

## Dear Parents

Phased reopening of St Nicholas School from w/b 1<sup>st</sup> June.

I am writing to explain the first phase of reopening as the lockdown eases. This plan and the associated Risk Assessments have been agreed at a meeting of the Board of Governors on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2020.

Our plan to reopen has been based around the following principles:

- To ensure that pupils and staff are as safe as possible from the risk of infection.
- To minimise the spread of any infection within the school, and any consequential risk to a rise in the infection rate in the community at large.
- To give as many pupils as possible the opportunity to have some school based education before the end of the academic year.
- To recognise that social distancing for our pupils is not feasible as a means of controlling infection spread.

And, additionally for us:

- To ensure that pupils become familiar and are able to be safely looked after, in a new and unfamiliar building.

As a special school, we have also been given different advice from mainstream schools about how we are expected to open. The government has said:

‘Special schools, special post-16 institutions and hospital schools will work towards a phased return of more children and young people without a focus on specific year groups.’

Bearing all this mind, our strategy is therefore to work towards full reopening, taking a cautious approach by reducing the amount of contacts within school and putting in place risk reduction measures including stricter hygiene control. This has required extensive risk assessment resulting in classes working as ‘bubbles’ with very limited contact with the rest of the school.

**During the first phase of reopening we will be running a rota system from 4<sup>th</sup> June. This means that all classes will timetabled for 2 days a week; either Monday and Tuesday or Thursday and Friday. School will be closed to class groups on Wednesdays when the school will be deep cleaned.**

Staff will be returning on the 1<sup>st</sup> June, but we will not be opening for remaining pupils until 4<sup>th</sup> June. During this period staff will be trained and prepared staff for the procedures to follow when pupils return, and also be familiarised and trained on the use of the new building.

### **Ongoing care provision for the children of key workers and vulnerable children**

This will be not be running over half term, and will not restart until **Tuesday 2nd June**. This is because we require all staff to be trained together on the 1st June on the risk assessments.

After 2<sup>nd</sup> June, if these children have a class to attend, they will be placed in their class, otherwise they will receive day care as they have up to now.

## Rota of Classes

Having surveyed parents, our understanding is that currently many parents feel it is unsafe for their child to return to school. The government has made it clear that parents will **not** be penalised if they choose to do this. We have devised our rotas based on parents who have told us they are happy for their child to return to school. **If you have reconsidered your initial decision you need to let us know but no changes can be made until 22<sup>nd</sup> June, as it affects the number of children in each bubble.**

### Classes on Rota

| Group A<br>Monday/Tuesday starting 8 <sup>th</sup> June   | Group B<br>Thursday/Friday starting 4 <sup>th</sup> June  |
|---|---|
| Dragonfly (Lauren)<br>Ladybird (Laura McNally)<br>Caterpillar (Laura Hornegold)<br>Squirrel (Becky)<br>Fox (Nikki)<br>Forest (Emma/Vanessa)<br>Meadow (Maggie)<br>Ocean (Rocio)<br>River (Katie/Claire) | Grasshopper (Eleni)<br>Bumblebee (Paula)<br>Butterfly (Abbie)<br>Beetle (Belinda - Elfreda on Maternity leave)<br>Elephant (Frederique)<br>Giraffe (Kat)<br>Hedgehog (Gaynor/Gillian)<br>Orchard (Peju)<br>Valley (Alison/ Melodie) |

## Transport

We are informing transport today about the pupils who need to be transported to school on this rota. We will only give the names of pupils whose parents are happy for their child to return. They have risk assessed their own processes and are planning to limit the numbers of children travelling on each bus to reduce the risk of cross contamination.

If your child was previously at Canterbury Road and you have not yet applied for school transport, you should do so immediately as this will need to be in place if you require it.

## Summary of Risk Assessment

A copy of the school's risk assessment for this phased return is attached.

Parents should be aware that whilst we will follow the procedures arising from this risk assessment, we have limited control over the following areas:

- Pupils who travel on school transport – they are unlikely to be in the bubble they are in during the school day.
- Some staff will travel to school using public transport.
- For parents bringing their own children to school, there will be social distancing enforced during the drop off and pick up period.

This is why strict hygiene control will be in place as individuals enter the building to reduce the risk of cross contamination.

We will also require parents to change their child into clean clothes for each day they are in school. Most children may find the return to school easier if they wear school uniform, however we are not going to enforce the school uniform policy to enable parents to provide clean clothes.

At the moment there is no track and trace system in place following testing. If an individual tests positive, we would need to close down a whole bubble and that child's bus route and monitor those pupils according to advice received from the Health Protection Agency.

### **Child Displaying Symptoms**

If a child displays symptoms in school they will be quarantined, and we will expect them to be collected immediately. **It is very important that we have up to date phone number as well as a second contact number, and that you are contactable when your child is in school.** Any child displaying symptoms at home should be kept at home, and any child displaying symptoms on the bus will not be allowed into school.

### **Pupils coming to the new school**

We understand that many pupils will be confused by the fact they are starting in a new school building. Once they see the familiar faces of their classmates and school staff we hope they will quickly get used to the new school. In order to prepare them for this, we have attached a social story which we hope you will share with your child prior to their return.

If you require clarification on any of the information in this letter, please email the school. We will communicate with parents again on 1<sup>st</sup> June following the final decision by the Government about whether it is safe for schools to return. This announcement is being made on 28<sup>th</sup> May.

We are looking forward to welcoming back more pupils and hope that this first phase will begin a return to normality for the whole school community.

Take care, and stay safe

Best Wishes

Nick Dry & The Senior Leadership Team

St Nicholas School