**Dear Parents**

 I hope this information reaches you well rested and in good health!

We are greatly looking forward to seeing you and as I am sure you are all aware CV-19 is still very much part of our daily life and we therefore have to continue to take great precautions to stay as safe as possible.

With our September start fast approaching, I’m sure that a number of parents may have questions about how we are approaching things at school. We have drawn together a Q&A format that we thought may be useful for parents. We hope we have covered the main points, though there may be more questions that follow. It is important to note that this is our starting point and that things may change over (or even before!?) the first few weeks. There will be adjustments and alterations in response to situations changing, finding better (or safer) ways of doing things and simply to address mistakes or unforeseen issues.

We will communicate these as swiftly as possible when they occur.

The school has placed a full version of our risk assessment on the school website.

**SOME REMINDERS FIRST**

We will be operating school similarly to Rainbow school to enable everyone to be as safe as possible.

The Government has recognised that younger children cannot socially distance but are recommending we continue to use the POD/Bubble system in school.

We have made the decision to continue to have sister classes together as they share the cloakroom and toilets, this will enable us to continue to have separate outdoor areas for each POD.  Each class will be separate inside their classrooms for learning.  This year each class is the name of an author to celebrate our love of books and reading at The Ellis.

F1 Nursery       PINK POD

F2 Delightful Donaldsons    RED POD

Y1 Wise Woollvins          **ORANGE POD**

Y2 Perfect Potters

Y3 Fantastic Fletchers       YELLOW POD

Y4 Wonderful Walliams

Y5 Creative Cowells          GREEN POD

Y6 Determined Dahls

We will continue with our one way system around school and parents will say goodbye at the drop-off gates. There will be a member of staff on the main gate and the gate near F2 to support the children saying goodbye and remind everyone of the one way system.

F1, F2, Y1 and Y2 enter school from School Street and drop off at the red gate near F2.  F1 go to the Nursery gate.  All parents leave following the Foundation field and walking up to the main gate.

If you need to drop a KS2 child off second you leave them in the drive area to walk around the Y5/Y6 side of school and leave via the main gate.

 If you are just dropping off a KS2 child please leave at the main gate, when there is a staff member there.

This is a great opportunity for everyone to start the park and walk for 5 minutes scheme.  It enables everyone to come to school for their allocated time and will ease congestion and therefore help the safety of everyone at drop off and collecting time.

No cars are allowed to drive into school or turn near the main gate during drop off and pick up times.

**BREAKFAST CLUB**

Please only book into breakfast club if it is absolutely essential as we are trying to reduce numbers as much as possible.  Initially breakfast club will be in the hall and we will have a separate area in the hall for each pod.  We will use the front door for breakfast club starting at 8am.  To help us organise can you please let us know what time you will be arriving.

**AFTER SCHOOL CLUBS**

We will not have any clubs after school during Autumn 1 and we will review for Autumn 2, after October half term.

***To keep school as safe as possible for all our families and staff we all need to respect the social distancing rules that have been made by the Government in and out of school.***

Your cooperation and support is, as always, appreciated in this matter.

Please do not hesitate to make contact if you have further questions that need answering before your return on the 2nd September.

Keep safe

Mrs Hurding (Mrs H)

**Q and A for the September return to school.**

**What happens when children arrive at school?**

Children will enter school through their designated entry point. Please try to arrive punctually and on time (not early!). Members of staff will be around to monitor entry/exit points. Children should move straight to their designated drop-off/collection points where a member of staff will be meeting them at the appropriate time. Where possible, we wish for children to do this independently to minimize persons entering the site. Initially, we appreciate some of our youngest children may need additional support/reassurance from parents which we understand is necessary. However, please note we ask that children only be accompanied when it is absolutely necessary. Please can we ask that only one adult drops off to decrease the amount of adults in school. We are aware that many children will need support to settle back into school and to get used to the new routines. We will support and nurture all our wonderful children back into school. We may need to hold a child to support their transition away from their carer.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Times and meeting points: | Drop off | Collect | Waiting |
| **Pink Pod****Nursery** | **8.45am** | **11.45am****3.30pm** | Wait at Nursery red gate. Socially distancing along the Foundation field |
| **Red Pod****Foundation 2** | **8.55am** | **3.10pm** | Wait at the red F2 gate. Socially distancing along the path parallel to Rainbow garden |
| **Orange Pod** | **Y1 8.50am****Y2 8.40am** | **Y1 3.15pm****Y2 3.05pm** | Wait at the red F2 gate. Socially distancing along the path parallel to Rainbow garden |
| **Yellow Pod** | **Y3 8.50am****Y4 8.40am** | **Y3 3.15pm****Y4 3.05pm** | Wait at the main gateFrom Y4 (as long as we know) children can leave school independently |
| **Green Pod** | **Y5/6 8.45am** | **Y5/6 3.10am** | Wait at the main gateIdeally encourage to leave independently |

