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PLANS FOR THE WIDER OPENING OF SCHOOL TO YEAR 6 CHILDREN

21 May 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

We wrote to parents / carers of children in Year 6 last week about the government's plan to open schools to pupils in Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 from 1st June at the earliest, subject to COVID-19 infection rates being low enough across the country.

We understand that whilst some of you welcome this news, others are anxious about the prospect of your children coming back to school. Everything we have planned is underpinned by government guidance, some of which was only published last Friday and updated as late as today. You can read all of this by clicking [here](#).

In this letter, we want to outline our plans for opening Orchard to Year 6 pupils from **Tuesday 2nd June**, if the government says it is safe to do so. Our hope is that by giving you as much information as possible about how we think we can begin to welcome more pupils back to school, you can be reassured that we are taking all the steps we can to keep everyone as safe as possible. If there is anything you want to discuss after reading the information, please contact school and we will endeavour to speak to you as soon as possible.

We would like to say a big **thank you** to the 50 parents of Year 6 pupils who responded to our survey about returning to school. We said in our letter that knowing how many children we might expect if we open would really help our planning. Unfortunately, only 56% of Year 6 parents responded, which does mean some of our planning is provisional.

We understand there is a lot of information in this letter. This is because it is important for you and your child to get a feel for what school will be like upon wider opening, if the government allows on 2nd June. We would encourage you to talk to your child about the information in this letter. Time permitting, Mr. Brown will look to record a series of short videos next week to cover some of the information above in a way that might be easier to understand for the children.

Thank you for your continued support and our very best wishes go to you all.

Mr. C. Brown
Headteacher
Orchard Academy

Mr. I. Mohamed
Chair of Local Advisory Board
Orchard and Shepherdswell Academy

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Information about wider opening of school to Year 6 pupils

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Who can come to school and when?

Children in Year 6 may be able to come to school on **Tuesday 2nd June** if the government says it is safe to do so.

Pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5 cannot come to school until further notice, even if they have a sibling in Year 6.

School has remained open over the past 9 weeks to children of key workers and those who we have invited for numerous reasons. **This provision will continue after half term regardless of whether the government says we can open to Year 6 or not.**

Government guidance states that:

- *Children and staff who have been classed as clinically extremely vulnerable due to pre-existing medical conditions have been advised to shield. We do not expect people in this category to be attending school, and they will continue to be supported to learn or work at home as much as possible. Clinically vulnerable (but not clinically extremely vulnerable) people are those considered to be at a higher risk of severe illness from coronavirus. Few if any children will fall into this category, but you should follow medical advice if their child is in this category.*
- *A child/young person or a member of staff who lives with someone who is clinically vulnerable (but not clinically extremely vulnerable), including those who are pregnant, can attend their education or childcare setting*
- *If a child or staff member lives in a household with someone who is extremely clinically vulnerable, as set out in the guidance on shielding, it is advised they only attend an education or childcare setting if stringent social distancing can be adhered to and, in the case of children, if they are able to understand and follow those instructions. This may not be possible for very young children and older children without the capacity to adhere to the instructions on social distancing. If stringent social distancing cannot be adhered to, we do not expect those individuals to attend. They should be supported to learn or work at home*
- *staff and children should not attend if they have symptoms or are self-isolating due to symptoms in their household*

Does my child have to come to school?

The government are encouraging children and young people in the eligible year groups and priority groups (such as children of critical workers) to attend unless they are self-isolating or there are other reasons for absence (such as shielding due to health conditions as mentioned above).

Parents should continue to notify us as normal if their children are unable to attend so that we are aware and can discuss this with them.

If parents initially decide not to send their child to school, but later change their mind, they must contact school before their child returns. We will then arrange a 'return to school plan' for your child.

Parents will not be fined for non-attendance at this time.

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Will the school minibus be operating?

Government guidance says:

“Parents and children and young people should be encouraged to walk or cycle [to school] where possible, and avoid public transport at peak times.

They should refer to [guidance on safe travel, particularly on public transport](#).

Home to school transport provided or organised by schools, trusts or local authorities varies widely. Schools, trusts and local authorities should work together and with relevant transport providers to put in place arrangements which fit the local circumstances, including the measures being put in place to reduce contact.”

