



## **Parents' Information:**

***Wider School Opening from 15<sup>th</sup> June 2020***

Mrs Rebecca Jordan

June 2020

Dear parents/carers,

From Monday 15<sup>th</sup> June we are welcoming children back into school as part of a phased approach to the full return of all children.

The safety and wellbeing of the children, staff and families of Thorns is our priority and we have had many things to consider in order to successfully open school back up to the children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 6.

The original organisational arrangements were put in place based on the parents who said yes to sending their children back when we sent forms out before half-term. These numbers have since increased and arrangements have had to be amended as a result. Because of classroom sizes and staffing considerations, we have maximum capacities for our bubbles and once these capacities are reached we cannot add any more children to them (max. 16 per bubble, split over two rooms of 8). As stated in the risk assessment, classrooms have been carefully measured and maximum numbers of children that can safely be accommodated calculated. In addition, we have had to take into account various other pieces of health and safety guidance and advice. This has been a logistically challenging task.

Due to pupil numbers and variations in staffing, each bubble will work slightly differently. We apologise if this causes any inconvenience to our families but is unavoidable. We must also point out to parents that subject to whatever happens next, in terms of governmental directives etc., we cannot guarantee how long the new status quo will be maintained. We can't rule out potentially having to implement other measures - such as reducing the number of days children spend in school - in the event of further wider opening or pressures to increase pupil numbers.

As always, I will keep you updated with anything relevant to you. I know parents have asked about opening for year groups not yet included in the wider opening as some of you have one child who will now be in school and another who won't. At this time, I do not know what the situation is with a view to moving back to 'normal' and opening fully. I eagerly await announcements. Similarly, concern has been expressed about transition arrangements (both for children moving on to secondary school and for the rest moving to a new year group). Again, at this point, I have no information to give you. I have contacted the local authority with some thoughts about September but have been told we need to wait until we know more about the 'bigger picture'. This is a fair point - but I am itching to start making plans. Whatever happens, please rest assured that the children's best interests will be at the centre of our planning.

Please take the time to read the information below. I realise that it is quite a lengthy document but is important that you are aware of, and fully understand, the implications of your child being in school during this coronavirus crisis, and of how, together, we will endeavour to keep everyone safe.

Kind regards,

*R.L.Jordan*

Mrs. Rebecca Jordan

Head Teacher

## **Key Worker Bubble (Bumblebees)**

This bubble will comprise approximately 16 children whose parents are in key worker roles or who need to be in school for other specific reasons.

These children will access school via the staff entrance

- 8.40am Doors open
- 12.00pm Lunch in hall, followed by outdoor play (designated area)
- Flexible pick up throughout the afternoon
- 3.15pm Finish

From Monday 15<sup>th</sup> June, the staff rota will finish and the Bumblebee Bubble will have two consistent teams of staff:

- Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday morning: *Miss Kaur and Mrs Raithby*
- Wednesday afternoon, Thursday and Friday: *Miss Morgan and Mrs Westwood*

Bumblebee Bubble's allocated room is the hall, and they have exclusive use of Y3/4 children's toilets.

The activities will be more structured than they have been and children will be doing more focused learning. The children in Reception, Y1 and Y6 will be doing work and activities that reflect what their classmates are doing in their class bubbles or being set for home learning.

Children in this bubble are also expected to wear their school uniform from Monday 15<sup>th</sup> June, as we attempt to reintroduce an increased amount of normality and formality.

## **Reception Bubble (Owl)**

- 8.45am Drop off
- 12.00pm Lunch in classroom followed by outdoor play (designated area)
- 2.15pm Pick up

Children need to be brought to the usual pupils' entrance (KS1 playground). The fence along Thorns Road will be appropriately marked for social distancing. Please ensure that you keep at least a 2m distance from other children/parents. Children will enter through the gate, where a member of staff from their bubble will greet them and take them into school. Parents will not be allowed onto school premises and only one parent should accompany their child. At the end of the day, a member of staff will bring the children to the gate to be collected. Again, social distancing is expected while you wait.

