

16 July 2020

## Information about Returning to School – September 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope you and your families are well. I know you have been patiently waiting for further information about September and how it will look here at school.

The government published their [guidance to schools for full opening](#) on 2<sup>nd</sup> July and whilst we now have outline plans that I can share, there will be a more detailed letter sent to you in mid-August after the government confirms it is safe to fully reopen in September. We are expecting an announcement from them on 11<sup>th</sup> August.

Our staff training days in September are on Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> and Friday 4<sup>th</sup>. School is closed to pupils on these days.

**Year 3** will start school on **Monday 7<sup>th</sup> September**.

**Years 4, 5 and 6** will start on **Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> September**.

We are mindful that Year 3 pupils are starting a brand new (much bigger) school, having not been at their own schools since March and in some cases having not visited Orchard before. The decision has been taken to open to Year 3 only on Monday 7<sup>th</sup> September so that we can safely show them around the school site during the day and allow them time to adapt to their new surroundings and procedures.

### Uniform and Equipment

The government's current position is that all students in all year groups will be able to return to school, full-time, from September. The guidance is clear that full school uniform can be worn, and that clothing will not need to be washed any more frequently than usual. We will therefore expect **all students to be in full school uniform** from September. We appreciate that financially these are difficult times, so if any family fears they will find the cost of uniform too high, they should contact [the school office](#) and we will help with second-hand uniform. All items will have, of course, been washed.

Your child's teacher will inform the class of the days they will be doing P.E. at school. We will temporarily be asking children to come to school wearing their P.E. kit on those days.

To minimise the amount of equipment travelling to / from home, we ask that you **do not** send your child in with a **pencil case**. We will provide all relevant and clean stationery for the children. Lunchboxes will be allowed to be brought to and from school.

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Orchard and Shepherdswell  
Academy  
Together we will achieve.

## Timings of the Day

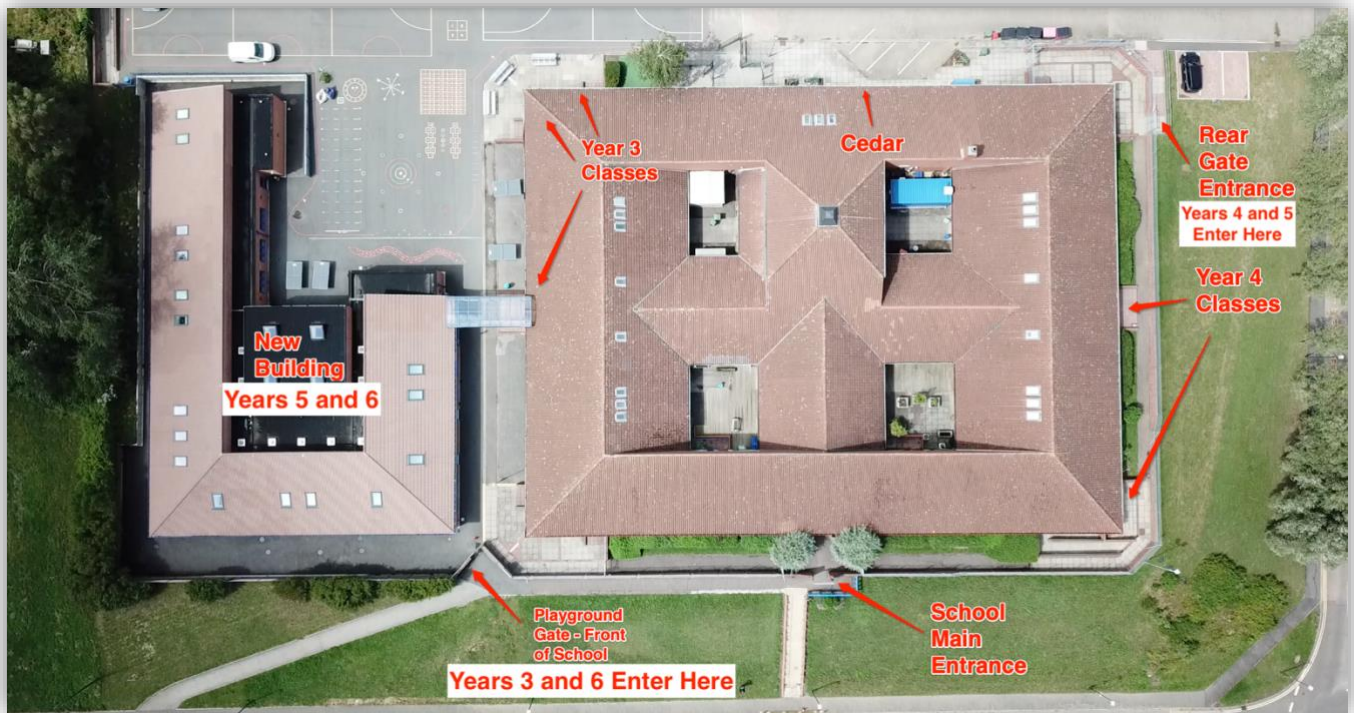
There will be a staggered start and finish for different year groups until further notice. The times have been decided in collaboration with Shepherdswell Academy in order to try to allow for parents with children at both schools to be able to go between sites at relevant times, particularly if their child is in Year 3 and / or 4 at Orchard.

