

Parent guide to returning to school

Government guidance explains the rationale for fully re-opening schools in September to all pupils:

- The prevalence of coronavirus (COVID-19) has decreased;
- The NHS Test and Trace system is up and running;
- Public Health England is clear about the measures that need to be in place to create safer environments within schools;
- Returning to school is vital for children's education and for their wellbeing;
- The risk to children themselves of becoming severely ill from coronavirus is low and there are negative health impacts of being out of school;
- Lower academic achievement translates into long-term economic costs due to having a less well qualified workforce;
- For many households, school closures have also affected their ability to work. As the economy begins to recover, the Government needs to remove this barrier so parents and carers can return to work.
- We have updated our Risk Assessments, acting on the most recent advice from the Government and from Nottinghamshire County Council. School is subject to a heightened cleaning programme and the children in school will have to follow the established protocol of regular handwashing and hygiene.
- The overarching principle applied during this stage will be to reduce the number of contacts between children and between staff. This will be achieved through keeping class groups separate in 'bubbles' and through maintaining distancing between individuals. These are not alternative options and both measures will help. In younger children, the balance will be on separating groups from other groups (adults and children) and for older children, distancing (between adults and children and between children and children). All children in school will be supported to maintain distance and not to touch staff where possible. Both of the approaches (separating groups and maintaining distance) are not seen as 'all-or-nothing' options, and will still bring benefits even where implemented partially.
- The most important message we can get across to parents in order to protect our school community and wider families is: **Stay Alert.**

If you, your child, or anyone in your household, has a new continuous cough and/or a high temperature (above 37.8°C) and/or a loss of, or change in, your/their normal sense of taste or smell YOU MUST STAY AT HOME. Children with any of these symptoms MUST NOT BE SENT TO SCHOOL – this is for the safety of other children, their families and school staff.

The first person in the household to have symptoms of COVID-19 must stay at home for at least **7 days**, but all other household members who remain well must stay at home and not leave the house for **14 days**. The 14-day period starts from the day when the first person in the house became ill.

For anyone else in the household who starts displaying symptoms, they need to stay at home for at least 7 days from when the symptoms appeared, regardless of what day they are on in the original 14 day isolation period.

Staying at home for 14 days will greatly reduce the overall amount of infection the household could pass on to others in the school and wider community.

TEST AND TRACE: The NHS 'Test and Trace' programme is a vital part of the plans to allow more children back into schools. Parents must book a test if they or their children have symptoms via

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-getting-tested>.

All children can be tested, including children under 5, but children aged 11 and under will need to be helped by their parents/carers if using a home testing kit. Details will need to be provided of anyone the person being tested has been in close contact with if they were to test positive for COVID-19 or if asked to do so by NHS Test and Trace.

Those who have been in close contact with anyone who tests positive must self-isolate (e.g. anyone who has had any face to face contact within 1m, any contact within 1-2m for more than 15 minutes, travelled in the same car or other small vehicle...). COVID-19 tests can be booked via this link:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing-and-tracing/> or by phoning NHS 119 (for those without access to the internet). On receiving test results the following action must be taken by the person who has been tested:

- **A negative test result** – if they feel well and no longer have COVID-19 symptoms they can stop self-isolating. Other members of their household can stop self-isolating.
- **A positive test result** – they must follow the stay at home guidance and **MUST** continue to self-isolate for at least 7 days from the onset of their symptoms and then return to school only if they do not have symptoms other than cough or loss of sense of smell/taste. They **MUST** continue to self-isolate if they have a high temperature until it returns to normal. Other members of their household should continue self-isolating for the full 14 days.

From Thursday 3rd September we will be welcoming back all children into school. We are working hard over the next two days to reset the school and establish new bubbles.

We have had to comply with all the guidelines from National Government and revise all previous Covid-19 Risk Assessment. We have prepared by reviewing and amending many current policies, staff training and a reorganisation of the school to comply with infection control / social distancing etc.

I have amended the guide we sent out in June to let you know some of the changes your child may see. Even children who have been here from the beginning of lockdown will see some differences.

