

# Coronavirus – Frequently Asked Questions for parents



Last updated: 21<sup>st</sup> May 2020

## **1. How will you keep my child safe?**

We have introduced the following measures in line with government guidance for safe working in education, including:

- changing classroom layouts so that desks and chairs are spaced as far apart as possible
- staggering break and lunchtimes
- creating 'bubble' groups with a maximum of 8 children, one teacher, and if required, two teaching assistants, who will remain with that group for a minimum of a week
- keeping each of the 'bubble' groups away from others to limit the mixing of groups

We will continue to work together with your children to maintain good hygiene practices, with children washing their hands throughout the day for at least 20 seconds with soap, when they arrive in school; catching coughs and sneezes with tissues and washing hands; washing hands before eating; and encouraging children to avoid touching their eyes, nose and mouth. Resources will not be shared between children until they have been cleaned, and frequently touched objects will be wiped regularly by staff.

The government has recognised 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'. Furthermore, there are some children for whom, in order to keep them safe, it will not always be possible to maintain the recommended distance of 2 metres. We have therefore worked through the Government's 'hierarchy of measures' as set out in the [guidance Implementing protective measures in education and childcare settings](#).

We will continue not to have visitors in school. Any external people entering school will be those providing essential maintenance services, in-line with our duty to provide a safe premises. They will be expected to follow our hygiene protocols and will only work in areas of the school where children and staff are not present. We have strict protocols in place in order to receive essential deliveries.

## **2. If not all children can return to school, is it safe for any children?**

The Government guidance for parents and carers 'Opening schools and educational settings to more pupils from 1 June', states 'We want to get all children back into education as soon as the scientific advice allows because it is the best place for them to learn, and because we know it is good for children's mental wellbeing to have social interactions with other children, carers and teachers'. The guidance also sets out the latest scientific advice to government which is:

- 'there is high scientific confidence that children of all ages have less severe symptoms than adults if they contract coronavirus and there is moderately high scientific confidence that younger children are less likely to become unwell if infected with coronavirus
- limiting the numbers of children going back to school and college initially then gradually increasing numbers, guided by scientific advice, reduces the risk of increasing the rate of transmission'

You can read the full guidance [here](#).

### **3. Do I have to send my child to school if I share a household with people who are shielding?**

You do not have to send your child to school if a member of your household is shielding due to being in one or more of the clinically extremely vulnerable categories that the Government has outlined. We recommend that you follow the Government guidance if you share a household with a person in this category. You can access the full guidance [here](#). Your child will be able to access online learning whilst they remain at home, which is the same offer that children attending school will receive.

### **4. Will regular hand washing be monitored by staff?**

Handwashing is built into the normal school routine. Staff will monitor the pupils that they are working with and ensure that they are washing their hands with soap for at least 20 seconds when they arrive in school, that they are catching coughs and sneezes with tissues and then washing hands, and that they are washing their hands before eating. Staff will also encourage children to avoid touching their eyes, nose and mouth. There will be posters reminding children of how to wash their hands in the toilets and staff will supervise handwashing before children eat and visit the toilets.

### **5. Will the school have enough supplies of hand sanitiser etc?**

The school will ensure that it monitors its supplies of hand sanitiser, soap and other essential products that are needed to maintain good hygiene. The Department for Education are aware that some items will be in high demand and have a contact email for schools should they have difficulty in sourcing key products.

### **6. Will children's temperature be checked on entry?**

No. We ask that families ensure that they keep their children at home if they are exhibiting the symptoms of the virus, which are a new continuous cough or a high temperature (37.8 degrees). It is also important that children isolate for 14 days if a member of their household develops COVID 19 symptoms from the first day these symptoms occurred.

### **7. What information will I get to support my child in preparing for a return to school?**

We will advise parents of the procedures and routines in place and what families can do to help us to keep both children and adults safe in school. We know that children will be excited to see their teachers and friends and we will ensure they are inducted back into school life so that they understand the new routines and expectations whilst we operate within the COVID 19 period.

