

Dear Parents

You will probably be aware, from information in the news that schools may reopen on 1st June to some year groups. The Government have said this should happen if they are confident that infection rates for Covid-19 continue to fall. I know that this is a very unsettling time for everyone and that many of you are unsure about whether you are comfortable with the prospect of your child returning. These concerns are understandable and we have been planning how to make the school as safe as possible for our school community – staff, pupils and parents.

I am sure that you have a number of questions and I hope to answer some of these in the outline below which give information about what the expectations are and what this may look like for you and your child. A gradual return to school will allow us to carefully adapt to the new ways of working that will be inevitable for all of us. We do not have all the answers and this will not be a return to school as the children know it because of the need to minimise the potential for the spread of Covid-19 and ensure the safety of everyone concerned by following guidance on social distancing for educational settings.

As a school we are committed to doing our utmost to ensure the safety of everyone. Here are some of our plans:

- We will be minimising contact by ensuring that each group of returning children are placed in a 'pod' of no more than 15 children with a teacher. Each pod will not be permitted to interact with other pods. Each pod will have its own designated classroom and outdoor space.
- A one way system will be in operation for movement around the site and the building to prevent contact between groups and to help children and parents enter and leave the site safely.
- Should any member of a pod exhibit any sign of infection, the school must be notified immediately and the individual child or member of staff must not come to school. If this happens during school time, the school will contact parents of other children in this group. If a child or staff member for a pod tests positive for the infection the rest of that group will be sent home and advised to self-isolate for 14 days. No child will be permitted back in school until they have completed the required time period for isolation. (7 days if you have a positive test.)
- The children may not be with their class teacher in their pod but are likely to be with other children in their class.
- The layout of classrooms will be changed to spread children out.
- Mixing between groups will be reduced through staggered drop off and collection times as well as staggered breaks and lunchtimes.
- We will promote regular hand washing for at least 20 seconds with running water and soap
- We will promote the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach with everyone
- We will be cleaning more frequently, to get rid of the virus on frequently touched surfaces, such as door handles, table tops, play equipment and taps.

Further Questions

Is attendance at school compulsory for children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 6?

Whilst we would like to see as many children as possible in these year groups attending school, parents will not be penalised if they choose not to send their child at this time.

Can children of key workers attend school even if they are not in the priority year groups?

Children who are currently attending are permitted to continue attending school, regardless of which year group they are in. If your child is in one of the priority year groups they will be put into a pod with other children from their class. The school will need parents/ carers to provide evidence of keywork status before any other children are permitted to attend.

If you have been informed that you should now return to work and you are personally classified as a key worker, we will require a letter from your employer stating this and we will contact you. We may not be able to meet all requests because of our staffing capacity. If there is someone at home or working from home, we expect the children of non-attending year groups to be at home. This is to support the management of school capacity

Can children with an EHCP attend?

Any child who has an EHCP is entitled to attend school regardless of their age group as is currently the case. If your child has an EHCP and you have concerns about sending them back to school, please arrange to speak to Mrs O'Callaghan prior to them starting.

Can children with a social worker attend?

Any child who has a social worker is entitled to attend school regardless of their age group as is currently the case.

We also have a small number of children who have also been attending school. If we have contacted you about this, your child may continue to attend.

Unfortunately, we are not currently in the position to extend places to children in other year groups including children in the nursery.

When will my child return to school?

Year 6	Tuesday 2 nd June
Year 1	Thursday 4 th June
Reception	Monday 15 th June

What will the school day look like?

We will operate staggered start and end times as follows

Reception	Start – 9.40am	End - 2.45pm (1pm on a Friday)
Year 1	Start – 9.15am	End - 3.10pm (1.15pm on a Friday)
Year 6	Start – 9.00am	End – 3.30pm (1.30pm on a Friday)

Please note that the school will be closing early on a Friday to enable a deep clean of the building to be carried out for the following week.

The children will be given an age appropriate induction into the new expectations.

What happens at drop off in the morning?

We are asking Year 6 pupils to either walk to school on their own or a parent can drop them at the gate so they enter the site on their own. They will be greeted at the gate by a member of staff and directed to their room.

