



St George's C of E School
(Part of SDBE Multi Academy Trust)

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14th July 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

Update on Wider Re-opening of School in September

Thank you for your patience while we waited for further guidance on re-opening schools. On 23rd June the Prime Minister announced that it is his plan that all pupils, in all year groups, will return to school full-time from the beginning of the Autumn term. September will see the reintroduction of mandatory attendance. He also announced a relaxation of social distancing rules in England. He stated that "Our objective is to have got the rate of transmission and incidence down so far that we are able to go forward in a much more normalised way."

I am sure you are as keen as we are to get back to school 'as we know it'. In preparation for the resumption of school on a full-time basis for all children, we are reviewing our risk assessment and considering the additional risks and control measures to enable a return to full capacity in the autumn term. We have created a detailed action plan so you know what the school's reopening will look like in practice.

We will operate in 3 separate hubs, in separate Early Years, KS1 and KS2 buildings with separate staff. Our children will be consistent class groups called bubbles and there will be minimal contact between bubbles.

Start and End of the Day

Recent guidance advises schools to adjust start and finish times as a measure to keep groups apart as they arrive and leave school. In September we are introducing staggered drop-off and collection times to minimize the number of children and adults arriving at the school at the same time.

- EYFS/KS1 - Start 8.50am. Finish 3.00pm
- KS2 - Start 9.00am. Finish 3.15pm.

Other measures in place to minimise the amount of time that different classes are in contact with each other include:

- staggered break times
- shortened lunchtimes to 45 minutes to minimise the amount of time that different classes are in contact with each other

The staggered start, finish times and break times will not reduce the amount of overall teaching time.

Staggered Start for EYFS

Staggering the start dates of new nursery and reception class children is considered 'best practice' by many early years' organisations and advisors. Staggered start dates has been the norm for many years at St George's.

Children are started in smaller groups. Small groups will allow staff to deal more effectively with any anxieties and also allow them to explain, organise, and operate the systems we are putting in place to try to ensure a safer learning environment for very young children eg drop-off and pick-up procedures, handwashing systems etc. Staff can also more quickly assess the social/emotional needs of individual children, which can then feed into the recovery curriculum.

New children to our nursery and reception who attended settings other than St George's will start on the first day of term. The other nursery and reception children will enter in small groups over the next four days of term being already familiar with the St George's EYFS setting. All nursery and reception children will be in school within the first full week of the new school term. There are still spaces available for full-time Nursery provision – please contact the school office.

Before and After School Provision

We are intending to open up our Breakfast Club before school provision from September, however, we will not be opening up any After School Clubs until after the Autumn half-term. You will be receiving further details on this from the main office in due course.

Organisation

On 2nd July Education Secretary Gavin Williamson announced that for nurseries, childminders, and other early years providers, restrictions on group sizes will be lifted from 20 July, increasing capacity for more children to return to school. Whilst it is not possible to ensure a totally risk-free environment, minimizing contacts and mixing between people reduces transmission of coronavirus. In addition to changes to start, finish and break times, we will also:

- organise children in consistent class groups (bubbles)
- minimise contact between bubbles
- advise pupils and staff to practice social distancing
- organise classrooms and move furniture to maintain space between desks
- ensure children work at the same desk for all lessons
- reduce movement around the classroom
- carefully consider how play equipment is used ensuring it is cleaned frequently between use and that multiple bubbles do not share it or use it simultaneously
- remove soft furnishings, soft toys and equipment which are difficult to clean

All of these measures will help to limit the amount of people your child mixes with and so lessens the risk of transmission of Covid-19.

Health, safety and well-being

Our first priority is to ensure the health, safety and well-being of our children, parents and staff. This will be a huge effort for all concerned as the Government guidance 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.' We recognize that younger children will not be able to maintain social distancing, and it is acceptable for them not to distance within their group. However, we will try to ensure that groups remain distanced from each other.

When the guidance is fully implemented many of the classroom environments, routines, lessons, and relationships our children have come to know will be very different. We hope you will take the time to prepare your own child for this ahead of the transition period.

Attendance

September will see the reintroduction of mandatory attendance. As part of this, on 1st August, the government will pause its advice for vulnerable people to shield if there is a continued decline in coronavirus transmission rates. This means that pupils affected by those rules should be able to return to school. However, some pupils may still be unable to attend because they are complying with clinical and/or public health advice given to them. If that were the case, we will continue to offer access to remote education that is integrated into school curriculum planning.

