

Dear Families,

We are all relieved that school will be open for everyone again on March 8th. Our first concern will be to settle the children back and ensure they are happy and secure in their classroom bubbles. Regular handwashing and limiting contact with lots of people is what will keep us all safe. One of our primary jobs will be to help the children reconnect with their friends. Playing and chatting together will soon help them to enjoy being back at school – we have seen it happen time and time again over the last few months - so please do not worry too much. All the staff are ready to do everything they can to support and nurture the children back into formal schooling. An anxious child cannot learn so that will be our key priority in the first few weeks.

You will have questions and I hope we can answer as many here as possible. Governors and staff have tried to ensure school is as safe, accessible and germ-free as it can be when we welcome all our 150 children back but if you can think of anything that would benefit our setting, please let us know.

What time does school start?

Please could you ensure children arrive at school between 8:40 and 8:50 a.m. YR children and Miss Wickland's Y4/5 class will enter through the Nursery gate, Y2 will come through the office entrance, Y1 and Y6 will enter by the playground/car park gate and Ms Langdale's Y3/4 class will come straight into the classroom by the fire door near the car park. Little Explorers' must come to school for 9 a.m.

Adults will be at the entrances to help the children say goodbye and then get them straight into their classrooms. This will ensure that each "bubble" or class can enter the school safely and we can avoid groups of people gathering.

Please be on time but, if you are after 8:50am, please come to the office to register your child.

Bus and taxi children will be met by Mrs Seymour and taken straight to their classrooms.

What time does school end?

The staggered departure times worked well for everyone therefore families with the surname beginning with A to E will collect all their children from the top playground at 3pm. Families with the surname beginning with F to P must collect their children at 3:10pm and the remaining families R to Z must arrive at 3:20pm. Please enter via the small playground gate by the modular classroom, wait on the top playground, socially distancing, for your children and then leave straight away through the car park gates. The children will be supervised by school adults to ensure the safety of everyone. The teachers will be in the classrooms waiting with the other children.

Please leave the playground immediately; do not be tempted to stay and chat with others. Remember adults must wear masks to collect their children.

Is there Breakfast Club and Home Learning Hub?

Yes!

Breakfast Club will remain in the Little Explorers' room for everyone with Mrs Leonard.

Home Learning Hub will be in the Nursery with Mrs Stevenson and Miss Carter.

They will be spending as much time as possible playing outside.

What precautions will school put in place to minimise large groups gathering?

During the first day of welcoming the children back, we will be able to show them what to do and what we expect to happen in terms of moving around school. Collective Worship will be in classrooms, playtimes will be staggered and children will stay in their class “bubbles”

What will the classroom be like?

Children can now sit together at tables. This will be their place for the duration of the day. They will have their own stationery and maths equipment provided by school and must not bring pencil cases or bits and pieces in from home. They will be able to bring reading books home now.

What do you envisage a child’s classroom experience will be like?

The Government have acknowledged that young children cannot socially distance within their classrooms. Furthermore, it will be vitally important to encourage the children to collaborate. Social play, paired talk, peer learning and group activities will be powerful tools to help the children regain their confidence in a classroom setting. Our Reception children, Y3, 4, 5 and 6 will also eat in their classrooms. Y1 and 2 will have lunch in the hall.

Will there be break times or will it be so strict that pupils have to stay in one spot all day? Break times will still be timetabled in the morning and at lunch but staggered so that classes do not mix with other groups and in this way, we can reduce the risk of spreading any infection.

How will toilet breaks be managed?

Children will be shown how to minimise contact during allocated toilet breaks. Only 2 pupils to access these at a time. No one will be restricted from going to the toilet and pupils will be constantly reminded about the importance of hand washing. Our cleaning team will be there to clean the toilets after morning break and after lunch.

Will children have PE sessions, although we know they will be very different?

Outside activities will be carefully planned. Guidelines say that equipment can now be used for non-contact team games. There will be no PE inside yet.

My child is feeling anxious about returning to school. What can we do to help?

Share all this information with your child, talk to your class teacher on Class Dojo and give us a ring/email so that we can answer any personal questions to help prepare everyone for a return to school. It is important that the children realise that we must continue to be really vigilant as the virus has not gone away – we must still keep ourselves and others safe.

I will be regularly picking up my emails so please do not hesitate to message me if you think I can help with anything.

There will be activities planned to support the children’s emotional well-being and these will be tailored to suit the children’s needs during the school day. I have added some transition and mental health resources to the bottom of this letter.

Will my child be comforted if they are upset? Will they be able to comfort others?

We will find different ways to comfort an upset child in line with the guidance from the DfE. No one will leave a child upset, we just couldn't do that. We will still have to avoid contact as much as possible between everyone as per Government guidelines – virtual hugs will be the order of the day. First aid will be administered by an adult in your child's bubble.

I am worried about my child and family catching this virus. Do I have to send my child back to school?

The Government has said that all children must return to school in March unless they are clinically vulnerable.

If Public Health Lincolnshire decide to close our school due to a localised Lockdown, will there be home learning for those who aren't in school?

Teachers will deliver a blend of their own pre-recorded sessions and some from Oak National Academy and White Rose Maths. It will be accessed in the same way as the last Lockdown experience – using your child's Seesaw account. If technology is an issue for your family, we will do all we can to assist you in this, so that the learning can be accessed. We now have the Department for Education's devices available for loan.

What will happen if there is a potential COVID19 case in school?

In the event of a person in school displaying symptoms of the virus, their first duty is to tell someone. We will remove the person, adult or child, from the group as soon as is possible and take them to a designated space away from everyone else. Parents will be informed and they must book a test for the person/family concerned. The person will be sent home as soon as possible. Public Health Lincolnshire will be informed immediately and will help school decide what needs to be done next. All families will be informed of the potential case and the test outcome.

Meals

We are still providing hot school meals (both options) for pupils in school. We ask that all pupils in KS1 take up their Universal Under 7s free school meal offer so that extra baggage does not come in from home. Please check to see if you are eligible for free school meals – there's no harm in trying.

Uniform

All children must come to school in uniform. A warm coat, hat and gloves are essential. Warm PE kit (tracksuit) will be needed for physical activity and can be left in the children's individual lockers.

School transport

School transport is available should families wish to use it. They will be expected to wear masks.

Would the children be able to wear some sort of face protection or PPE?

The Government have said that PPE is not required in schools unless staff are dealing with a pupil that is showing signs of having the virus. So no, pupils will not need to wear PPE.

How should we continue to contact school?

We strongly advise that no one comes to the school office unless necessary. If you need to contact us then please do so by email, ClassDojo or by telephone. Please do not leave important messages about your child on our school Facebook page.

Mental well-being links

<https://youngminds.org.uk/blog/what-to-do-if-your-child-is-anxious-about-going-back-to-school/>

<https://rockitmama.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/How-to-Foster-Your-Childs-1-1-683x1024.png>

<https://www.abc.net.au/life/helping-kids-with-the-transition-back-to-school/12247052>

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any further queries.

Stay safe, stay healthy and stay happy. Fingers crossed; East Lindsey stays as safe as it has been and we all receive the first vaccine by July!