**How can I speak with school staff if there is a need?**

Due to the current and ongoing situation, we are asking parents to only enter the site when absolutely necessary, eg drop off and collection times, unless your child walks home or usually meets you outside. Entrance into school for parents is only by invite from staff or by prior arrangement. If you need to speak specifically with a member of staff, we ask that you make contact via calling the school office or through your class teacher’s email. If required, appointments may be made to speak directly with a class teacher through these methods. At this time, parents are not welcomed into classrooms routinely. We will be available to support so please make an appointment or phone Mrs Hurding and /or Mrs Gay who are available to talk during school hours.

 **I can see that the children have staggered starts, but what about playtimes?**

The importance of physical activity and regular breaks is important for both health and social reasons. Children will have breaks with their own classmates and their pod, this is facilitated by having designated play areas. We will continue to have learning opportunities outside too.

**What about dinnertime?**

 Lunchtime will be staggered and adjusted for most year groups. We are realistic in that we believe it isn’t possible to ‘feed’ our children in the usual way. Our youngest children often take the longest to eat their lunches and need the most support. For this reason, they will eat their lunches in the main hall, utilizing the larger space for distancing. In order to maintain the integrity of the ‘PODS’, other children will be required to eat their lunches in either the classroom or picnic tables/ in their PODS outdoor area.

**So are children having usual school dinners and hot meals?**

The school has worked with the meal provider to offer a range of meals. There is some variation to the menu, however, this allows the meals to be delivered and eaten safely in areas other than the school hall. Initially, these will be fully disposable (trays/plastic knives/forks, etc) to avoid unnecessary movement, cleaning and opportunities for viral transmission.

**How would I order these meals?**

These are ordered the same way as before, paid electronically via Parentpay.

**My child has packed lunches- what does this mean for them?**

Children can use their usual lunchboxes, etc. A fully disposable packed lunch would still be our preference, as it limits what comes into school, however, it if fine to bring in a sandwich box/bag if it is washed and taken home every day.

**What about drinks in school?**

It is important that all children have readily available drinks. All supplies in school are mains fed and safe to drink. It is for this reason that we will provide every child with their own school water bottle, which will be cleaned at the end of the day and kept in school so children don’t need to bring a water bottle from home.

**How will you ensure that good hand hygiene is achieved?**

Staff will routinely and regularly ask your child to wash their hands at key transition points in the day. Examples will include at the start/end of the day, after breaks or after using shared materials and resources.

**How well set up is the school to promote hand hygiene?**

Each classroom has hand washing points, these all have readily available soaps and paper towels. In addition to this, all rooms and most entry/exit points will have hand sanitizer. Children will receive regular opportunities and reminders to use them.

**What about respiratory hygiene?**

Staff will remind children about promoting good standards of respiratory hygiene. This will be in line with current guidance from the government, for example **‘catch it, bin it, kill it’** for coughs and sneezes. Alongside hand hygiene, children will be reminded about touching mouths and faces and the inevitable ‘nose picking’!

**What about toilets?**

The theory of using ‘bubbles’ (PODS) is that the children will operate as if they are in an extended family/household. Just like you wouldn’t necessarily sanitise a toilet at home after each use, we will be doing the same. Children within pods have allocated toilets for their use, just like a home uses a shared toilet for a limited number of people, we will be doing the same. The priority here is good hand hygiene, as it quite rightly, always should have been!

