



Richardson Dees Primary School

Website: www.richardson-dees.eschools.co.uk

Email: office@rdees.org.uk

Outstanding Governance Awards Finalists 2019



Head Teacher: Mr W Myers BA (Hons); NPQH
Chair of Governors: Mrs A Parker BA (Hons) FCIPD MIOD

High Street East
Wallsend
Tyne and Wear

Tel: 0191 263 8139
Tuesday 26th May

NE28 7RT

Important Information About Proposed Return to School

Dear parent / carer,

On Sunday 10th May, our government made the announcement that children would begin a phased return to school. The Prime Minister reasserted this position at his briefing on Sunday 24th May. As a school, we have considered our response to this and today, I am going to share with you how we intend to further open our school to pupils.

Before I do that, I wish to take the opportunity to thank you once again for the huge amount of support and understanding we have felt from within our school community during these incredibly difficult times. Since school closures on Friday 20th March, Richardson Dees has been open every week, including holidays and bank holidays, to support those families who need us most. Now we are being instructed by government to open our doors to more children across specific year groups and we intend to do just that, but we must do it as safely and as cautiously as we are able to.

In order to facilitate this return, school will have to be radically different to what it was for our children before the lockdown. Before we can open our doors to more pupils, we must satisfy every single criteria of our risk assessment procedures. In whichever way we approach this, one thing is clear - we can only minimise risk, we cannot eradicate it completely. Equally, the experience for everyone in our school will not be what we would ordinarily want for any of our Richardson Dees pupils, their families or our staff.

In this letter, I present a number of possible questions our families may have and I do my best to answer them. Should you require any further information to that which is provided in this letter, you can contact school directly by phone between the hours of 8:30am to 3:30pm, Monday to Friday or alternatively you can contact us at any time by email and we will get back to you as soon as we are able.

In the meantime, you must continue to make choices that you feel are right for your children and we will do everything we can to help you navigate through some of the toughest challenges schools and families have faced in recent times.

Stay safe #RDPSfamily
Mr W Myers, Headteacher





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When can my child return to school?

If your child has been coming to school during the closure period then they can **all** continue to do so. Our nursery will remain closed but Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 pupils will be able to return. For these children it is unlikely that it will be before **Monday 15th June**. However, this return date is not firmly set and could be subject to change.

What if I have children in other classes?

In this first phase of reopening, we **cannot** admit any children outside of Reception, Year 1 and Year 6. As part of our risk assessment process and alongside government guidance, this position will be reviewed at a later date. Only the children from other year groups who have attended during the closure period can continue to do so.

What will school be like?

Children whose families wish for them to attend will be registered to a 'bubble'. These bubbles will consist of at least two adults and no more than 8 children. Routines will have to be tightly managed. There will be no assemblies or carpet time. Children will work from their own desk. Packed lunches will be eaten in the classrooms. Break times, lunch times and start / finish times will be staggered throughout the day and kept within their bubble. There will be strict hygiene measures in place including regular handwashing. They will be restricted to certain toilets. The ethos of our school hasn't changed but to keep our children safe we will have a new Covid-19 behaviour policy in place. This will mean some further necessary changes to how we usually operate. We will update you with this in due course.

What will my child be learning?

They will continue to work from the learning packs that the other children do at home. This will be supplemented by creative lessons and physical activity to support their wellbeing. There will also be some necessary instruction each day as to how they can keep themselves and others safe.

So what time would my child be expected to attend and when will they finish?

This hasn't been finalised just yet but different bubbles would start at different times. The current working plan is that our youngest children would start at 9am and finish at 3pm. The older children would be here from 9:15am to 3:15pm. They wouldn't be able to congregate on the yard but would instead line up, in much the same socially distanced way as we are expected to at our supermarkets, at one of our four entry and exit points. Only one adult would be allowed to accompany each child and they would be expected to vacate the





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premises and surrounding area, immediately after drop off / collection and not to interact with other parents in a way that contravenes government guidance.

Will school still be running a breakfast club or after school provision?

No. We are unable to provide **any** of our children with a breakfast from Monday 8th June nor can we offer additional childcare from 8:00am to 9:00am or from 3:30pm to 4:30pm. These are decisions based purely on the health and safety of everyone in the building. We can't have children congregating in the hall like we did before lockdown as we did for Breakfast Club and we need the building to be empty for a deep clean every evening from 4pm.

What if everybody wants their children to return to school?

Our recent survey to parents of children in Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 told us that the majority of our parents do not yet feel ready for their children to return. If that continues to be the case, we have sufficient capacity. If more people than we have room for wish to return, then we would have no option but to operate on a rota basis. This could possibly be alternate weeks or three days for one week then two days for the next – we won't have a firm plan until we know who wishes to return.

Will my child be with their own class teacher?

Possibly but it's very likely that they won't. We have had to rearrange our staffing structure and we also have teachers from other year groups who will now be called upon to teach your children.

Will they get to see their friends from class around school?

They will only really get to see the children in their bubble. We plan to divide the yard up so they may see their friends playing in another part of the yard but they won't be able to mix outside of their bubble.

