

09 July 2020

Dear Parents/Carers

I wrote to you last week regarding our expectation to be open in full in September. I can now confirm this is the case and I am in a position to provide you with more details.

As you will be aware during lockdown we remained open throughout to children of key workers and those who were considered to be vulnerable. Opening to these small numbers was done with the aim of reducing transmission of coronavirus, to protect the NHS and save lives. As the situation improved we were asked to bring back more children from 1 June focusing on some year groups being educated in small 'bubbles'. We had to operate under very strict guidelines and were able to work safely and welcome 132 children back to school in a phased way. As a large primary school with over 500 pupils this was still only a small proportion of our total pupils.

Current guidance advises us that circumstances have changed. **The prevalence of coronavirus has decreased and returning to school is vital for children's education and for their well-being.** Whilst many of you will have done a great job of home schooling, time out of school is detrimental for children's cognitive and academic development. The impact can affect both current levels of learning and children's future ability to learn and therefore we need to ensure all pupils can return to school in September. The risk to children themselves of becoming severely ill from coronavirus is very low and there are negative health impacts of being out of school.

Given the improved position, the balance of risk is now overwhelmingly in favour of children returning to school. For the vast majority of children, the benefits of being back in school far outweigh the very low risk from coronavirus. With the reduced risks in mind, the guidelines we are being asked to work with for September are different to the current ones. The guidance provides a framework to put in place to provide proportionate protective measures for children and staff, whilst also ensuring that children receive a high quality education that enables them to thrive and progress. **We aim to bring all pupils back in September for normal school hours.**

As stated in my previous letter, the first day back for children is **Thursday 3 September. Nursery and Reception are being started in a phased way – see separate letter.** Also as stated in my previous letter **normal school uniform applies** and will be insisted upon. This is supported by Government guidance, which states uniform plays a valuable part in contributing to the ethos of the school and sets an appropriate tone.

I understand some of you may still be nervous about sending your children back, but we must urge you to do so as **from September attendance is compulsory** and the usual rules on attendance will apply. It is expected that even the pupils who have been shielding will be able to return to school. Many parents, who have sent their children into school during the lockdown and from 1



June also, had some anxieties but I can assure you that the feedback from them has been positive. The children adapted to new routines quickly and the staff have been very impressed by this. To help reassure you I am sharing some of the measures we will be following, as set out by Public Health England to reduce risk. I apologise for the detail included; I have tried to put key and logistical information in bold.

System of controls

Requirement	Prevention	Actions at Horton Grange
Numbers 1 – 4 must be in place in all schools	1) Minimise contact with individuals who are unwell by ensuring that those who have coronavirus symptoms, or who have someone in their household who does, do not attend school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If anyone becomes unwell with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature, or has a change in their normal sense of taste or smell, they must not attend school, or be sent home and advised to follow the 'stay at home guidance', which sets out they must self-isolate for at least 7 days and should arrange a test. Other members of the household should self-isolate for 14 days from when the symptomatic person first had symptoms. • If a child is awaiting collection they will be taken to the medical / isolation room. Any member of staff supervising a symptomatic child while waiting for collection will wear PPE. • Any member of staff who may have helped someone with symptoms and any pupils who have been in close contact with them do not need to self-isolate unless they develop symptoms themselves (in which case they should arrange a test) or if the test of the symptomatic person tests positive. • Everyone involved will wash their hands for 20 seconds with soap and water or use hand sanitiser. The area around the person with symptoms must be cleaned with normal household disinfectant.
	2) Clean hands thoroughly more often than usual.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hand washing is built into the daily routine several times a day and every classroom has hand sanitiser. Children currently school are well versed with these routines and children returning will be supported in establishing these routines.
	3) Ensure good respiratory hygiene by promoting the catch it, bin it, kill approaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every classroom has a supply of tissues and separate bin for tissues only. This bin is double bagged and emptied twice per day. • Posters are displayed around school to promote this and routines are taught and encouraged. • Where possible windows are open to ensure good ventilation.