The Lunchtime supervisors will be cleaning the toilets at lunchtime.

**How will the school be maintaining appropriate standards of cleanliness?**

The school has worked with the cleaning service provider to ensure that all recommended measures are in place. At the end of each day, all areas in school will receive enhanced cleaning. We have employed another cleaner to ensure each pod has its own cleaner. It is for this reason that classrooms have had some of the soft furnishing and additional resources stored so that all surfaces and ‘touch-points’ can be efficiently and effectively cleaned. In addition to this, all classrooms have a small kit of cleaning products for additional and intermittent use. This includes surface cleaners and wipes for use on frequently used surfaces, shared resources, etc. Again, the priority here is good hand and respiratory hygiene.

**How will classrooms be organised?**

We have always had a range of seating options in place at school which are used to support learning. The current guidance from the DfE is that where possible children should not be sat in facing groups. Children will be sat side by side generally facing the front where possible. However, we will be teaching children in groups and the younger children will be available to access provision as this is a vital part of their learning.

**Will my child be maintaining ‘social distancing’?**

The DfE guidance that we have received states that ‘children, and especially the youngest children, cannot socially distance’ and that ‘ for younger children the emphasis will be on separating groups’ and ‘consistent groups reduce the risk of transmission by limiting the number of pupils and staff in contact with each other to only those within the group.’ However, we also have in the same guidance that ‘for children old enough, they should also be supported to maintain distance and not touch staff where possible.’ We will be encouraging this by reminding children to attempt to maintain distance where possible and minimising physical contact between themselves, their peers and adults. Please support us with this by reminding children to socially distance as much as possible.

**Will school be monitoring temperatures?**

No. The latest guidance from DfE states that this is now considered an unreliable method of screening. We have invested in an infrared thermometer which we will use if staff or children are feeling ill.

 **What happens if my child has an accident or needs first aid?**

The school has appropriate supplies of PPE and staff trained to administer first aid. Common sense and moral duty would dictate that the safety of a child with a serious injury requiring immediate first aid would duly receive it. Alternately, should an older child have a minor graze or scrape, the most sensible way to deal with this may be them being supported in cleaning themselves up. We may not

be in a position to give your child the hug or cuddle they need in a minor instance such as this, but we will do all we can to give them the reassurance and positive regard we can. In other instances of accidents or illness (eg vomiting, etc) staff have appropriate PPE to deal with the situation. If we have needed to cuddle your child to support their well-being we will let you know. As nurturers we will hug your child if it is needed.

**Will my child need PPE?**

 PPE will only be needed in specific circumstances for staff, eg, supporting a child with medical needs or if a child becomes unwell and develops symptoms and a distance of 2m cannot be maintained by the adult supporting the child. We are instructed that children should not wear masks in school and whilst they may be wearing them as a result of using public transport or similar reasons, they should be removed prior to entering the school. If staff or parents need to or want to wear masks you are welcome to. The use of masks has greatly increased and is often now essential, since we were last all together, back in mid- July.

**What about PE?**

 Physical activity and PE is an important part of the school curriculum. Children will be encouraged to be active during breaks and lunchtime and participate in games and play with minimised/no physical contact. PE lessons will be undertaken and these will be outdoor wherever possible/appropriate. The delivery of these may require the use of shared resources (eg balls, bats, etc) which will be quarantined or cleaned after use (again hand washing is the key!) and physical contact minimised or eliminated where appropriate.

**What does my child need for school?**

Initially we are asking that children only attend school with what is necessary or essential. This should be a coat/jacket or similar (if weather dictates it), a packed lunch (including a lunchbox if that’s your choice) if not having a school meal. Children may or may not need a bag to carry all these, again we ask for your support in defining what is and isn’t really ‘essential’. Please avoid additional stationery, toys, gifts(!) and unnecessary clothing. All items brought in for school (eg lunch boxes, coats, etc) should return home at the end of the day for cleaning if necessary. Book bags are now allowed and books can now come to and from school (phew!).

**What about PE kits?**

We will have PE kits back in school, but please be mindful that the children will not always change. PE is encouraged to be outside and we will limit the need to change as much as possible.

