

**Bridgemere CE Primary School**

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Friday 22nd May 2020

Dear Parents/carers,

**RE: Phased reopening of schools**

I firstly wish to start by thanking you all for your patience and understanding at this very difficult time. I never thought I would find myself as the Executive Headteacher, along with my Senior Leadership Team, having to make such challenging decisions about the operation of our school.

You will hopefully have now read the Cheshire East position statement regarding the opening of schools. Cheshire East felt the 1st June was too soon for schools to open. They have proposed that all maintained, church and academy primary schools that educate the children of the borough open with a phased return from 15th June, as long as it is safe for this to happen.

Yesterday evening, the board of governors for Bridgemere and myself met and agreed that Bridgemere school will follow the local authority’s stance. A great deal of consideration and thought went into deciding whether this was the best pathway forward. Therefore, our school will make this timing their key priority. We are awaiting further guidance, particularly around how we keep our youngest children safe, over the coming days and there will also be additional announcements made by the Government on the 28th May 2020.

The specific details of the school’s pattern of opening and the measures we will be adopting will be communicated to you during the week beginning 8th June. We are working tirelessly to get our plans finalised and many hours of Senior Leadership Team time has been spent in working through every aspect to make the return of your children as safe as possible. It is worth pointing out that although the Government’s intentions of wider opening are for Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 to attend, this may not be possible in our school due to space and staff availability.   
We ask you to understand that many elements are beyond our control and therefore subject to some change but as always, the safety of our children, families, staff and community comes first.

In the meantime, up until 15th June, Acton School will continue to be the hub for all of our key workers’ children and vulnerable children who require places. The school will be open daily (including Bank Holiday).

Below I have produced a FAQs document which will be helpful in giving you a flavour of what school will be like upon your child’s return. We will also be providing further FAQs following the distribution of the opening patterns in each school on the week beginning 8th June 2020.

I appreciate this is a difficult time for all of our families, children and staff and fully empathise with the anxiety that will exist pertaining to our return. This is why it is so important we have the time to produce a comprehensive risk assessment to ensure we are doing everything we can to keep all involved in our school safe.

Kindest regards

Beverley Dolman Elizabeth Ford

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Executive Headteacher Chair of Governors

**Bridgemere CE Primary School**

**Frequently Answered Questions**

***How will the children be grouped and what will the classroom look like?***

It is important to understand that school will not look the way it normally does, particularly for our youngest pupils. Children will attend in small groups that we are calling ‘pods’. These pods will be of a  
maximum of 8-10 children across the classrooms. This is to ensure that we strictly adhere to the 2m social distancing advice when setting out our desks. Each pod will have their own base, teacher and play space outside. It is recommended that each pod is kept separate from all of the others and that pupils and adults stay with the same pod throughout. The children will not necessarily be with the teacher or teaching assistant that they were with before schools closed to the majority of children. Additionally, we will need to change the layout of our classrooms and children may not be in the classroom they are used to and it will not be possible to allow free movement or play. This is due to the guidance that schools are expected to adhere to.

***How will you keep the children apart?***It is widely accepted that social distancing in schools is nearly impossible, especially for our  
youngest pupils. We will endeavour to keep all of our children 2m apart, however there is no guarantee we can do this.

Where necessary, desks will be separated and children will be given their own writing equipment and resources to reduce contamination.

***How will the school run?***All children will be made aware of the rules and expectations of behaviour. We have to treat the safety of every person in the school building as the highest priority and therefore if a child is not willing or able to follow the rules, then their place at school will need to be reviewed.  
We will stagger drop-off and collection times in order to observe social distancing rules. You  
will be informed of your drop-off and collection time during the week beginning 8th June.

Only one adult should accompany the pupil and no siblings please. Parents/ carers should not enter the building or gather at the school gates and doors. We will be adding markings to the ground as far as possible to help parents/carers with social distancing.  
We will be staggering break and lunchtimes so that the ‘pods’ are not mixing together/moving around the school at the same time.  
Movement around the school will be restricted in order to reduce the risk of contact.