	<p>4) Introduced enhanced cleaning, including frequently touched surfaces often, using standard products such as detergents and bleach.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The cleaning regime has been reviewed to reflect guidance linked to cleaning of a non-health care setting. • Additional midday cleaning has been put in place focused around shared areas, high touch points and emptying of bins • All classrooms have anti-bacterial products to clean surfaces regularly • Frequently touched surfaces cleaned more often than usual. • There is no requirement for different groups of pupils to be allocated their own toilets, but they will be cleaned more regularly
<p>Number 5 must be properly considered and measures must be put in place to suit circumstances .</p>	<p>5) Minimise contact between individuals and maintain social distancing wherever possible, whilst delivering a broad and balanced curriculum</p>	<p>Grouping children</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Due to the size of the school, year group bubbles will be created. For the majority of the time bubbles will be class sized for older children. There may be times where bubbles are bigger to allow school to function but these will be for reduced periods of time. • Year group bubbles will be kept apart from other bubbles wherever possible. • Staff and children are encouraged to socially distance where possible and appropriate. This cannot be guaranteed at all times. • Children will be taught to work and play in socially distanced way. <p>Measures in the classroom</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where possible tables will be organised facing the front to reduce face to face contact, which lowers risk of transmission. This may be age dependent. • Where circumstances allow teachers will distance from children, however, it is recognised especially when working with younger children this is not always possible. In particular staff will try to avoid face to face contact and minimise the time spent within 1 metre of anyone. • To facilitate seating so that all children face forwards unnecessary furniture has been removed from classroom • For children old enough they will be supported to maintain distance and not touch staff and their peers where possible. • Where children move classrooms for a specific lesson which may have been used by another bubble cleaning will take place.

Measures elsewhere

- There will be **no assemblies** in groups larger than a year group.
- Movement around school will be minimised.
- Wide corridors at Horton Grange allow children to walk on the left and keep their distance.
- Lunch times will be re-organised so that lunch is eaten in year group sittings only, or in their classrooms. For these reasons initially there will be **no hot school lunch. Those entitled to a free school meal will receive a school packed lunch. Paid for school packed lunches can also be ordered using the normal system. Children can also bring their own packed lunch.**
- **Breaks will be staggered** and should more than one year group be outside at the same time, the yard area will be zoned and children should play with children in their class only.
- Initially there will be **no breakfast club** on offer as this involves mixed year groups in one area. This will be reviewed in time.
- Use of shared staff rooms will be minimised and will have restrictions on numbers that can enter.
- Teachers are able to teach across bubbles and year groups but will need to socially distance where possible.

Measures for arriving and leaving school

- We are lucky at Horton Grange to have several entrances to the building and each year group has their own door to enter through. Therefore, we **will not be staggering start and finish times.**
- **Doors will be open between 8.45am and 8.55am** for children to enter. There will be no changes to start and finish times. **Cones will be laid out to promote distancing so please be patient. No adult may enter the building. Specific arrangements may be required in Early Years.**
- **Adults are also not permitted to enter the main reception** without a pre-booked appointment or in case of an emergency.
- To reduce numbers **only one adult should bring a child to school.**
- Adults and children must remain