We do not think it is safe to use the school minibus as a method of travel at the moment. We are in discussions about trying to arrange a safe alternative (such as taxis) but would currently suggest that if parents are able to make alternative arrangements, then they should do so.

Would my child be in their usual class?

Year 6 children will all be in the New Building. Following government social distancing guidance, we can only fit 11 children in our classrooms in the New Building. This means that children may not be in their usual classroom as they will need to be split into 8 groups of 11. We have given each group the name of a colour (e.g. blue group, red group etc.). Each group will have a teacher assigned to them. Because we normally have 3 classes in Year 6 but now need 8 teachers, your child may not have their usual teacher.

Government guidance says:

“...children, young people and staff where possible, should only mix in a small, consistent group and that small group should stay away from other people and groups.”

We are thinking carefully about which children might go into each group and are trying to ensure they would have at least one friend as well as other children who are going to the same secondary school. However, we cannot guarantee your child would be with their friends and will not be able to ‘swap’ children from one group to another.

We will email / text parents by the middle of next week at the latest to inform you which group your child would be in, what room they would be in and which teacher they would have if the government says it is safe for us to open school on 2nd June.

What times would the school be open?

If school opens from 2nd June, different groups of Year 6 children would start / finish the school day at different times in a staggered way. This is to enable everyone to maintain social distancing and prevent a build-up of people at the school entrances.

Children of key workers, those who have been invited to school over the last 8 weeks and pupils with an EHCP will continue to be dropped-off and collected from the school’s main entrance (rear carpark if travelling by taxi). All children and parents should continue to observe the 2 metre social distancing guidelines where possible. Year 6 children should enter the school grounds via either the gate at the front of school by the New Building or via the side gate near the school carpark at their designated staggered arrival time (see below). Two groups will arrive and depart together. These children should then walk to their designated lining-up area on the school playground.

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The designated lining-up areas will be colour-coded according to each child's group. Social distancing guidelines should be observed where possible. Parents wishing to drop-off or collect their Year 6 child should wait outside the designated school gate and observe the social distancing guidelines please.

Group	Room	Entry and Exit Gate	Start Time	Finish Time (Mon*-Thu)	Finish Time (Friday)
Green	Spare Year 5 Class	Front Playground Gate	8:40am	2:45pm	12:00
Blue	Rowan	Rear Gate (near car park)	8:40am	2:45pm	12:00
Red	Sycamore	Front Playground Gate	8:45am	2:50pm	12:05
Orange	Spare Year 6 Class	Rear Gate (near car park)	8:45am	2:50pm	12:05
Yellow	Willow	Front Playground Gate	8:50am	2:55pm	12:10
Purple	Oak	Rear Gate (near car park)	8:50am	2:55pm	12:10
Brown	Elder	Front Playground Gate	8:55am	3:00pm	12:15
Black	Ash	Rear Gate (near car park)	8:55am	3:00pm	12:15

***N.B. school is closed to Year 6 on Monday 1st June**

Why would school be closing early on Fridays?

Planning to teach children takes time. Whether it's printing, photocopying, cutting-up resources or producing lesson-plans, a lot of time and effort goes into the lessons that we deliver to your children. Since 2005, all teachers have been entitled to PPA time: time away from their classroom for planning, preparation and assessment. This is usually 2.5 hours and means that every week, your child would normally have some of their lessons taught by another member of staff (French, P.E., music etc.).

Because of government guidance stating that children and adults should not mix between groups, each teacher assigned to a group will have to stay with the children all day. Therefore, we will be closing early to all children on Fridays to give teachers the opportunity to plan work for the following week. This time is especially important since teachers are planning lessons for groups they are likely to be unfamiliar with, which takes a lot of time and effort.

On Friday afternoons, we will also be deep cleaning each class ready for the next week.

What should children wear to school?

Our expectation is that all pupils should wear clothing that is appropriate for school and can be washed daily. Families will be expected to provide a clean outfit each day. Our school uniform policies are therefore suspended – pupils can wear school uniform or not, but clothing **must be freshly washed and clean each day**.

Does my child need personal protection equipment (PPE)?

