



Stanley Crook Primary School

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OUR MISSION: TO TRY OUR BEST, TO TELL THE TRUTH, TO LOOK AFTER EACH OTHER AND THE COMMUNITY

"Pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare is OUTSTANDING" (Ofsted, 2019)

14th May 2020

Dear parents/carers,

Re: possible reopening of school to more pupils in June

We know you that you will have seen in the news that schools may reopen on 1 June to Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 pupils, **if** the government thinks it's safe to do so.

It is a very unsettling time for us all. Please be assured that school will reopen **ONLY** if and when we assess that it is safe to do so. The safety and wellbeing of our pupils, staff, families and community is our top priority. There is no such thing as social distancing in a school, however hard we will try. The reason why childhood illnesses spread so quickly in schools is because we are in contact with each other all of the time. I am sometimes asked by parents to keep children apart from each other – I can put children at opposite ends of different classrooms and they are like magnets; they are drawn to each other. It does not matter how many times we tell children to keep apart or away from each other – they physically cannot do it and this is just part of being a child. They are not disobeying instructions; they are just being children.

Following a meeting today of senior staff and teachers of targeted year groups, a detailed action plan has begun to be established to evaluate how effectively government guidance could be implemented at school in order to ensure the safety of pupils, staff and families. In order that the risks posed are reduced as far as it possible, any planned increase to the number of pupils attending school requires a careful, measured and methodical plan that is built around the highest safety standards. Unfortunately, the information from the government, as currently set out, does not yet provide the fine detail to support such a plan. Upon completion, we will share our action plan with you as soon as possible so you know what the school reopening will look like in practice. Precautions we will be taking will include, but will not be limited to:

- Limiting class sizes
- Staggering break times, and pick-up and drop-off times
- Increased cleaning
- Keeping pupils and staff with coronavirus symptoms at home

When we do open the doors of our school again, it will be a very different environment and experience for the children. Government guidance states that we need to have small classes of no more than 15 children, however, due to the physical size of our learning spaces we would not be able to accommodate such a large number in one classroom 'bubble'. This is likely to mean that children accessing school provision will only be able to do so on a part time/rota basis, remaining with the same small group of

children for the duration of their time in school. Children may be split into groups and taught in different classrooms. Vulnerable children and the children of key workers, who have accessed school provision throughout the period of closure, will remain in their existing 'bubble' to minimise the risk of transmission as far as possible. Any additional children of keyworkers who need to access school provision will be placed in the same 'bubble' to further mitigate the risk.

This of course means that some children will have a change of teacher and teaching assistant responsible for them, and it is likely that this will not be the teacher/TA they usually work with. They will be segregated and shielded from the rest of the children in school. They may be in a different classroom to the one they are used to. They will have their own playtime, their own lunchtime and their own start and finish time. They will have their own equipment and stationery. They will not be able to share with others. Many of the activities they are used to accessing, such as water play, sand and playdough for the younger children, cannot be available. Limited provision for breakfast club and wrap-around care will be available **only for the children of keyworker parents**.

If a child or an adult in their group contracts the virus, the whole group will be sent home to self-isolate for 14 days.

If your child is clinically extremely vulnerable, or living with someone who is in this group, they should not come back to school and should continue home learning. If your child is clinically vulnerable (but not clinically extremely vulnerable), you should follow medical advice to decide if they should come back to school. Guidance from the government and Department for Education can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers/reopening-schools-and-other-educational-settings-from-1-june>

Reviewing responses made by parents and staff regarding an early reopening of schools, we are aware that these issues are very real concerns for you and the same issues are the ones that are presenting the most significant challenge for us as a school in planning an reopening.

I want to reassure you that we are not going to be pressuring anyone to send their children to school. The government has announced that any parent not wishing to send their child to school upon reopening will not face a fine. We will keep you updated with all decisions on a further reopening of our school, including our preparations for making sure the school is as safe as possible, so you can make an informed decision. More needs to be known about the impact and risk to children, but we also need to know more about the risk to staff parents and the wider community too.

However, despite having said all of this, we are being asked to try and open our school and we will aim to do this – just as we have kept the school open for children of key workers for the last 2 months. I hope you know us well enough by now to know that we will do our utmost to ensure the safety of all children in our care and to give them the best experience possible. Currently, there is still a huge amount of work to do behind the scenes with risk assessments and planning.

To help us with our preparations, we will be emailing a form later in the week to parents of children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 asking you if you would like your child to access school from 1st June 2020. This is totally optional –there is no pressure on any parent or carer to send their child into school. The staff will continue to provide online work to be completed at home for all year groups, regardless of which classes are in school.

It is important for you to understand that the decision to open the school is not compulsory. The government is asking us to open – the final decision about whether we can do that safely lies in the hands of the Head Teacher and the Governing Body.

In the meantime, the school is still open **only** for vulnerable pupils and the children of key workers. We know some employers will be encouraging you to return to work, but we are not in a position currently to extend places to other children, until we receive further government guidance and advice from the Local Authority.

We would like to thank you for your continuous support in helping your child learn from home. Over the coming days, we will continue to engage with government guidance, union advice and Local Authority support and we will keep you updated once we know more about the planned reopening of schools.

If your child will remain at home beyond 1 June, we'll continue to support you and them with home learning, and meal support for those eligible. We realise that this is a decision that will need to be made individually by each family depending on their own circumstances, and as always we will support you as much as we can no matter what your decision may be.

Please do continue to stay in touch with us about how your child is getting on. If you have any questions, please contact Mrs Wilkinson.

Warm regards,

Mr D. Christie
Headteacher

Mrs R. Wilkinson
Deputy Head
EYFS / Y1 teacher

Mrs D. Martin
SENDCo
Y1/ 2 Teacher

Miss V. Williams
Year 6 teacher

Mrs C. Lawes
Chair of
Governors

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