



Patron - Professor Barry Carpenter CBE

3rd July 2020

Dear Parents and carers

As ever, I trust that you are well along with our whole school community. I am getting in touch today after we finally received the much anticipated guidance from the Government yesterday.

I am sorry that this is a fairly lengthy letter. Please read it carefully though as it contains important information about our plans to open our schools fully.

I am pleased to confirm that we are now busy finalising detailed plans to **welcome back all children in September**.

Our next steps

- Updating risk assessments with you.

In order to progress with re-opening, we need to touch base with all families to make sure our risk assessments are up to date. Classroom staff will be in touch with you before the end of term to ensure each child's risk assessment is up to date.

Class staff will also want to discuss areas of focus for your child's curriculum and the areas of priority that you feel your child will need to focus on from September.

- Clarifying plans around transport

Class staff will also confirm with you whether you intend to send your child back full time from 4th September or whether you plan to phase their return, and whether you will be utilising transport from the Local Authority or bringing them to school yourself. We will notify transport of the pupils' class arrangements but parents and carers will need to liaise directly with transport about arrangements. Should you decide to bring your child to school yourself, we will need to allocate you a staggered time slot for drop off and pick up which we will collate and confirm before 4th September.

The new guidance, risks and how we will keep our school communities as safe as possible

I have summarised below what we will be doing in our schools in order to implement the guidance. Please note, the full guidance for the re-opening of special schools can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-for-full-opening-special-schools-and-other-specialist-settings/guidance-for-full-opening-special-schools-and-other-specialist-settings>

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The key guidance message is to have proportionate protective measures to reduce the risk of transmission. This includes the 'system of controls' – both prevention and response to infection.

1. Prevention

These measures will be in place all the time:

1. Ensuring that those who have coronavirus symptoms, or who have someone in their household who does, do not attend the setting. This means pupils, their families and staff and their families.
2. Clean hands thoroughly more often than usual.
3. Ensure good respiratory hygiene by promoting the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach.
4. Introduce enhanced cleaning, including cleaning frequently touched surfaces often, using standard products such as detergents and bleach.

The following measures are for our schools to **be flexible, sensible and realistic** about:

5. *Minimising* (not ceasing necessarily) contact between individuals (social distancing). This will mean we will encourage minimal contact and maximum distance between staff and children and children and their peers 'where possible as much as possible.' The guidance recognises that for children with complex needs it is not possible to stay socially distant.

Therefore we will minimise the potential spread of the virus by keeping groups of pupils (bubbles) separate. Bubbles will be formed of several classes that logistically ensure we can have sufficient staff and shared space available. We will be cleaning resources regularly, staggering break and lunch times, reducing (not necessarily stopping altogether) the amount of time bubbles cross over or interact. So, the key message is less, not zero, contact.

Pupils will inevitably be in one another's social space, but within their 'bubble'.

However, there is no guarantee that children will be able to be transported by LA transport in their bubble groups.

6. Where necessary, staff will wear appropriate PPE. Each school will use PPE for all intimate care and physical interventions where appropriate to the child and situation.

We have made the decision to additionally continue to monitor staff and children's temperatures, although the guidance states this is not necessary, as we feel this is a sensible and reasonable action in our risk assessment.

2. Response to any infection:

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Should we become aware of any potential cases of Covid 19, we will follow all guidance and liaise with Public Health England (PHE) and the Local Authority. This means we will:

- i) Engage with the NHS Test and Trace process.
- ii) Manage confirmed cases of coronavirus as directed by PHE
- iii) Contain any outbreak by following local health protection team advice.

Local lockdown scenario or further reduced provision plans

Should South Gloucestershire be forced into a local lockdown scenario, similar to the current situation in Leicester, we will swiftly close the school to all pupils. Depending on the circumstances, we would plan to re-open reduced provision for children of key workers and identified vulnerable children in the same way that we did for our Phase 1 reduced provision, from March – June 8th 2020, based on our risk assessment process.

Confirmation of all planning

The Board of Trustees still have legal responsibility to oversee and approve our risk assessments and planning. They are meeting to do this on 14th July. We will therefore contact you again by the end of Weds 15th July to confirm our plans or notify you of any changes. Decisions are based on the following principles:

1. Our obligation to ensure the safety of pupils, parents, carers and staff
2. A commitment to the welfare and wellbeing of pupils and staff
3. Approaching the planning task in a measured and deliberate way with ethical and compassionate leadership
4. Making the best possible decisions on the basis of the guidance, new statutory processes and within the constraints and parameters we face in our schools and trust.

Please be reminded that we will be closed on 1st and 2nd September for INSET training. This will be training for all staff around the new logistics of keeping children and staff safe in school, and updates to safeguarding legislation and curriculum changes.

We are very much looking forward to seeing your children and welcoming them back after a very challenging period for everyone.

With very best wishes

Carrie Osmond

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