The government guidance (implementing protective measures in an education and childcare setting) states:

“Wearing a face covering or face mask in schools or other education settings is not recommended. Face coverings may be beneficial for short periods indoors where there is a risk of close social contact with people you do not usually meet and where social distancing and other measures cannot be maintained, for example on public transport or in some shops. This does not apply to schools or other education settings. Schools and other education or childcare settings should therefore not require staff, children and learners to wear face coverings. Changing habits, cleaning and hygiene are effective measures in controlling the spread of the virus. Face coverings (or any form of medical mask where instructed to be used for specific clinical

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reasons) should not be worn in any circumstance by those who may not be able to handle them as directed (for example, young children, or those with special educational needs or disabilities) as it may inadvertently increase the risk of transmission."

Staff are not required to wear PPE. However, please be aware that some may choose to do so.

What routines would be in place for increased hygiene and safety?

Temperature checking

We may take children's temperatures on arrival to school as a precaution. This would be done with an infrared thermometer which requires no contact with the child. Any staff using a thermometer would have the appropriate training. Further information on what would happen if a child becomes unwell is given later in this letter.

Hand washing

All children (and adults) should wash their hands upon entry into school or their classroom. All handwashing should be in line with the current COVID-19 guidelines and for at least 20 seconds on each occasion. Handwashing routines will continue throughout the course of each day. For example, before and after break and lunch time, after blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing into a tissue and after going to the toilet. Each classroom has a hand-washing sink, soap and paper towels available, with a lidded bin for used tissues and paper towels.

Toilets

Children of key workers and other invited children will continue to use the existing toilet facilities in Year 4 and the changing room toilets at break and lunch times.

Year 6 children will use the toilet facilities in the New Building. For example, groups based in the Year 6 classrooms will use the Year 6 toilets whilst groups based in the Year 5 classrooms will use the Year 5 toilets. Children wishing to go to the toilet will be allowed to go one at a time so that social distancing guidelines are adhered to. The toilets will be cleaned several times throughout the day.

Social distancing measures

In line with government guidance, tape will be placed in the middle of the corridor so that all children walk on the left-hand-side should they need to pass each other. Government guidance states:

"While in general groups should be kept apart, brief, transitory contact, such as passing in a corridor, is low risk."

External classroom doors will be used for Year 6 children to enter and leave their classroom on each occasion. The internal doors to the corridors will be propped open and must only be used when children need to go to the toilet or in an emergency.

Tables will be placed in rows to allow for as close to 2m social distancing as possible. Children will be allocated their own stationary which should be kept on their table.

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Would normal lessons be taught?

Because the children would be returning to school after a long period away and because they are not in their usual teaching groups with their usual teachers, lessons would be different from normal.

We have devised a special curriculum given that children have missed a lot of school time and are potentially anxious about a whole range of issues.

Aims for our curriculum

- To create collective experiences to reduce feelings of isolation
- To provide opportunities for children to express their feelings and emotions and to develop compassion and empathy for others
- To rebuild relationships with peers and staff
- To renew engagement with the process of learning (metacognition)
- To develop resilience
- To work together to understand the safety measures and create a new normality within these to re-establish our Orchard community
- To prepare for transition to secondary school

Each day would start with opportunities for children to talk/ express their feelings and emotions. This might be achieved through circle-times, mindfulness activities and other PSHE sessions. These may need to be revisited throughout the day and explored in a way which meets the needs of the children within each group. Some children may need individual opportunities for this, and we will need to find ways to achieve this whilst adhering to the new safety requirements.

The curriculum would be transparent so that children recognise we are trying to address their knowledge gaps that they might feel acutely aware of. It would also seek to re-introduce a sense of routine. Therefore, our curriculum would include daily maths & English lessons that secure the skills needed for secondary school but with the emphasis being on re-engaging with learning and developing their confidence as learners. For example, this can be achieved in maths through problem-solving activities, solving real life problems and using them in cross-curricular learning. English lessons would be based on familiar stories and content that is entertaining and engaging in order to build confidence. The lessons would consolidate the learning from the Key Stage 2 English curriculum and for some children, will begin to develop text analysis skills that they will use in secondary school.

We also plan to include daily opportunities for outdoor learning to develop social skills and work on group projects such as a filmed end-of-year performance.

What would happen at break and lunch times?

