



Patron - Professor Barry Carpenter CBE

14th July 2020

Full re-opening of our schools in September

Dear Parents and carers

I am very pleased to be writing to confirm that the Board of Trustees have today sanctioned the school's plans for re-opening fully in September. This is welcome news as we all want to see your children back in school. Please accept my apologies for confusing everyone in my last letter with regard to dates! To be clear, staff INSET training and preparation is on 1st and 2nd September, and **school opens for pupils on Thursday 3rd September 2020.**

For a very small number of children, risk assessments do not yet confirm that school will be able to accommodate them safely and those families have been notified about alternative arrangements.

Thank you to all parents and carers for your collaboration and support throughout this exceptionally challenging season.

Clarifying plans around transport

Transport have been notified of school opening. They will be in touch with you during the summer. Should you have any transport-related concerns please contact Transport directly.

Transport have confirmed the following:

- Escorts and drivers will wear masks
- Escorts will wear gloves and may wear aprons in some cases
- All vehicles will be cleaned before and after every journey
- Pupils will be encouraged to wear face coverings, but they understand that this will not be possible for many of our pupils
- Escorts and drivers will not come into the buildings to pick up and drop off
- Escorts and drivers have been asked not to use our toilets in schools

If you are driving your child to school, please be aware that the school will allocate you a specific drop off and collection time in order to ensure all children are safely met and taken home. You will also be asked to wait in your vehicle until a member of staff comes out to meet you and escort your child into the building.

School trips and visits

There will be no school trips for the foreseeable future. Pupils will be allowed to participate in local walks in small groups where that is part of their curriculum.

Swimming and hydrotherapy



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For safety reasons, the pool at New Siblands School will remain closed until further notice. We are very sorry about the impact of this on our pupils. We continue to scrutinise all guidance from the Department for Education.

Reminder of the guidance, risks and how we will keep our school communities as safe as possible

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>

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'.



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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:

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, based on our risk assessment process.

We are very much looking forward to seeing your children and welcoming them back in September and hope that you are able to find some moments of rest over the school summer break.

With very best wishes

Carrie Osmond

Headteacher