		<p>socially distanced on the yard.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Please don't loiter at the gates.● We would like to encourage initially a one way system. Please enter via the Cowpen Road gates and leave via the Tynedale Drive exit.● Please be patient at drop off and collection and be responsible for your own and your child's social distancing.● Face coverings are not recommended in school. Should children choose to wear a face covering for their journey to school, children must be instructed not to touch the front of their face covering during use or when removing. They must wash their hands immediately on arrival, dispose of temporary face coverings in a covered bin or place reusable face covering in a plastic bag they can take home with them and then wash their hands again before entering their classroom. <p>Equipment and resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Equipment and resources are integral to education in schools. During the summer term, their use was minimised, many were moved out of classrooms. That position has now changed for the Autumn term, because the prevalence of coronavirus has decreased and because they are so important for the delivery of education.● Children will be provided with their own set of frequently used resources in a pencil case which will remain on their table and will not be shared.● Classroom based resources, such as books can be shared within the class bubble; these will be cleaned regularly along with regularly touched surfaces.● All classrooms will have their own supply of anti-bacterial wipes / products for this purpose.● Any resources that are shared between bubbles will be cleaned frequently and meticulously, or rotated to allow them to be unused for a period of 48 hours (72 hours for plastics).● Outdoor play equipment will be frequently cleaned. If this not possible they will be declared out of use. <p>Items brought from home</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Children must limit the amount of equipment they bring into school to
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		essential lunch boxes, water bottle and coat. Bags are allowed.
Number 6 applies to specific circumstances	6) Where necessary, wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● PPE is not advised in school unless for carrying out first aid, intimate care or where a person has symptoms and distance cannot be maintained. ● Each classroom has a supply of PPE for the staff members in these cases and is next to each first aid kit.
Numbers 7-9 must be followed in every case where relevant	7) Engage in the NHS test and trace process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Staff, parents and pupils must be willing to engage in the test and trace process if they display symptoms. ● If a test is negative and the child / staff member is well enough, they may return to school. ● If a test is positive, staff and pupils should follow the 'stay at home guidance'. (7 days for the person with symptoms and 14 days for household members).
	8) Manage confirmed cases in the school community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● If we become aware of someone testing positive school will contact the local health protection team. The team will also contact school if they become aware of a confirmed case – as identified by NHS Track and Trace system. The health protection team will carry out a risk assessment to confirm who has been in close contact. ● School will send home anyone who has been in close contact with the person who tests positive advising them to self-isolate for 14 days. The health protection team will advise us who must be sent home. ● Household members of children sent home do not need to self-isolate unless the child develops symptoms. ● If someone in the class / group asked to self-isolate develops symptoms themselves in the 14 day period they should get a test. Even if the test is negative, they should continue to self-isolate for the remainder of the 14 days. If it is positive you should inform school and should continue to self-isolate for 7 days from start of symptoms.
	9) Contain any outbreak by following local health protection team advice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● If there is an outbreak, health protection teams may recommend that a larger number of children self-isolate as a precautionary measure. ● A mobile testing unit may be set up.

We understand that returning to school may be daunting for some children and for others it may be exciting. Everyone's experience of lockdown will have been different; as has ours! Hopefully, having the chance to say good-bye to their current class teacher this week will have helped bring some closure to this year. Regardless of where children are on their return, I have an amazing, dedicated and highly skilled team of staff who will work to support your children emotionally and academically so that no child is disadvantaged long term from this period out of school. **However, we can only do that if children are in school daily when they are well enough to do so. Please support us in ensuring that.**

During the first week (2 days) teachers will focus on getting to know their new class and basic routines. In the week following that, they will gradually assess and establish where children are in their learning so that focused catch up can be achieved. We have very high expectations that children will catch up quickly.

We are informed that the usual statutory assessments will take place in Summer 2021. These include:

- Year 1 phonic tests
- Key Stage 1 tests and teacher assessment
- Year 4 multiplication tables check
- Key stage 2 tests (Year 6)

Further details of these dates will follow in September.

And so that brings us to the end of a very strange year! I cannot thank you all enough for your support during this very strange time. We continue to be very proud of Horton Grange, its pupils and the wider community that makes it up. I have worked at Horton Grange for what seems like a very long time now and I always knew it was a very special place, but the last few months have only proved it to be more so; I am very privileged to be the headteacher here.

On that note have a lovely summer, **stay safe** and we look forward to welcoming the children back in September.

The school office will be manned during the first and last week of the school holidays should you have any questions or queries please contact via telephone.

Regards



Nichola Irving
Headteacher