### **8. How much notice will we be given to prepare for a return to school?**

It will be the Government's decision as to when schools will open more widely for children beyond the current groups (the children of key workers, those with an Education, Health and Care Plan, and those with a named social worker). The Government are proposing that schools open more widely on 1<sup>st</sup> June for children in Reception, year 1 and year 6, which is in addition to the existing groups. The Government has stated that this will be subject to the 5 key tests that they have set justifying these changes, which are:

1. making sure the NHS can cope
2. a sustained and consistent fall in the daily death rate
3. rate of infection decreasing to manageable levels
4. ensuring supply of tests and PPE can meet future demand
5. being confident that any adjustments would not risk a second peak that would overwhelm the NHS

**9. How will I balance myself returning to work and potentially a phased return to school for my child?**

We would encourage you to let us know about your work situation and will do our best to accommodate individual circumstances, as far as is possible.

**10. Will my child be attending school every day?**

No – because we are a small school, we do not have the space to accommodate all of the year groups that the Government has advised should return, we will put a timetable in place, which will be shared with you as soon as possible.

**11. Is school open at the normal times?**

During week commencing Monday 1<sup>st</sup> June, St Joseph's will open to children from Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> June for half days for children in specific year groups (as detailed in letter dated 22/05). From Monday 8<sup>th</sup> June, school will open for whole days with staggered starts and ends to each day operating, to ensure social distancing measures can be met. Details of these times and the school timetable will be shared as soon as possible.

**12. Will my child still get a school lunch?**

Yes - your child will still be able to have a school lunch. The Local Authority has taken the decision with our catering provider to arrange schools into hubs, with one school preparing packed lunches for the other schools within its hub. This means that currently your child will be entitled to a packed lunch at lunchtime. If your child is entitled to free school meals you will receive vouchers for the days that your child is not in school.

**13. How do I manage one of my children being in but possibly not another, due to the staggered approach?**

Unfortunately, we will only be able to open for the groups of children determined by the Government which are currently Reception, Year 1 and Year 6. We understand that this could cause difficulties for many of our families. Children whose parents are both keyworkers children, those with a named social worker and those with an EHCP will of course continue to be entitled to attend our Hub provision.

**14. If my child is not in school due to a rota system, will they still be expected to complete home learning? How will this reflect what is taking place in school?**

If your child is not in school they will be expected to complete the home learning provided as far as is possible in relation to your family's individual circumstances. The home learning provided will mirror the learning provided in school.

**15. Will my child be taught by their usual teacher?**

Children will be taught by their usual teacher as far as possible.

**16. How many staff will be with my child?**

Groups will be organised into a maximum of 8 pupils with one teacher and, if required, two teaching assistants. Some children may have 1:1 support if this is a requirement of their Education Health and Care Plan.

**17. Will my child with an Education Health and Care Plan still have 1:1 support all day? Will this be their usual 1:1 support or different people?**

Where possible, schools will endeavour to keep staffing consistent but this may not be possible due to the complexities of rotas and the number of staff who may be self-isolating.

**18. Will my child have to wear a mask?**

Government guidance 'Safe working in education, childcare and children's social care settings, including the use of personal protective equipment (PPE)' states that PPE is not needed in the majority of situations within school and should only be worn where usually worn. You can read the full government guidance [here](#).

### **19. Will you have tests available for pupils?**

The Government has provided a service through which to apply for tests for:

- An essential worker with coronavirus symptoms
- Those aged 65 or over with coronavirus symptoms
- Someone who cannot work from home and has coronavirus symptoms.

Anyone with coronavirus symptoms can apply if they live with an essential worker, a person aged 65 or over, or someone who travels to work. You can apply for a test if you have a clinical referral from NHS 111 online. Please see full guidance [here](#).

### **20. Will teachers be tested?**

As essential workers, teachers can apply for a test through the government scheme if they have coronavirus symptoms. If school staff have symptoms and are due to be in school, they are asked to follow government guidance and self-isolate in accordance with their circumstances. Please see full guidance [here](#). The School maintains a record of staff absences as part of our normal attendance procedures and have adapted this for COVID-19, in accordance with government guidance, in order to support staff on when it is appropriate for them to return.