Break times will be staggered for all groups and children will be allocated a colour-coded zone in which they can play either on the school field or playground as appropriate. If it is wet play children will stay at their table in their classroom. The Assistant Headteachers will assist with supervision following social distancing guidelines. The outdoor play equipment will not be in use; this is in accordance with government guidelines for outdoor play areas.

Lunch time will be staggered for all groups and children will eat their lunch and play in the same designated colour-coded zone either on the school field or the playground. If it is wet lunch, children should stay at their table in their classroom and eat their lunch. The Assistant Headteachers and Midday Supervisors will assist with supervision

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following social distancing guidelines. Consideration will be given as to what children will be allowed to do during lunch times in order to allow them some freedom to socialise and 'play' whilst maintaining social distancing.

Lunch time and play time arrangements for children in Cedar class will be decided in consultation with staff when we are aware which children will be in school.

Catering

From 2nd June, all kitchen staff will return to work and the kitchen will re-open. Meals will be served as 'packed-lunches,' delivered to classrooms to avoid unnecessary mixing of children as per government guidance. We will continue our 'free school meal' service for those children in school and those at home.

What would happen if a child became unwell?

Children should not attend school if they are unwell, or if someone in their household is suffering from coronavirus symptoms.

If anyone in an education or childcare setting becomes unwell with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature, or has a loss of, or change in, their normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia), they will be sent home and advised to follow the government's [COVID-19: guidance for households with possible coronavirus infection guidance](#). The child's parents will be notified immediately.

If a child is awaiting collection, they will be moved, if possible, to the Reading Room where they will be isolated behind a closed door, depending on the age of the child and with appropriate adult supervision if required. Temperature-permitting, windows will be opened for ventilation. If it is not possible to isolate the child, they will be moved to an area which is at least 2 metres away from other people.

If the pupil needs to use the toilet while waiting to be collected, they will use a separate toilet if possible. The toilet area would be cleaned and disinfected using standard cleaning products before being used by anyone else.

PPE will be worn by staff caring for the child while they await collection if a distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained (such as for a very young child or a child with complex needs).

What would happen if someone were to test positive for COVID-19?

If a child or staff member develops symptoms compatible with coronavirus, they will be sent home and advised to self-isolate for 7 days. Their fellow household members should self-isolate for 14 days. All staff and students who are attending school will have access to a test if they display symptoms of coronavirus and are encouraged to get tested in this scenario.

Where the child or staff member tests negative, they can return to school and the fellow household members can end their self-isolation.

Where the child or staff member tests positive, the **rest of their group will be sent home and advised to self-isolate for 14 days**. The other household members of that wider group do not need to self-isolate unless the child, or staff member they live with in that group subsequently develops symptoms.

As part of the national test and trace programme, if other cases are detected within the cohort or in the wider setting, Public Health England's local health protection teams will conduct a rapid investigation and will advise school on the most appropriate action to take. In some cases, a larger number of other children may be asked to self-isolate at home as a precautionary measure – perhaps the whole group, site or year group. According to government guidance, closure of the whole school will not generally be necessary, though all parents would be notified of a positive test result.

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What cleaning arrangements are in place at school?

Cleaning will be carried out from 7:30am until 8:30am and then from 3:00pm until 4:30pm. Between these times, a member of cleaning or site staff will be spot-cleaning all constantly touched surfaces, handles, toilet flushes etc.

We will be following government guidance as set out in [COVID-19: cleaning in non-healthcare settings](#).

We will clean surfaces that children are likely to be touching, such books, desks, chairs, doors, sinks, toilets and light switches etc. more regularly than normal.

We will also seek to ensure that all adults and children:

- frequently wash their hands with soap and water for 20 seconds and dry thoroughly. See the [guidance on hand cleaning](#)
- clean their hands upon arrival at school, before and after eating, and after sneezing or coughing
- are encouraged not to touch their mouth, eyes and nose
- use a tissue or elbow to cough or sneeze and use bins for tissue waste ('catch it, bin it, kill it')

We will:

- ensure that help is available for children who have trouble cleaning their hands independently
- consider how to encourage young children to learn and practise these habits through games, songs and repetition
- ensure that bins for tissues are emptied throughout the day
- ensure, where possible, that all spaces are well ventilated using natural ventilation (opening windows) or ventilation units
- prop doors open, where safe to do so (bearing in mind fire safety and safeguarding), to limit use of door handles and aid ventilation

Government guidance states that there is no need for anything other than normal personal hygiene and washing of clothes following a day at school.

