



Friday 15<sup>th</sup> May 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

We are writing today to provide you with an update in our work in preparation for opening our schools to more children.

The Government, as you may be aware, have asked that we begin to plan for the reintroduction of provision for Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 children. **We take the safety of our children and staff very seriously and we will not compromise on our high standards of safety and care.**

We have spent the week following the government's announcement working closely as a team with our Health and Safety and Property Advisors to look very carefully at the guidance which has been issued and start to form a plan for the return of pupils. This plan is being carefully risk assessed to ensure that as a Trust, we not only follow the Government and Local Authority basic guidelines, but go beyond them.

We have set out our guidelines which we will be following as a Trust in the form of FAQs. These are subject to change depending on further government advice but we wanted you to be aware of our planning at this time to enable you to have as much information as possible.

Our next steps will be to contact parents of the individual year groups early next week to ask whether you intend to send your child to school to access the provision we are providing and also to give you further detailed information on: start and finish times, details of the provision for your child and communications we will make with your child and family to help reassure the transition back to school.

Over the next week our Trustee Board will continue to meet as a specialist COVID group, and the Local Governing Boards will also have overview of our planning. Only when the Headteacher, Trustees and Central Team of Health and Safety Experts and Property Team have signed-off on individual plans will schools be given the go ahead to start their provision. The team of school and Trust will continue to monitor standards of health and safety at every school throughout this period.

In this period of national uncertainty, we cannot foresee what course the COVID outbreak will take but we can be certain that as schools within our Trust, we have made every effort to put into place in our schools the most stringent and considered safeguards that we can to protect children and staff.

**Your views are important - Please read through the attached FAQs and if you have any questions of queries, we want to hear them. Please contact <insert contact email address here>.**

Yours sincerely,

Victoria McConnell

Headteacher

Wensum Junior School

Lynsey Holzer

CEO

Evolution Academy Trust



## frequently asked QUESTIONS



### **COVID-19**

#### **INFORMATION FOR PARENTS – MAY 2020**

##### **Attendance at School**

###### **When will my child be expected to return to school?**

The Government have produced guidelines to ask school to open Nursery provision, Reception, year 1 and Year 6 from June 1<sup>st</sup>. This does not mean that all year groups will be open from the 1<sup>st</sup> and all our schools are planning on a staggered start for children, your school will contact you early next week with a clear plan for a start date and what the days will look like.

###### **Do I have to send my child if the school is open for the year group?**

It is expected that you will send your child to school if the school is open for the year group but the government are clear that there will be no penalties in place for parents choosing not to send their child to school. You can expect telephone calls from the school to talk through reasons why you have decided to keep your child at home but this will be a discussion at this stage. If your child is self-isolating or shielding due to a medical condition they will need to remain at home at this time.

###### **If my child is not in the returning year groups or cannot come to school will the online learning continue?**

Yes, it will continue.

###### **Will my child be expected to attend all day and will the start and finish times be the same as normal?**

Our schools are planning very carefully for the start and finish of days to ensure we limit the possibility of crowds of parents and children so all our schools are operating a staggered start and finish time and your school will contact you individually about the arrangements for your children. These may change as we work to find the best solutions for children.

###### **If my children are in different year groups - some in the returning year groups and others in non-returning year groups, can I send them all?**

Not at this time. We have to carefully follow our plan to reintegrate children gradually.

###### **When will the other year groups be returning?**

We do not have a clear plan from the government on this issue but we will let you know as soon as we hear anything.

###### **Can I send my child on some days and not others?**

No. If you send your child into school, you will be expected to send them to each session.

###### **Will the children of keyworkers and vulnerable groups continue to have provision in the school?**

Yes – children of keyworkers and vulnerable groups will continue to access provision. This group of children will be kept separate from the returning groups.

###### **When should I keep my child at home?**

You should keep your child at home if the child or anyone in the household shows signs of Coronavirus. Children and members of their household will be eligible for testing under the government scheme. If your child is in the clinically vulnerable category including conditions such as asthma and diabetes, you should seek medical advice before returning to school.

##### **Safety**

###### **How are we as a school making a decision that our school is following all the guidelines and is as safe as we can make it?**

As a school, with our members of the Trust team, we have completed a detailed risk assessment which looks at 9 areas of our school operations. This will be under constant review by the school and the Trust and overseen by Trustees. If any element of school practice is measured as high-risk we will either take actions to improve it or could close down provision.

###### **When would you take the decision to close a school or classes in a school?**

We may be asked by the government to close down the provision in a school if directed by the government if there are increases in infection rates in a local area. We may close a school if there is an outbreak of cases in the school or within a bubble. We may close a school or classes if we are unable to provide enough staff to operate safely.

