up times, with only **one adult** escorting a child. Parents will have to maintain social distances and there can be no congregating on the yard, at the school gates and no entry into the school buildings. More details of these arrangements will follow any final decision on our reopening model.

Will my child share materials and resources with other children? Will children have their own dedicated desks and equipment to minimise spread of germs?

No – we will provide children with individual resources for their use only, or we will ensure resources are thoroughly cleaned before re-use. No resources will be allowed from home.

Will the children be in school all day or for a specific portion of the day?

Our models are looking at doing whole days.

If key workers' children can still attend on days when needed are these going to be day's like now – child care or will learning be taking place?

Key worker's children's days will remain in line with current guidance – provision of child care only – understanding that the management of this group contains children across a range of year groups.

If one child/staff has confirmed case of covid 19 do all of the class have to self-isolate for 14 days but not parents?

It is probably the safest to give the instructions as set out in the guidance:

What happens if there is a confirmed case of coronavirus in a setting?

When a child, young person or staff member develops symptoms compatible with coronavirus, they should be sent home and advised to self-isolate for 7 days. Their fellow household members should self-isolate for 14 days. All staff and students who are attending an education or childcare setting will have access to a test if they display symptoms of coronavirus, and are encouraged to get tested in this scenario. Where the child, young person or staff member tests negative, they can return to their setting and the fellow household members can end their self-isolation. Where the child, young person or staff member tests positive, the rest of their class or group within their childcare or education setting should be sent home and advised to self-isolate for 14 days. The other household members of that wider class or group do not need to self-isolate unless the child, young person or staff member they live with in that group subsequently develops symptoms. As part of the national test and trace programme, if other cases are detected within the cohort or in the wider setting, Public Health England's local health protection teams will conduct a rapid investigation and will advise schools and other settings on the most appropriate action to take. In some cases a larger number of other children, young people may be asked to self-isolate at home as a precautionary measure – perhaps the whole class, site or year group. Where settings are observing guidance on infection prevention and control, which will reduce risk of transmission, closure of the whole setting will not generally be necessary.

If a child tests negative for covid 19 in this window can they return to school?

Yes

Can school demonstrate that they can safely and effectively deliver education while being able to support the children's social skills with the practical limitations they have? How can teachers teach effectively without coming into close contact with the children? How will mental wellbeing be addressed when children want to hug/play with their close friends and are unable to?

This will be a significant challenge and it is clear that lessons and teacher delivery will be very different from that which we are used to. We will try our best to make sessions engaging and interesting but pupil/teacher interactions will not be the same as they were. All our staff are very talented and committed to all the children in their care, they will do

their best in difficult circumstances, but it would be dishonest not to accept this is going to be a challenge.

What are the teachers' views about the children returning to school after the 1st June? Do they feel that they can keep themselves safe and the children safe?

It is probably impossible to outline every view, and equally probably not fair if specific personal opinions are shared. However, as teachers and support staff are also family members and parents themselves it is fair to say they share the same anxieties that you as parents do. Safety is a key concern as is the mental well-being of the children in their care. We would love to have all our children back in school, but we can only manage a limited number back on site, that meets socially distancing guidelines and that is in a way that maintains safety for all concerned, children and staff. Staff share many of the concerns that are laid out in these questions.

What are hygiene plans for toilets and handwashing areas (regular cleaning)?

Children will have to have dedicated toilet slots as we must avoid pupils from other groups coming into contact – pupils will be supervised safely as we can't have pupils moving round the building freely. Additional soap and sanitiser will be provided; all groups will have access to sinks and hot water and hands will be washed regularly and after every period spent outside.

What would protocol be if a child injured themselves?

Again, another challenge, however, we as professionals looking after children would do what we are expected to do in our loco parentis role - if we can support the child from a social distance we will, but if not we would support the child, but this will involve us using additional PPE, gloves and other equipment and we would then follow handwash protocols.

Will social distancing be standard, or only if people are symptomatic?

This will be for all at all times until the guidance tells us otherwise.

How will learning restart after months away from school? As teachers will also be planning for home learning, the curriculum will be amended to try and keep both groups of children as closely linked as possible. But it will be a slow start for those who attend school with an emphasis on the mental wellbeing of children.

How can 1 to 1 support be provided with social distancing?

This is a significant challenge and we are awaiting additional advice around this. Some pupils in school have identified SEND needs and they have a dedicated 1:1 worker for some or all of the day. By its nature, 1:1 work involves close proximity working. Clearly, we are looking to reduce risk by reducing contact and trying to work within social distancing guidance. It may be that we can find methods of working with very small social 'bubbles' however, there will need to be risk assessments carried out for some pupils to determine whether we as staff can work in a safe manner and this, in turn, will allow parents also to have their input in the kind of support that can or can't be offered.

How will general movement around school be addressed?

Any movement around school will be limited and supervised with possibly a one-way system at pinch points.

Will staff temperatures be checked on entry to school each day?

The guidance states there is no need for parents to report pupil temperatures on arrival, and we will not be taking staff temperatures on arrival. We will ask all school users to be mindful of the ongoing advice and report any symptoms that may present if any symptoms are present then pupils will be asked to stay away.

What are the plans for those consistently breaching any social distancing rules?

We would have to insist these rules are followed, if not then their place in school would be removed.

Will children be expected to wear uniforms?

Given we would need to ensure pupils arrive in clean clothes each day, we would not be enforcing school uniform rules for any phased reopening. This will allow clothes to be completely changed each day and washed before reuse – unlike school uniform.

How will Y6 transition work now?

I have been informed that the Academy has been providing online transition support and we will clarify this as and when they update us on transition plans moving forward. Y6 staff have completed various tasks set by the Academy to provide them with as much information as they requested so that they get to know you child and their needs as best as we can at this stage.

Should you have any additional questions at this time please feel free to email them to us on p2259.admin@durhamlearning.net