The adults who will be working with the Owl Bubble are:

- Monday and Tuesday: *Mrs Homer and Miss Norton*
- Wednesday: *CLOSED TO CHILDREN FOR TEACHERS' PPA*
- Thursday and Friday: *Mrs Hughes and Mrs Bicker*

Owl Bubble's allocated room is the reception classroom, and they have exclusive use of the reception children's toilets.

## **Year 1 Bubble (Badgers)**

- 9.15am Drop off
- 12.30pm Lunch in classroom followed by outdoor play (designated area)
- 2.45pm Pick up

Children need to be brought to the usual pupils' entrance (KS1 playground). The fence along Thorns Road will be appropriately marked for social distancing. Please ensure that you keep at least a 2m distance from other children/parents. Children will enter through the gate, where a member of staff from their bubble will greet them and take them into school. Parents will not be allowed onto school premises and only one parent should accompany their child. At the end of the day, a member of staff will bring the children to the gate to be collected. Again, social distancing is expected while you wait.

The adults who will be working with the Badger Bubble are:

- Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday morning: *Miss Kirton and Mrs Holmes*
- Wednesday afternoon, Thursday and Friday: *Mrs Bennett and Mrs Molloy*

Badger Bubble's allocated space is split across two rooms: Year 1 classroom and Year 2 classroom. This is because we have too many Y1 children in school for them to be in one classroom all together. Instead, we have made the decision to split the bubble across the two classrooms so that for longer periods of 'stillness', such as the register, story times or more formal lessons, they can still maintain a social distance of 2m between themselves and the adults. Half the bubble will work with the teacher in one room, and the other half with the teaching assistant in the other room. However, because they are still one bubble and can therefore mix, they will be able to share the same outside space and toilets. They will have exclusive use of the key stage one children's toilets.

## **Year 6 Bubble (Otters)**

- 9.45am Drop off
- 12.30pm Lunch in classroom followed by outdoor play (designated area)
- 3.15pm Pick up

Children need to be brought to the usual pupils' entrance (KS1 playground). The fence along Thorns Road will be appropriately marked for social distancing. Please ensure that you keep at least a 2m distance from other children/parents. Children will enter through the gate, where a member of staff from their bubble will greet them and take them into school. Parents will not be allowed onto school premises and only one parent should accompany their child. At the end of the day, a member of staff will bring the children to the gate to be collected. Again, social distancing is expected while you wait. As is normally the case, with your written consent, Y6 children may arrive and leave unaccompanied. Please email: [info@thorns-p.dudley.sch.uk](mailto:info@thorns-p.dudley.sch.uk) to provide this consent. Mobile phones can be brought into school by Y6 pupil but must be turned off and kept at their own workstations. School accepts no responsibility for these.

The adults who will be working with the Otter Bubble are:

- Monday and Tuesday: *Mrs Rees and Miss Beardsmore*
- Wednesday: *CLOSED TO CHILDREN FOR TEACHERS' PPA*
- Thursday and Friday: *Mrs Whyatt and Mrs Baker*

Otter Bubble's allocated room is the Year 6 classroom, and they have exclusive use of the Y5/6 children's toilets.

## Keeping Everyone Safe during the COVID-19 Pandemic: *Managing and Mitigating Risk*

You will find government guidance and other relevant documents in the 'COVID-19 Information' section of the school website. Our risk assessment can also be found in this folder.

As a school, we have had to put many new measures in place and review various policies to reflect the current pandemic. For these measures to have maximum effect, we will require support and co-operation from families. We ask that you follow the guidance set by the government with regards to social distancing, meeting up with other people etc. If families ignore these guidelines you will be compromising, and somewhat negating, the safety measures we have worked so hard to implement in school. Please support us in keeping our school safe for our children and our staff.