Only one parent per child/children will be permitted on the site for Year 1 and Reception children. They will be directed to the designated gate to enter the site in Orchard Road or a particular side of the path at the gate in Cromwell Road. The children will be greeted by a member of staff and will be expected to stay in an assigned area, maintaining social distancing in their line. Parents must leave their child at the designated drop off point and follow the one way system out of the designated gate in Orchard Road or the exit path to the gate in Cromwell Road. The children will be accompanied to the allocated teaching room for their pod.

What happens at the end of the day?

Year 6 children should walk straight home at 3.30 or their parents can greet them at the gate.

Reception and Year 1 children will be accompanied to their designated area in the playground where parents can collect them and follow the one way system off the site. Again, only one parent should collect your child from school.

Will my child be with their regular class teacher?

No – As classes must be split into smaller pods with no more than 15 children per group this is not something we can guarantee.

What will learning look like in school?

As classes may not have their own teacher it will be impossible for learning to be comparable to a 'normal' school day. Teachers will plan work for the group which will be very similar to what is being set for the children who remain at home. All children in the same year group will be focussing on the same learning and, whether at school or at home, will continue to learn key skills.

What work will be provided for children not attending school?

We will continue to set work and direct you to the resources currently used for home learning. These resources will also be used for the children at school. You will still be able to collect learning packs from school.

What guarantee can you provide that social distancing will be observed?

The reality is that where children are concerned, especially those who are very young, this is extremely difficult. We will however be implementing the government guidance for children returning to school and will have no more than 15 children in each group. Each group will have their allocated break time and lunchtime and will have a designated space in the playground with their own play equipment at these times. Children within each pod will be reminded that they are not to touch each other and must maintain social distancing. Children will not be able to cross between zones and interact with children in other pods.

What happens if my child is upset, or falls over and requires first aid?

We will always do our best to observe social distancing but this is not always possible in real life situations at school. As such we will comfort children and administer first aid, during which time it would not be possible to maintain social distancing. If a child is upset for any other reason we will do our best to comfort and reassure them.

What should my child wear to school?

Parents are advised by the government to wash their child's clothing after each school day so we will not be insisting on wearing school uniform each day but their clothing should be suitable for a school environment or their uniform. They are expected to wear school uniform or their own sensible clothes but on days when they have PE they should wear their PE kit to school so they do not have to change during the school day.

What equipment will my child need to bring to school?

The children should not bring anything in from home. Each child will be issued with a plastic wallet containing essential stationery which will remain on their desk for only that child to use. The water fountains will be turned off so the children should bring in a labelled water bottle which will be filled from jugs at the start of the afternoon session after lunch. If they have a packed lunch this should be provided in a small bag which will be kept under their desk or on the back of their chairs. If the children bring a coat to school this will be hung on the back of their chairs.

What happens if my child returns to school but they are unhappy and would rather be at home?

If you make the decision not to continue to send your child after they have started back we would ask that you inform the school of this. Children would not then be permitted to return unless agreement has been reached with the school beforehand.

Can I send my child for a few days a week rather than for the whole week?

Unfortunately not.

Will children and staff be provided with masks?

Masks will not be worn in school and are not advisable for young children who are more likely to keep touching them making them more likely to spread infection. However, masks may of course be worn by your child on their journey to school if you wish.

What if I change my mind and would like my child to return to school?

We ask you to give us 48 hours notice prior to bringing your child back to school if you have previously said your child will not be returning. Please do not send your child in if you have not previously informed the school. Please contact the school office so that we can ensure we have appropriate staffing levels and can still adhere to social distancing arrangements.

What should I do if I need to speak to someone in school?

The office team are available via telephone and email (absence@tops.hounslow.sch.uk) from 8.15 to 4.00pm each day. In order to maintain social distancing please do not come to the school office unless you have a confirmed appointment.

I hope you can see that we have given a great deal of consideration to the children returning to school and feel a little more informed about our plans. If you have further questions please email them to the school office and we will do our best to help you. Please note that these plans may change if there is any change with our risk assessments or the government does not consider it safe to return at this time.

Finally I would like to congratulate you all on your resilience at this difficult time and thank you for your continued support and cooperation.

Yours sincerely

Christine Haslam
Headteacher.