Hygiene

We have also put in place several measures to ensure cleanliness and hygiene as this is an important part of limiting transmission of the disease. Children will be required to wash their hands on entry to the classroom and then again at regular intervals throughout the day. Outside sinks have also been installed in EYFS, KS1 and KS2 playground.

Staff members will be regularly cleaning touch points around the classroom and school such as light switches and backs of chairs. Children will be given a pack of equipment to use for their learning, which they must not share with others. Some classroom items will be removed as they cannot be easily cleaned such as soft furnishings and equipment with intricate parts. Each group will be given a set of outdoor equipment that will be cleaned between uses and used only by that group. Children will not be permitted to bring any items in from home such as pencil cases. Initially they will also not be able to take items home such as reading or home learning books. We will review this regularly and, in the meantime, the school has secured access to Oxford Owls which will allow children to read high-quality e-books at home. There is further information regarding this on all class website pages.

Whilst guidance says that bags are permitted, our guidance to parents is that children can bring a bag if they need to bring a packed lunch and a water bottle. No other items are to be brought in.

To ensure that water bottles do not get mixed up between children, we will NOT be using the school water bottles. Children can bring their own water bottle with their name clearly labelled. They can refill this in school, but will need to take it home each day and ensure it is cleaned thoroughly ready to bring in again.

Curriculum

In line with government guidance, substantial modification to the curriculum may be needed at the start of the year, so teaching time prioritizes addressing significant gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills. Curriculum planning will be informed by an assessment of pupils' educational needs and will be in the best interests of our pupils.

For pupils in **early years** we will:

- focus on the prime areas of learning, including communication and language; personal, social and emotional development; and physical development.
- Assess gaps in language, early reading and maths, particularly ensuring children's acquisition of phonic knowledge and extending their vocabulary

For pupils in **KS1 and KS2** we will:

- Identify gaps and re-establish good progress in phonics, reading, increasing vocabulary, writing and maths
- Identify opportunities across the curriculum so they read widely
- Develop their knowledge and vocabulary
- Keep the curriculum broad, so that the majority of pupils are taught a full range of subjects over the year, eg. science, humanities, PE, the arts.

The aim will be to return to the customary curriculum for all pupils by summer term 2021.

Lunches

The school kitchen will be fully open from the start of the autumn term and will comply with the guidance for food businesses on coronavirus. The lunch hall will be divided into hubs and there will be staggered lunch times in order to allow for bubbles not to mix. Children will be seated at tables with only children from their class bubble. Separate entrance and exit points for key stages will also be in use. Normal legal requirements will apply about the provision of food including for those eligible for free school meals or universal infant free school meals.

School Uniform

We relaxed the uniform policy while only certain categories of pupils were attending in June and July. From September, however, children will be expected to be in school uniform. If there are

any issues related to this, please contact Lee Franklin, our Parent Support Advisor. We also have some pre-owned uniform that is in very good condition.

Behaviour Expectations

The Government has introduced the protective measures as a way of ensuring that transmission levels stay low. The aim is to ensure the safety of your child, members of staff and reduce risk of transmission back into your families. As such, the Behaviour Policy has been amended to reflect these changes. We will, therefore, expect children to adhere to the new rules and systems we have put in place. Ahead of September, it would be valuable to discuss the measures the school will put in place and the sanctions attached to them so they know what to expect when they return. A risk assessment will be completed on children who we feel it is needed to ensure they are able to comply with protective measures. ***Please see the addendum attached.***

If a child has symptoms in school

If a child becomes ill, we will follow the very specific guidance which may involve a whole class, or even the whole school, being told to self-isolate. ***Further information to follow.***

In case of a further closure

While the aim is to have all pupils back at school in September, we will also need to plan for the possibility of a local lockdown. If our local area sees a spike in infection rates, we may be advised to close temporarily for most pupils like before. If this happens, we will have a contingency plan in place to offer immediate remote education for all pupils at home and ensure continuity of education.

We are aware that things change by the day and we approach the new academic year with hope and caution. I can assure you that we will be making the decisions we feel are right for our school, planning for the school to be as safe as possible for children, parents and staff. If you have any questions or queries or there are any areas you would like further clarification on, please email admin@stgeorges.lewisham.sch.uk or contact the school office.

Thank you for continuing to support us and our school community at this difficult time and for your continuous support in helping your child learn from home. I look forward to welcoming you and your children all back in September.



Ms. K MacAlpine
Interim Headteacher