### *Hygiene Practices*

- Please ensure that your child washes their hands thoroughly (for at least 20 seconds) before coming to school and refrains from touching anything (e.g. the school fence) on the way in.
- When they arrive in school, children will be sent one at a time to wash their hands (we currently have plenty of soap and paper towels in school).
- Children will be sent at regular intervals to wash their hands, and always before and after breaks, before and after lunch, and after using the toilet.
- Bubble staff will wipe surfaces down regularly and they will be kept as clear as possible to make this easier.
- Resources, such as Numicon or other maths apparatus, will be disinfected after use by a group of children.
- Soft toys and furnishings, including cushions and blankets, have been removed.
- Where children can be spaced 2m apart, e.g. when sitting at their desks to do work, they will be (but please note, social distancing will not be possible at all times and children will sometimes work together in groups outside and will be allowed to play together at break times).

### *Social Distancing*

- The fence along Thorns Road, and the area in front of the school hall doors, will be marked with social distancing indicators. Please use these to ensure you keep at least 2m away from others.
- The school foyer has a marker to ensure that nobody is within 1m of the hatch, and the same on the other side. There is a new Perspex screen to protect staff and visitors. Anti-bacterial alcohol gel is available in the foyer area and all staff and essential visitors to school must use this before entering the building.
- Our corridors are narrow, which we cannot do anything about. However, we have taped off a central divider and put arrow indicators to ensure people keep left. Children will not be moving around the school.
- Classrooms have been measured. Upon entry to each classroom there is a marked 2m exclusion zone for bubble staff. This exclusion zone can also be used by anyone visiting the bubble (such as Mrs Jordan or Mrs Parkes). Individual tables have been positioned so that there is 2m between each child. There is a maximum capacity of 8 children in each standard classroom and 16 children in Reception's larger space.
- Children will be reminded regularly about social distancing, and there will be visual reminders in classrooms and around school. It is important to understand that children cannot adhere to social distancing within their bubbles at all times, only when practical for them to do so.

### *Safeguarding and Child Protection*

- Procedures for dealing with any concerns relating to child protection or safeguarding will remain as normal, and our usual policies are in place. We are aware that for some children, lockdown won't have been a positive experience and that potentially it will have been traumatic for them. Staff are well trained in responding to any issues relating to this.
- We have added an appendix to our Child Protection Policy to take account of COVID-19-related matters and to reflect how we will protect our children at this time.

### *Emergency Evacuation and Lockdown Procedures*

- COVID-19 appendices have been added to these policies
- In the event of a fire or lockdown alarm, we will endeavour to adhere to social distancing and not mixing bubbles IF the risks of doing so are not outweighed by the imminent risk of fire, an on-site intruder etc. We will exercise common sense should an alarm occur, and hope that parents would trust our judgement in so doing.
- During the first week of wider opening, we will carry out a fire evacuation drill.

### *Medical and First Aid*

- Usual policies for medication remain in place. Please make sure inhalers are in school.
- First Aid procedures will be followed as usual, but in the event that a child requires treatment of some kind, the first aider will wear PPE. All of our TAs are first aid trained, and everyone has received online training in correct application, use and disposal of PPE.
- First aid will be administered in the bubble's room or outside on the playground. The First Aid room will be out of bounds to prevent mixing bubbles. Each room will be equipped with basic first aid equipment. Packs of supplies will be provided for bubble adults to take outside.
- If an adult becomes ill with COVID-19 symptoms whilst in school, they will be sent home immediately and will attend for a test (another adult – from the bubble's opposite team – will cover their duties). Parents will be informed and it will be at each parent's discretion to decide whether or not they want their child to remain in school. If the adult is confirmed as having coronavirus, the whole of that bubble (children and staff) will be required to self-isolate for 14 days. The rest of the household does not need to do so.
- If a child in school becomes ill with COVID-19 symptoms, their parent will be called immediately to come and collect them. In the meantime, an adult from their bubble will put on their PPE, take them to Willows Room and wait there with the windows open. For the protection of both parties, the door to the corridor will also remain open so that they are not shut in a room together. The child's parent is expected to take their child to be tested. The rest of the bubble's parents will be informed and it will be at each parent's discretion to decide whether or not they want their child to remain in school. If the child is confirmed as having coronavirus, the whole of that bubble (children and staff) will be required to self-isolate for 14 days. The rest of the household does not need to do so.