Will my children be in the same bubble?

If siblings are close in age e.g. Reception and Year 1 then possibly, yes. However, if they are further apart e.g. Year 1 and Year 6, then no they wouldn't be together.

Does my child have to wear uniform?

No but they can if they wish. We are aware that children might have grown out of their uniforms or that it might be difficult to replace damaged ones at present. They need to wear appropriate clothing though, ideally including tracksuit bottoms / leggings / trainers as they won't be able to change for any physical activity. What is absolutely crucial is that whatever they wear, it is washed at the end of every day and this would include





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their jackets and coats.

Will my child be allowed to wear PPE?

The government guidance states the following: 'Face coverings ... should not be worn in any circumstance by those who may not be able to handle them as directed (for example, young children ...) as it may inadvertently increase the risk of transmission.'

What happens if my child shows symptoms whilst in school?

We will be checking the temperature of every child before they enter school. Should symptoms develop through the course of the day, your child will be removed from the bubble and must be collected straight away by a parent or carer. Your child would then need to be tested before they return to school.

What happens if someone in the bubble contracts the virus?

Should that happen then we would close the bubble for 14 days and send staff and pupils from that bubble home. If the child has a sibling in another bubble then that would be closed down for 14 days and the staff and pupils would be sent home from that bubble too.

What happens if someone in our household contracts the virus?

School MUST be notified immediately. Your child must not be brought into school and the entire household must self-isolate for 14 days.

I'm worried about the effect that all this will all have on my child's mental health – what are school doing to address this?

Your child's health and wellbeing is absolutely paramount in all of this. A big part of the curriculum will be around staff helping children to adjust to their new routines, to talk about their concerns and to address them through fun activities and class discussion. We will be in regular contact with parents and available throughout the school week to address any concerns they might have as well.

Can you assure me that my child will be safe from Covid-19?

No. We can minimise the risk but we can't eradicate it altogether. Even with our robust risk assessment and carefully managed routines and procedures, there is still much we don't know about this disease. We will follow the guidance and advice of government as best we are able to and we will continue to do everything we can within that to keep our children, our staff and all of their families as safe as we can do.





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Can you assure me that my child will be socially distanced from other children at all times?

No. Classroom bubbles will be set up so that children are apart. However, children naturally gravitate towards their friends and particularly for our youngest children, it would be virtually impossible to stop them from breaching the 2 metre rule. Moreover, as a school we believe that continually separating our children from each other, especially those young pupils who don't quite understand why, could be incredibly detrimental to their general health and well-being and their development as a whole.

- We **will not** physically intervene to enforce social distancing for our youngest children
- We **will not** punish our youngest children who are unable to socially distance from their friends
- We **will** take firmer action with older children who knowingly and willfully break the rules of social distancing
- We **will** exclude older children who choose to disregard the rules and expectations set to them and potentially put others in danger by doing so

Can you assure me then that my child will be socially distanced from staff at all times?

No. Much like in the previous point, the intention is that the school day is going to be set up to minimise contact between all pupils and staff. This includes things such as classroom layout, clear routines / expectations and staggered start time, breaks etc. However, there may be times where your child requires first aid or intimate care. This would be administered as it usually would but staff would be required to wear PPE. There could be other times where your child is just upset and staff would not neglect their duty of care. Your child would be supported in the same way as we have always done. So long as it is done with the utmost sensitivity, it is at the discretion of staff as to how they address each situation. Equally, staff members wishing to wear PPE at other points in the day will be allowed to provided it is agreed PPE that has been issued by school.

My child is not able to return at this time – how will school be supporting their needs?

We will continue to deliver learning packs fortnightly. We will continue to keep in contact with our families by phone. We will continue to be available via email or class dojo. We will continue to communicate through our website.

I wish for my child to return to school. What do I need to do next?

Provided your child meets the government criteria, we will contact you by telephone from Monday 1st June. During this conversation, we only need one thing – a firm and clear decision as to whether your child will be returning to school or not. Should you give us firm 'yes', your child will be added to our daily register and





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allocated to a 'bubble'. You will then be contacted a second time in the week beginning **Monday 8th June** to be given a start date and other essential information. One final requirement before your child can start school is that you sign a home / school agreement outlining the key expectations of school and your agreement to support and abide by them.

What happens if I say my child is coming but then change my mind?

You must do what you feel is the best for your child. We would review your decision with you fortnightly from there.

What happens if I say my child ISN'T coming but then change my mind?

This is fine but we can only take in additional children on a fortnightly basis so you may have to wait for your child's start date.

Can my child come for some days but not all?

Yes but these must be agreed in advance and they must attend and leave at the pre-agreed times.

What if I am late dropping off my child?

If you find yourself unable to attend at the agreed time your child will **not** be allowed into school on that day. You **must** also ring school to notify us.

What happens in the summer holidays?

School will be closed for the six weeks holidays.

Thank you for taking the time to read through these questions and answers. If you have any other questions, thoughts or suggestions, please contact school either by phone or by email and we will be happy to address them.

Mr W Myers
26.05.20