Your child’s every day shoe should ideally be a trainer as we encourage time outdoors.  Please try and have the trainers as plain as possible to fit in with the school uniform.

We will continue to provide lots of opportunities to learn outside so please ensure all children have the clothes appropriate for the days weather and have wellies in school too.

**PLIMSOLLS**

Will be needed to change into inside, when outdoor shoes are dirty.

**Are children wearing uniform ?**

Yes, the DfE have stated that this is now advised. We are asking children to attend in their usual uniform. Current guidance requires that it is not necessary to employ any special methods of cleaning uniform other than those you would usually use with regular washing to ensure good standards of hygiene. However, where possible we would recommend clean clothes every day, please let us know if you need support with this, we have been donated some good quality second hand sweatshirts.

**What about homework and reading books?**

By minimising other potential sources of transmission between home and school, we can be more confident in controlling others. Teacher’s will be asked to follow their usual homework systems from September and manage this by having a system in place for receiving (eg an ‘in-tray’ or similar) and distributing homework (again this is mitigated by good hand hygiene in staff as well as children). Reading books can be selected and used.

**Have behaviour expectations been revised?**

 We always expect our children to be kind, thoughtful and respectful. At this time some amendments have been made with specific reference to include deliberate spitting and coughing, refusing to follow instruction about physical contact and distancing. Deliberate acts will be taken seriously, however, we do appreciate that with young children they can forget at times. There will be regular reminders by staff to follow the guidelines.

**How will my child receive additional support and help when needed?**

Staff at school have always routinely worked closely with children, for example on a 1:1 basis when they are finding something particularly difficult. In many cases this can still be done ‘at arms length’, though at times it may be more difficult and we need to support our children to learn. Children with specific needs or working with EHCP’s will have their needs assessed and addressed in line with current guidance. We want to keep our children and staff safe and enable learning to take place.

**During the summer term, attendance regulations were relaxed and it wasn’t compulsory to attend. Does my child now have to attend school?**

The DfE has instructed that ‘school attendance will be mandatory again from the beginning of the autumn term. This means from that point, the usual rules on school attendance will apply, including: • parents’ duty to secure that their child attends regularly at school where the child is a registered pupil at school and they are of compulsory school age;

• schools’ responsibilities to record attendance and follow up absence

• the availability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices in line with local authorities’ codes of conduct.

We are also instructed that ‘shielding advice for all adults and children will pause on 1 August, subject to a continued decline in the rates of community transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19). This means that even the small number of pupils who will remain on the shielded patient list can also return to school, as can those who have family members who are shielding’. We also know our community and that some of our children may be anxious about returning to school for a variety of complicating factors. We welcome the opportunity to discuss, reassure and support children in this situation. Please contact school from 1st September via the phone or email.

**OK…Why is all this important?**

The measures outlined above, such as ‘bubbles/Pods’, staggered starts and hygiene requirements have been put in place (to follow the guidance!) because it is really important that we do what we can to help keep everyone safe, including children, staff, parents and the wider community. By operating in this way we can minimize the risk and should anyone within the school become ill, develop symptoms or test positive for COVID19 the school can be really clear on the necessary steps which are outlined in the next question.

**What happens if my child, myself or someone else shows symptoms?**

Staff members and parents/carers understand that they will need to be ready and willing to:

* Book a test if they or their child are displaying symptoms. Staff and pupils must not come into the school if they have symptoms, and must be sent home to self-isolate if they develop them in school. 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
* Provide details of anyone they or their child have been in close contact with if they were to test positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) or if asked by NHS Test and Trace
* Self-isolate if they have been in close contact with someone who tests positive for coronavirus (COVID-19), or if anyone in their household develops symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19)

Anyone who displays symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) can and **should get a test**. Tests can be booked online through the NHS testing and tracing for coronavirus website, or ordered by telephone via NHS 119 for those without access to the internet.

The government will ensure that it is as easy as possible to get a test through a wide range of routes that are locally accessible, fast and convenient. By the autumn term, we will be provided with a small number of home testing kits that we can give directly to parents/carers collecting a child who has developed symptoms at school, or staff who have developed symptoms at school, where we think providing one will significantly increase the likelihood of individuals getting tested.