### *Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)*

- We are well-stocked with PPE for staff to use in the event that they need it. We have face masks, gloves and aprons, as well hand wash, alcohol gel and approved surface cleaners. Staff have all seen an online tutorial about the correct use of PPE, including how to put on, remove and dispose of a face mask.
- Each child will have their own pack of tissues at their workstations and after use these will be disposed of in the new lidded bins in each bubble's room.

## *Behaviour*

- A COVID-19 appendix has been added to our Behaviour Policy. The full policy is on our website.
- As a school, we will continue to have high expectations of children during their time in school, and whilst we accept that School may be daunting and unsettling - and allowances for that will be made – the usual rules around behaviour will apply: be SAFE; be KIND; be GREAT, and display the behaviours associated with great-ness:
  - **G**ood presentation (of self and work)
  - **R**espectful (of people and property)
  - **E**mbrace challenge (have a go; take a risk)
  - **A**iming high (aspire and achieve)
  - **T**rying your best
- Rewards, such as stickers and stampers, will still be used as appropriate. Staff will apply anti-bacterial alcohol hand gel before giving children stickers. Adults in each bubble may have their own rewards systems that they use with their children.
- Consequences for not following our rules will still be applied, such as being spoken to in their bubble classroom by another member of staff e.g. Mrs Parkes or Mrs Jordan (social distanced in adults' exclusion zone). For full details please see the Behaviour Policy Covid-19 Appendix on our website.
- Please note, that whilst we never take physically 'restraining' children lightly and it is something we would VERY RARELY need to do – and then only by trained staff - at this time, we will not handle/carry/hold children who are in a heightened emotional state and in obvious distress (e.g. kicking/screaming, running off, refusing). If this occurs, parents will be called in to collect their children immediately.

## Keeping Everyone Safe during the COVID-19 Pandemic: Day to day practicalities

- Children are still expected to arrive – and be collected – **on time and** to attend **every day**. If a child is not attending due to illness, the usual procedures for reporting absence will apply (i.e. a phone call to the School Office).  
It is of the utmost importance that children arrive in school at their allocated time and that they are also collected promptly. Late arrivals or collection would result in children having to enter/exit through the main school office. This poses an increased risk to everyone and increases the likelihood that individuals from different bubbles may come into contact. On this basis we are taking the view that children **either arrive on time or don't come in at all**.
- Children need to wear their **school uniform**. We want to ensure that children still see school as school. Because of the difference in the curriculum, the amount of time they will spend working outside etc. and the small numbers, there is a possibility that some children may feel confused about being in school. Wearing their school uniform, can be one aspect that remains normal and familiar. As it is summer term, summer uniform (dresses, shorts) is to be encouraged. As usual, no jewellery or 'fancy' hair accessories, and for ease of hand washing, no watches either.
- To make it easier to do physical activities and outdoor learning, we are suggesting that children wear **trainers or pumps** instead of their usual school shoes. However, please bear in mind that lace-up trainers could present a problem for children who cannot do up their own laces. **Unless a child can tie their own laces, they need to wear Velcro-fastening trainers or basic PE pumps**.
- Children do not need a PE kit in school.
- Children **must bring their own water bottle**, filled at home with water only. This bottle needs to go home each afternoon for cleaning. We have no shared cups.
- For mid-morning break, **children will need a healthy snack**. This includes Reception children as we are not receiving free school fruit deliveries at this time. The healthy snack policy can be found on our website.
- Arrangements regarding school meals have changed. This is due to instructions from the local authority. Please note, they are subject to further change. We will update you as applicable.
  - Children entitled to income-based free school meals (FSM) will continue to receive a voucher. Parents will therefore need to provide their children with a lunchbox from home.
  - Children not entitled to a free school meal (KS2 children) can purchase a grab bag (ordered in the usual way using School Money) or bring a lunchbox.
  - Children in Reception and Y1 who are not entitled to FSM will still be entitled to a universal free school meal if they attend school and will be provided with a grab bag. These need to be ordered on School Money. Alternatively, they may bring a packed lunch.