***How will you reduce the risk of infection for my child in school?***We will be completing a comprehensive risk assessment to inform us of all the measures we  
can take and we will respond to any new guidance and scientific information that we are given  
immediately. The guidance is clear in stating that it is not recommended for staff to wear PPE – staff will not as a general rule wear face masks, gloves, etc. However, there are times where they will, for example, if they are supervising children who are ill/showing symptoms in school (whilst we wait for parents to collect), undertaking first aid on a child, or if it is necessary for a member of staff to come into very close contact with a child.  
Children will work in ‘pods’ which will not be in contact with another pod.  
Movement in classrooms and around the school will be restricted in order to reduce the risk of contact.  
Personal items such as toys must not come to and from school.

Any packed lunches sent in from home must be in a disposable bag and any cutlery must be  
disposable.  
Very frequent hand washing and sanitising of surfaces will take place (children will be  
encouraged to help keep their own area clean), the ‘catch it, bin it, kill it’ slogan will be  
stressed (bins will be emptied throughout the day).  
Each classroom will be cleaned by a cleaner at the end of every day and a fogger will be used on Fridays after school has closed.  
Sinks for handwashing or hand sanitiser will be available in every classroom.  
Rooms will be as well ventilated as possible with doors and windows open (even if it is cold).  
We will be aiming to do as much outdoor learning as possible since being outdoors carries less risk of infection.  
Outdoor equipment/apparatus/play equipment/climbing frames may not be accessible because of the difficulty of sharing surfaces and of cleaning.  
We encourage you to walk or cycle if at all possible.

***Will my child have to wear school uniform?***We would like children to wear warm, practical clothing with shoes that they can fasten  
themselves. This may be school uniform but does not have to be. It is most important to reduce  
the chance of infection that you send your child in to school in **clean** clothes each day they  
are in school and wash all clothes at the end of the school day and we realise this would be  
difficult for some parents if we enforced school uniform. If your child is scheduled to have a  
specific PE lesson we would ask you to send your child into school wearing appropriate clothing  
for exercise that they can wear all day. We do not want children changing in school and  
bringing in extra clothing.

***What will the children be learning?***Our main focus will be on the children’s health and well-being, PE, English and Maths and on  
helping them transition back to school and to the next stage of their education. We aim to do lots of learning outdoors.

***What if my child becomes unwell?***If anyone has a cough/temperature/feels unwell at school, they will be sent home. They will  
need to self-isolate for 7 days, or until tested negative. Anyone in the child’s household will  
need to self-isolate for 14 days.  
If a child or member of staff shows symptoms and tests positive for CoVid-19, then the whole  
‘pod’ that the child/adult was in must be sent home and they must self-isolate for 14 days.  
Staff and children should not attend if they have symptoms or are self-isolating due to symptoms in their household.

***What if my child has a medical condition or if I, or a member of my family, is ‘shielding’?***Children or parents who are clinically extremely vulnerable (or ‘shielding’) or who live with  
someone who is ‘shielding’ should NOT attend school.

***How can I contact the school?***From the first day the school is open a member of the admin team will be available to answer  
the telephone and to continue to deal with emails.  
**The reception desks will remain closed and no parents should attempt to enter the  
school buildings** – please telephone or email with any questions or concerns.

***My child has been attending because I am a key worker. Can he/she still attend?***Yes. These children will continue with their current arrangements. It is important to note that our school will be following the 2m social distancing and therefore the maximum capacity in our classrooms are 8-10. This is different to the government guidance which states a maximum  
capacity of 15 children per classroom. Therefore, we have a limited number of places available  
and we will be using the same approach for these places as we have before i.e. it must be last  
resort for child care.

***Will you be offering wraparound care through the Before and After School club?***Wrap around care will only be available for the children of key workers or those children deemed vulnerable. This will be chargeable from 15th June 2020.

***Is it compulsory for my child to attend?***It is not compulsory for your child to attend and there will be no sanctions for non-attendance.  
We will endeavour to follow all the guidelines and to take all the precautions we can to keep your child safe should you decide to send your child to school; however, we understand that you will want to make your own decision about what is best for your child under these circumstances and we will support and respect whatever you decide. We appreciate some parents are as yet undecided about sending their pupils back, which we also fully understand. However please note, once our capacity is full, we may not be able to offer your child a place at a later date.

**You can contact the school office by email if you wish to discuss any further concerns  
and a member of the team will call you.**Many thanks again for your continued support throughout this difficult time.