We ask parents and staff to inform us immediately of the results of a test:

* If someone tests negative, if they feel well and no longer have symptoms similar to coronavirus (COVID-19), they can stop self-isolating. They could still have another virus, such as a cold or flu – in which case it is still best to avoid contact with other people until they are better. Other members of their household can stop self-isolating.
* If someone tests positive, they should follow the ‘stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection’ and must continue to self -isolate for 10 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. This is because a cough or anosmia can last for several weeks once the infection has gone. The 10 day period starts from the day when they first became ill. If they still have a high temperature, they should keep self-isolating until their temperature returns to normal.

Other members of their household should continue self-isolating for the full 14 days.

**What will the school need to do if someone becomes ill, shows symptoms or receives a positive test result?**

We must take swift action when we become aware that someone who has attended has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19). We will contact the local health protection team. This team will also contact us directly if they become aware that someone who has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) attended the school – as identified by NHS Test and Trace. The health protection team will carry out a rapid risk assessment to confirm who has been in close contact with the person during the period that they were infectious, and ensure they are asked to self-isolate. The health protection team will work with us in this situation to guide us through the actions we need to take. Based on the advice from the health protection team, we must send home those people who have been in close contact with the person who has tested positive, advising them to self-isolate for 14 days since they were last in close contact with that person when they were infectious. Close contact means:

* direct close contacts - face to face contact with an infected individual for any length of time, within 1 metre, including being coughed on, a face to face conversation, or unprotected physical contact (skin-to-skin)
* proximity contacts - extended close contact (within 1 to 2 metres for more than 15 minutes) with an infected individual
* travelling in a small vehicle, like a car, with an infected person

**The health protection team will provide definitive advice on who must be sent home.**

**A quick reference version of what to do if a situation arises: The main symptoms of coronavirus are:**

* **A high temperature –** this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature)
* **A new, continuous cough –** this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual)
* **A loss or change to your sense of smell or taste –** this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal

Most people with coronavirus have at least 1 of these symptoms.

**What to do if you have symptoms**

**•** If you have any of the main symptoms of coronavirus:

• **Get a test to check if you have coronavirus as soon as possible**.

• Stay at home and do not have visitors until you get your test result – only leave your home to have a test.

**•** Anyone you live with, and anyone in your support bubble, must also stay at home until you

get your result.

***The table below covers the vast majority of situations for children, should your situation not be covered, please contact school to discuss.***

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| What if͙ | What to do | Return to school when͙ |
| my child has covidsymptoms. | **• Do not come to school****• Update school daily****• Self isolate****• Get a test****• Inform school immediately about test result** | the test comes back negative. |
| my child tests positivefor covid. | **• Do not come to school****• Update school daily****• Self-isolate for at least 10 days****• Inform school immediately about test result** | they feel better after 10 days isolation. Symptoms can last for several weeks once the infection has gone, but they can return after 10 days if they feelwell. |
| somebody in myhousehold has covidsymptoms. | **• Do not come to school****• Update school daily****• Self isolate****• Household member to get a test****• Inform school immediately about test result** | the household member test isnegative. |
| somebody in myhousehold has testedpositive for covid. | **• Do not come to school****• Update school daily****• Self isolate for 14 days** | the child has completed 14 daysisolation. |
| NHS test and trace haveidentified my child as a‘close contact’ ofsomebody withsymptoms or confirmedcovid. | **• Do not come to school****• Update school daily****• Self isolate for 14 days** | the child has completed 14 daysisolation. |
| we/my child hastravelled and has to selfisolate as part of a periodof quarantine. | **• Do not take unauthorized leave in term time****• Consider quarantine requirements (and****possibility of quarantine) and FCO advice****when booking travel****Returning from a destination where quarantine****is needed****• Do not come to school****• Update school daily****• Self isolate for 14 days** | the child has completed 14 daysisolation and quarantine periodcomplete. |
| we have receivedmedical advice that mychild must resumeshielding. | **• Do not come to school****• Contact school****• Shield until you are informed that restrictions** **are lifted and shielding is paused again.** | school inform you that restrictionshave been lifted and your child canreturn again. |