There will be no cooked meals during this time.

Please note: When providing a lunchbox, please be mindful of accessibility and try not to send any packets or containers that are very difficult for children to open themselves.

- Each bubble will have their own allocated lunchtime supervisor, who will oversee children eating (either in their allocated rooms or, weather permitting, in their outdoor spaces) and then supervise their free play (with social distancing encouraged where appropriate, but not fully expected). Each bubble will have its own box of play time equipment so that they still have plenty to do. Each lunchtime supervisor will have a set of first aid supplies (they are all first aid trained) and a walkie-talkie to make contact with the school office if they require any assistance.

- During the staggered lunchtimes, one of our cleaning staff will carry out a thorough clean of all toilets. Unfortunately, it is not practical to clean the toilets after every individual use.
- Due to the low numbers, and various other factors, **our usual curriculum coverage will not be possible**. Children will however, do age-appropriate activities linked to the curriculum requirements for their year group and be closely matched where possible to the home learning. With a shorter-than-normal school day, and much time being given over to handwashing and other hygiene routines, time for learning will be reduced. We also intend to use much of the time to do **outdoor learning activities**; and are currently planning an **exciting project** we would like all of our children to be involved in.
- Children will **not be allowed to bring book bags** into school. Each child will be provided with their own selection of reading books to be kept in their work space.
- **Pencil cases are not allowed** in school and children will not be allowed to share stationery. Each child will have their own stationery pack containing essential items.
- Children will need to keep the things they bring into school with them in their classrooms, where they will be placed at their work stations. They may only have with them: **cardigan/jumper** and/or **jacket; water bottle; lunchbox; glasses; sunglasses; sun hat**. Children need to have had **sun cream applied before school**.
- Children will have new exercise books to use during this time. Teachers will not be marking in the usual sense of the word. Adults will provide **verbal feedback** to children and the children will then be told by their teacher to tick their work, put a smiley face etc. to indicate that it has been looked at and discussed. Teachers will not be taking books home.
- Each of the bubbles' allocated rooms has an external door and access via the cloakroom (where pegs will be taped off) to their toilets. **There will be no need for children to move around school**. Bumblebee Bubble children will access their toilets via the main central corridor, but the doors leading to upper key stage 2 and to the admin area and key stage 1 will be kept closed.
- Children will have access to a variety of indoor and outdoor learning and play **equipment**, which will be kept within their bubble, and all of **which can be wiped down with anti-bacterial cleaner**. In the event that bubbles need to share any equipment, it will be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected before being passed from one bubble to another. Reception will still access a range of equipment and resources for their play-based learning; this will be cleaned at the end of each day.
- Parents are asked not to come into school but instead to phone in (01384 818285) with any questions or queries. Should a visit to the school office be required, you will find that social distancing is clearly indicated and the hatch now has a new Perspex screen, for the protection of everyone.
- Please be advised that for the foreseeable future, **we will only be allowing essential visitors into school** (this includes contractors carrying out essential repairs or maintenance). Visitors will not have any contact with children or enter bubble classrooms when occupied. Any unavoidable visitors to school will be required to social distance and will have to use alcohol gel before entering the building. Visitors may have been directed to wear face masks by their employers.

*If guidelines change, or there are new government announcements that may alter the way we are currently working, we will, of course, let you know.*

**Keeping Everyone Safe during the COVID-19 Pandemic: *What children can expect to see***