I appreciate that the children may be anxious, and the staff are preparing to support through all these different transitions.

Here are the main points about the changes: (some I have shared already)

- There will be separate hubs, they will operate independently of each other.
- Some hubs will be a single classroom and some will have more than one class in.
- The children in each hub will use different entrances to come in and out of school. **No child (or parent) will use the main entrance**
- There will be staggered times for children arriving and leaving school; depending on whether they arrive with parents or on Local Authority transport.
- Children will be discouraged from bringing things from home with them, so please minimise what children bring in with them.
- Classes will be in regular communication with home and your class teacher may do this via a home school diary or a regular email update.
- If they need a favourite toy or object from home (because this helps them settle) it needs to be one that can be cleaned so **no cuddly toys**. (If this is going to be a big issue, please contact your class teacher)
- Obviously, communication books / iPads need to come in to school.
- If your child needs spare clothes, these will need to be sent in daily (we will not be using general spares from school)
- If your child brings in a packed lunch, this can be brought in a lunchbox that can be wiped down or a bag that can then be thrown away in school.

One of the main differences will be arriving and leaving school:

Arriving to school

- All children coming in on home / school transport (Local Authority organised transport) will arrive between 9am – 9.15am at the pupil entrance (back of school).
- At 9.15 parents who are bringing their children in will drive to the pupil entrance (back of the school) and be directed to park by a member of staff in a Hi-Vis jacket. Once all the cars are in and engines off, staff will come to your car and take the children to their hubs.
- Parents walking into school will head to the 'bus shelter' at the front of the school to sign your child in. From there you will be directed by staff to your child's hub entrance. Please do not arrive until 9am as all staff will be in a daily briefing.

Going home from school

- High dependency transport will be arriving and gone by 3pm.
- If any parents wanted to collect their child by vehicle at 2.45 to be leaving by 3pm please inform your class teacher.
- Home school transport will arrive at 3.00pm ready to leave by 3.20pm.

- Any parent collecting their child by foot will wait in the 'bus shelter' from 3.20pm and staff will bring your child to you.
- All parents collecting children in a vehicle must be in school by just after 3.20pm parked up at the back of the school. Children will be brought to the cars by staff. All parents need to leave by 3.30pm
- **Communication:** All communication with school must be by email, text or telephone. Parents cannot visit the school office without an appointment during this time and **MUST NOT** enter the building. All payments should be made via School Money wherever possible.
All the teachers have a school e-mail address and check this on a regular basis. If you wish to communicate with the class teacher this is a good method.

- vicky.caunt@ashlea.notts.sc.uk
- louise.douglas@ashlea.notts.sch.uk
- katie.evans@ashlea.notts.sch.uk
- lisa.brown@ashlea.notts.sch.uk
- stacey.carver@ashlea.notts.sch.uk
- Emma.bottomley@ashlea.ashlea.notts.sch.uk
- samantha.howells@ashlea.notts.sch.uk
- ellie.rogers@ashlea.notts.sch.uk
- luke.skillington@ashlea.notts.sch.uk
- caroline.morrison@ashlea.notts.sch.uk
- james.sheppard@ashlea.notts.sch.uk
- neil.phipp@ashlea.notts.sch.uk
- heather.keating@ashlea.notts.sch.uk
- kate.davies@ashlea.notts.sch.uk
- sandra.gell@ashlea.notts.sch.uk

- **School dinners** will still be available to order and the children will be eating these dinners in their hub group.
- **School Uniform:** The children are expected to wear our normal school uniform. Wearing school uniform supports 'normality' and the re-entry to school after a period of time for many children away from school.
- **Reading books** can now be sent home. This has changed under the latest guidance with the easing of restrictions. However, class reading books will only be sent out on Mondays (following 48 hours of 'quarantine' in school over the weekend) and need to be returned on Fridays. Any books not returned on the Friday will not be swapped until the following Friday/Monday.
- **Medicines:** All medicines must be handed over to the Health Care Assistants; they should not be sent in children's school bags. You need to have completed a consent form before we are allowed to administer medicines. If you have

previously completed one and the medicine dosage and other information has not changed you may not need to do it again. <https://www.ashlea.notts.sch.uk/forms/>