### **21. Will children be tested if unwell?**

The Government scheme has now been extended to testing children aged 5 and over. If children experience symptoms of the virus which are a new continuous cough or a high temperature (38.5 degrees or above,) they should stay at home and follow government [guidance](#). Follow NHS guidance and call 111 if you are worried about a baby or child. If they seem very unwell, are getting worse, or you think there is something seriously wrong, call 99. Do not delay getting help if you're worried. Trust your instincts. See NHS guidance [here](#).

### **22. How will you ensure social distancing? How can lessons be undertaken with social distancing expectations?**

The Government guidance recognises 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 have worked through the hierarchy of measures' as set out in the guidance [Implementing protective measures in education and childcare settings](#).

Classroom layouts have been adapted to facilitate social distancing with children seated at desks that are as far apart as possible. Teachers will endeavour to maintain a 2 metre distance from children provided it is safe to do so. Assemblies will take place virtually. Break times have been staggered to reduce the number of children using the playground and arrangements have been made for playground activities that will ensure social distancing can continue. The small groups of children that have been established will not be able to mix with other small groups.

### **23. What will happen if there is a confirmed case of COVID in school?**

If there is a confirmed case in school we will follow the Government guidance for educational settings which is [here](#).

### **24. What will happen if cases start to rise again?**

We will continue to follow government guidance and direction.

**25. Who will help children when upset or injured?**

Staff will continue to help children when they are upset or injured. Staff will be provided with PPE for such circumstances in order to help reduce the potential spread of the virus, as it will not be possible to maintain a 2 metre distance in these circumstances, and the safety and well-being of your child in this context will require a different approach from staff. Staff have been trained in the use of PPE for these circumstances. The advice that we have sent to parents includes explaining to children about how these situations will be best managed.

**26. Will there be a defined protocol for us to follow if a household member develops coronavirus symptoms?**

If a member of your household develops coronavirus symptoms we ask that you inform the school that your child will be absent due to the fact that you will be following the Government's staying at home guidance [here](#).

**27. What are you doing to ensure the school is cleaned regularly? How often will classrooms and halls be cleaned?**

The school is cleaned every day by our contracted cleaning company. We will regularly wipe frequently touched surfaces and handles throughout the day. We are following the government guidance for cleaning in non healthcare settings. You can read the full guidance [here](#).

**28. How will you disinfect items that are used by more than one child between use?**

Resources will only be used by one child at a time. They will be wiped by the teacher with disinfectant before they are used by another child. The use of resources in Reception will be restricted so that these can be cleaned at the end of each day. Hand washing after engaging with equipment will be key in the early years.

**29. How will you manage toilets being used by a lot of people with no cleaning in between?**

Staff will supervise handwashing after children have used the toilet. Staff will supervise the numbers of children entering and exiting the toilets in order to maintain social distancing.

**30. How are you going to manage the children at playtime and lunchtime?**

Playtime and lunchtimes will be staggered in order to maintain social distancing but at the same time enabling children to get fresh air and have a break from the classroom. Teachers will remind children about how they can interact with their friends on the playground, according to the small groups that they have been organised into. Appropriate activities and resources will be out in the playground for children to be assigned too. Once this has been used it will need to be cleaned before the next group of children are in the playground.

**31. How will movement around school work?**

Children will spend the majority of their time in their classroom with individual desks arranged as far apart as possible. They will line up and walk at 2 metre distance, as far as possible, when transitioning to the playground at break times. Whilst eating their lunch in the school hall, children will remain with the other pupils as well as the adults from their 'bubble'. The furniture will be thoroughly cleaned between sittings. A timetable for all transitioning (ie moving to/from break and lunch) will be in place to ensure that individuals and groups do not pass anywhere in the school premises or grounds.

**32. How will you manage dropping off and going home times?**

When two year groups are timetabled to attend school on the same day, drop off and pick up times will be staggered – parents/carers will be advised of these times along with details of when year groups are timetabled to attend. Children will be collected from and brought to the main school gates by staff. They will wait in the playground in designated areas that ensure social distancing before entering with staff, or leaving the school grounds at the end of the day with a parent/carer.

**33. I usually bring my child to school using public transport and don't feel that this is safe. What support will I get in getting my child to school?**

If public transport is your means of bringing your child to school and you do not wish to use it, please inform the school. Home learning will be arranged for your child if your decision is to keep them at home. You may find the Government's safer travel guidance for passengers helpful, which you can access [here](#).