What equipment might be used and how is the school reducing risk?

Play equipment including the table tennis tables will be out of bounds for the foreseeable future.

Government guidance suggests reducing the use of shared resources:

- by limiting the amount of shared resources that are taken home and limiting exchange of take-home resources between children and staff
- by seeking to prevent the sharing of stationery and other equipment where possible. Shared materials and surfaces should be cleaned and disinfected more frequently
- although practical lessons can go ahead if equipment can be cleaned thoroughly and the classroom or other learning environment is occupied by the same children or young people in one day, or properly cleaned between cohorts. This applies to musical instruments and P.E. equipment

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Are visitors still allowed in school?

Parents are asked not to come to Reception and telephone the School Office instead if possible.

We will check our suppliers know and understand appropriate social distancing and hygiene arrangements. No other routine visitors will be accepted without the Headteacher's permission, with the exception of governors or East Midlands Academy Trust staff (who should only visit site when necessary). We are limiting the number of contractors on site for the foreseeable future.

What if a child is misbehaving?

We hope most of our children would be excited to come back to school, and we know that behaviour is usually excellent. To help provide some much-needed consistency for our pupils, the Orchard Academy Behaviour Regulation policy will remain in place throughout the summer term. Our pupils are familiar with, understand and respond to the traffic-light system. The pupils know that following the behaviour Regulation policy leads to them and others to becoming responsible citizens, enjoying the journey, enjoying the success and achieving together. We will put the mental and social development of our pupils first at this time so any use of the traffic lights or behaviour regulation policy needs to be flexible. We will remain consistent with our expectations, yet flexible in our approach and practice.

One area of the traffic-light system that will require change is the outcomes when a child is put on 'Red.' The current policy states that the child will be sent to the classroom next door in order to reflect and complete a 4W sheet. Due to social distancing measures, this cannot happen when school begins to open more widely, since we will not be mixing pupils or adults from different groups. In the case of a child being put on 'Red,' Assistant Headteachers Mr. Bartishel and Mr. Wilson will be supporting all staff and will be present in the New Building. When called for, they will come to the class to collect the child, reflecting on the problems and decisions before returning them to the group. Further failure to follow instructions and respond appropriately will be dealt with in the same way.

It is very important that children understand that any behaviour which could potentially endanger or upset others relating to the possible spread of germs will be treated incredibly seriously and will likely result in them being sent home. This includes (but is not limited to) deliberately coughing, sneezing or making comments about others' personal hygiene.

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Will online learning still be available if my child is at home?

Government guidance refers to schools using their 'best endeavours' to provide home learning if wider opening occurs on 2nd June. Most staff would be back at school and so would not be able to update the website quite as frequently as we have been. However, we are mindful that many of our children will now have some established routines at home and the provision of home learning tasks for those children will still be important and helpful. Therefore, we intend to keep this provision running as best we can until such a time that all children can return to school.

Currently, Year Group Leaders are updating their Year Group's webpages each day with new learning tasks, but with more staff needing to be in school each day it may not be possible to continue updating the, as frequently as before. To continue to support children at home we will seek to ensure the following:

- A link to the [White Rose Maths pages](#) is put onto the website where children can access a Daily Maths lesson with video input and activities to complete.
- A link to the [Classroom Secrets Home Learning website](#) is put onto the website for parents to download. We will continue to print these for collection.
- A copy of [First News](#) along with the Activity sheets, Quiz questions and Puzzles is put onto the website for parents to download and children to complete.
- Children will be encouraged to continue to make good use of the online learning resources that they are subscribed to: Bug Club, TT Rockstars, SumDog, Spelling Shed.
- A link to the [BBC Home Learning website](#) will be promoted through the school website too so that children are able to access new learning materials each day.

We will continue to produce the Daily Task Sheets for children to complete. There will also be a selection of activities from [Oak National Academy](#) to support Science and Topic learning during the Summer Term which links to topics that pupils would have been learning if they had been at school. These resources will be uploaded to the school website ready for 1st June.

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