### **How will you ensure that drop off and pick up times are safe?**

Each school has a very clear set of guidelines including one-way systems for parents and staggered entry and exit times which we will supervise to ensure that there is limited contact between parents or children at drop off and pick up times. Parents will be encouraged to use telephone or email to communicate with teachers or staff.

### **How will we ensure good hygiene in school?**

**Handwashing** – There will be a clear routine of handwashing throughout the day. All children will be shown and supported to do this thoroughly alongside government guidance. We have secured large stocks of soap and hand gel to ensure that there is good access across the school.

**Cleaning** – All our schools have new regimes for cleaning which include additional hours for cleaning staff and additional and clear guidelines to ensure all frequently touched surfaces are cleaned regularly including the cleaning of toilets once per hour.

**Resources** – Children will have their own set of pencils, books etc. which will be kept for them only with no sharing. This is not the case in Reception, where any resources shared will be regularly cleaned between uses.

**Home to school items** – Children will not be permitted to bring items from home except water bottles and lunchbox and will not be bringing home resources from school at this time e.g. reading books.

### **Will we be expecting social distancing in school by children and staff?**

All children will be in much smaller groups or 'bubbles' – the number in these groups will always be below the recommendation of 15 and depending on the size of classrooms will often be as low as 10 or 8. The children in the bubble will stay with this group throughout the day – at break times and lunchtimes and throughout the week and will not come into contact with children in other 'bubbles'. In their group, the layout of the classroom has been designed to ensure that children in the older year groups stay at a distance of 2 metres from each other as much as possible. In reception classes this is much more difficult. We will be keeping our reception groups small and ensuring through our planning that children are distanced as much as possible. Children will not be allowed to move around the school building freely, this will help reduce contact with others.

### **What will happen at lunchtimes and Breaktimes?**

Children will keep in their 'bubbles' to play and eat. Strict cleaning will take place before and after food and children will be instructed to wash their hands before and after food. Children will not be eating in a room with other 'bubbles'. Breaktimes and lunchtimes will be at different times for different 'bubbles' of children.

### **What will happen if there is a confirmed case of coronavirus at the school?**

If a child or staff members develops symptoms of Coronavirus, they will be isolated from the rest of the group, sent home and asked to self-isolate for 7 days and encouraged to access testing. All staff and children attending school will have access to a test if they display symptoms. If the test is positive, we will notify parents and send home the whole group of children for 14 days. At each stage, before and after testing, parents within the group will be given full information to enable them to make clear decisions.

## **Education**

### **What will the education for children look like in school?**

We have exceptional teachers in our schools who will continue to do their best to provide stimulating activities for children in and out of school settings. We will listen carefully to children and parents about how things feel and do our best to make things feel as normal as possible. The teachers will continue to provide lessons in school and continue to make them fun and stimulating. This will include PE lessons in their 'bubble' and work across the curriculum. We will not ask them to engage in any work which would mean close contact with another person, but our teachers will make sure there is plenty of collaboration in different ways.

**Nursery and Reception** - In our Nursery and reception classes, we will limit the number of activities available per day and are likely to direct the children to activities to ensure distance. Regular wiping of any shared resources such as bicycles will take place in addition to regular handwashing and any previously shared resources such as play dough will be temporarily unavailable. Children will still sit on the carpet in Nursery and reception, sing songs and play games, but will be asked to sit apart on spaces.

### **My child has additional needs? Will my child get the provision they need?**

Our dedicated teams will work with all parents but particularly those in vulnerable groups to ensure that children and parents are well prepared for the return. Please contact school directly to discuss the individual and they will work through a plan with you.

### **How will you ensure children understand the new expectations of them and are well prepared for a return?**

Our teams will be working hard over the next week to prepare information, communicate with families by email and video links to ensure children feel well prepared for the return.

### **Will my child have their usual teacher?**

As long as the staff member is at work, we will try to keep children with a known teacher or teaching assistant. Other adults may also be working with them.

### **Will my child need to wear school uniform? Will my child need to wear a mask for school?**

Yes, your child will need to wear school uniform or PE kit and follow the usual policies on behaviour in school. We would request that children **do not** wear a mask for school.

### **How will you look after the wellbeing of my child?**

The safety and wellbeing of your child are our top priorities. We have a talented team of staff who will be incorporating opportunities for children to talk about their experiences and any anxieties they may have during this difficult period. We will of course communicate with you throughout this period and concerns they may express – this is a team effort.

**What do I do next?**

**Your school will make contact with you directly and give further information about start dates and timings and will ask you to tell them whether you will be sending your child. IF you have any questions of queries, please contact us – we want to hear from you!**

**Further Information:** <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-educational-and-childcare-settings-to-prepare-for-wider-opening-from-1-june-2020/actions-for-education-and-childcare-settings-to-prepare-for-wider-opening-from-1-june-2020>