**34. Why can't my child continue with online learning until the end of the academic year?**

The Government states 'We want to get all children back into education as soon as the scientific advice allows because it is the best place for them to learn, and because we know it is good for children's mental wellbeing to have social interactions with other children, carers and teachers'. The guidance also sets out the latest scientific advice to government which is:

- 'there is high scientific confidence that children of all ages have less severe symptoms than adults if they contract coronavirus and there is moderately high scientific confidence that younger children are less likely to become unwell if infected with coronavirus
- limiting the numbers of children going back to school and college initially then gradually increasing numbers, guided by scientific advice, reduces the risk of increasing the rate of transmission'

You can read the full guidance [here](#).

**35. Will you still provide home learning if my child does not attend school due to shielding or isolation?**

Home learning will be provided for all children in these circumstances. Please ensure that you make the school aware of your situation that this may be recorded. Home learning will mirror the offer that children access in school.

**36. Will you still provide home learning if attendance is staggered, phased or done on a part time basis?**

Yes we will. Home learning will mirror the offer that children access in school.

**37. Will the school join classes if they don't have the staff on a temporary basis?**

We may need to join classes according to staffing available. All decision-making will be routed in ensuring the safety of children and adults. Class sizes will be a maximum of 8 children and these small groups will not mix with other small groups. A teacher, and if required, two teaching assistants, will be allocated to each small group, which they will stay with for a minimum period of a week, this arrangement is to reduce the mixing of pupils and staff.

**38. If work at home is the same as in school, why should I take the risk to send my child in?**

The Government states 'We want to get all children back into education as soon as the scientific advice allows because it is the best place for them to learn, and because we know it is good for children's mental wellbeing to have social interactions with other children,

carers and teachers'. The guidance also sets out the latest scientific advice to government which is:

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You can read the full guidance [here](#).

We are taking all necessary measures to keep our schools as safe as possible.

**39. The curriculum includes activities like PE and technical subjects which involve movement around a classroom and sharing of equipment. Will these subjects continue?**

Yes they will but the sharing of equipment will not feature as part of these sessions.

**40. Will I be prosecuted for non-attendance if I don't send my child to school?**

No - you will not be prosecuted for non-attendance.

**41. How will you ensure all children stick to the rules? What supervision ratios will you be operating? Will there be changes to the behaviour policy?**

We recognise that the rules can seem confusing for children and so we will regularly remind them about how to keep themselves safe in school in an age-appropriate way. The format of the school day is also organised so as to best enable pupils to follow the rules. Our principles, values, expectations and standards of behaviour will remain the same. It is important that children feel that these are consistent.

**42. Will the policy on school uniform be relaxed as my child has grown and I'm unable to purchase new?**

School will be supportive in all circumstances.

**43. Will I continue to get Free School Meal vouchers for the days my child isn't in school?**

Yes - you will continue to receive Free School Meal vouchers if your child is not in school and you are entitled to receive them.

**44. Will my child be allowed a school lunch? How will you ensure that this is safe?**

Children will be able to have a school lunch. Lunches will be served in classrooms, lunchbreaks will be staggered in order to facilitate social distancing. Marks have been set out at 2 metre distances to enable children to queue at a distance to collect their food. Staff serving will maintain a 2 metre distance.

**45. My child has suffered a bereavement – what support will be available?**

We have a bereavement policy and training planned that will guide all staff in situations such as these. We recognise that this could be a very traumatic time for children and families and are fully prepared to support everyone who needs it. This may include signposting or referral to specialist services.

**46. How will you cope with the social, emotional and mental health issues?**

We have reshaped our curriculum to ensure children are given more time to explore concerns and issues that may arise or have arisen during this crisis.

**47. Will the school be open over the summer holiday? Will transition camp run in the Summer holidays to help my Year 6 child transition successfully?**

We will follow government guidance on the arrangements for school summer holidays and will update parents with the details as soon as we know more from the Government. We are in communication with secondary schools to facilitate transition of year 6 pupils to their secondary schools.