- **Attendance:** The normal rules on school attendance will apply from September, including: the duty of parents to secure that their child attends regularly at the school where the child is a registered pupil (if they are of compulsory school age); schools' responsibilities to record attendance and follow up absence. A very small number of school aged pupils will still be unable to attend schools in line with public health advice because they are self-isolating and have had symptoms or a positive test result themselves; or because they are a close contact of someone who has coronavirus. Where this is the case, the Department for Education expects schools to be able to offer these pupils access to remote education: "School at Home". If our local area sees a spike in infection rates that is resulting in localised community spread, appropriate authorities will decide which measures to implement to help contain the spread. As a school we totally understand that as parents you are going to be anxious about your child returning to school. Hopefully you have already had the opportunity to speak to your class teacher about this. In September we will continue to support you as parents to ensure you are confident in the safety procedures we have put in to place.
- **Off site visits:** We will be reducing off site visits when we return in September. There will be no swimming, hydrotherapy or horse riding for at least the first term and other regular visits e.g. to shops or cafes will not take place until fully risk assessed as safe.

Holiday Challenges

- Decorate a shoe box (or similar) and together select inexpensive materials, photos or objects that make your child feel happy and help them to calm to put in the box. Please send this happiness box into school with them when they return in September. The following link gives you lots of information about happiness boxes and how they are used.

<https://barrycarpentereducation.files.wordpress.com/2020/05/rationale-for-the-happiness-box.pdf>

- All the family to decorate a stone or pebble with a pattern, words or pictures. Please send in the pebbles in September as they are going to be used to create a stone path as a permanent reminder of our journey during this time.

Curriculum

As we plan for the wider opening of school in September, we would like to share with you some information about what our curriculum will look like. We are calling it a recovery curriculum (a term coined by Professor Barry Carpenter) and it acknowledges that there have been big losses to many in our school community during the ongoing pandemic and that these losses of routine, structure, friendship, opportunity and freedom can contribute to our children feeling more anxious. Every child in our school has had a different experience during this time and as a school we are prioritising what the children will need on their return to school.

Wellbeing is at the forefront of our recovery from the Covid-19 crisis. The focus for school in the autumn will be upon ensuring that children are ready to learn and as such social and emotional learning will be prioritised over academic learning. This is because we know that children who are highly anxious cannot learn. We also know that in order to succeed, we need to work in partnership with families and carers; to build on the aspects that have worked so well during lockdown and learn from those things that have not worked so well. We only have to look at the wonderful videos, photos and work from the last few months to know that there is such a lot to celebrate and build upon. Much of this work is now being displayed in school as a record of how the Ash Lea community has come together. We would also like a more permanent record to represent our journey during this time by inviting everyone - pupils, parents, governors and staff - to decorate a pebble or stone which we will then use to build a stone path.

Class staff are currently planning on how they can ensure the return to school is as smooth as possible for all the children in the new term by focusing on:

- Belonging – sharing school/class values, celebrating successes and happy learning times, taking on class responsibilities
- Predictability in the structure of the day – building clear routines so that children know what is happening
- Organisation – ensuring a safe and ordered environment
- Regulation – work on understanding and talking about emotions, physical exercise, sensory processing
- Individualising the learning - some may very quickly settle back into school with little additional support but others may be very anxious and struggle to reengage with school and may need more targeted interventions
- Building and re-establishing relationships – it is a long time since anyone has been in a class group and some groups are changing

One of the strategies we will be using to support our children's emotional regulation is building up a happiness box.

If you have any questions about what the recovery curriculum entails and how this will look for your child, please do get in touch:

sandra.gell@ashlea.notts.sch.uk

The following is a link to a think piece and podcast if you are interested in finding out more about the recovery curriculum.

<https://www.evidenceforlearning.net/recoverycurriculum/>