**Years 3 and 4, along with the children in Cedar class, will start each school day at 08:30 and finish at 15:00. The school gates will open at 08:20 and 14:50.**

**Years 5 and 6 will start each school day at 08:45 and finish at 15:15.**

Of real concern is that children in Years 5 and 6 will arrive early to school and add to potential congestion at the gates as the Year 3 and 4 children arrive. **Please speak to your child(ren) in Years 5 and 6 to ensure they understand they must try to arrive at the school site as close to 08:45 as possible.**

## Entry and Exit from School



**Year 3** children should enter and exit the school by the **playground gate at the front of school**. In the morning, they should go straight to their classroom areas, and whilst waiting for the doors to be opened we ask that parents ensure they maintain **social distancing**.

**Year 4** children should enter and exit the school by the **rear pedestrian gate on Ravensbourne Place**. Please **do not** walk through the **vehicle gates into the school car park**. In the morning, they should go straight to their classroom areas, and whilst waiting for the doors to be opened we ask that parents ensure they maintain **social distancing**.

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**Year 5** children should enter and exit the school by the **rear pedestrian gate on Ravensbourne Place**. Please **do not** walk through the **vehicle gates into the school car park**. In the morning, they should go straight to their classroom doors and line up sensibly.

**Year 6** children should enter and exit the school by the **playground gate at the front of school**. In the morning, they should go straight to their classroom areas and line up sensibly.

We ask that parents of **Year 5 and Year 6** children do not come onto school site if possible, to minimise risk to everyone and ensure we can maintain social distancing.

Children going to **Cedar** class should go straight to Cedar as usual, using the **rear pedestrian gate on Ravensbourne Place**.

All children will be required to wash their hands when they enter school and regularly throughout the day. This includes, of course, at break and lunchtime and at the end of the day before going home. We will begin the term by re-iterating good handwashing and hygiene routines.

As stated in the government guidance, only children over the age of 11 should wear face coverings. This does not apply to any child at Orchard and so face coverings are not required at any time.

### Parents and Carers Visiting School

We ask that parents and carers remain vigilant during travel to / from school. Recent reports from the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE – the body that provides scientific and technical advice to support government decision makers during emergencies) have said that transmission of COVID-19 is more likely to occur before and after school because of parents / carers interacting with each other around school drop-off / pick-up. This includes, for example, gathering at classroom entrances or in local places such as shops.

Normally, we encourage parents to visit school and particularly welcome brief conversations at the classroom door before and after school. Sadly, these conversations usually result in a gathering of parents at classroom doors, so we will temporarily be trying to restrict these. We ask that you are as quick and efficient as possible in dropping your child at school and leaving the site. We are planning ways in which you might be able to communicate a short message with your child's teacher before / after school. I will provide more detail about this in my next letter to you.

We also ask that you temporarily avoid visiting the school office if at all possible. We are ready to take your phone calls and answer your email queries.

### School Minibus

The school minibus will run as normal. You should have already received information on how to request a place for this service by email. All students will be required to sanitise their hands before they get on the bus, as they get off and when arrive at school.

### Breakfast Club and School Meals

Breakfast club will resume from September, as will school meals. More information about safety measures we are introducing to breakfast club will follow in my August communication. Please be aware, however, that to ensure we can operate with safe numbers of pupils, your child(ren) will not be allowed to attend unless you have booked a place for them in advance.

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## Curriculum

Our **curriculum will remain broad and balanced**, which means that all students will still be able to access the full range of subjects. However, the core subjects of English, Maths and Science will likely have a little more curriculum time than they would normally in order to aid catch-up in these vital subjects where necessary.

Pupils' progress during the closure period and on-going throughout the year will be analysed continuously in order for **staff to identify students who are most in need of intervention and support**. We will spend the first few weeks allowing teachers to try to identify if and where any gaps in the children's knowledge might exist.

We have been so impressed by the resilience our children have shown through the period of lockdown. Many have shared experiences and successes with us throughout this time, and some of those have been shared on our Facebook page or our website. The children who have been in school this term have responded very positively to being back in school and have talked about their experiences of lockdown openly. We are confident that the vast majority of our pupils are secure and ready to return to school and rebuild their social connections. However, our staff team are ready to support all children as necessary, and we will provide support for those who find the transition back to school full-time more difficult.

Re-establishing good attendance and behaviour is of course a vital part of restoring full social and emotional wellbeing. Children will be expected to attend every day and wear full uniform. I am sure you will also appreciate how important it is for all children to have good hygiene routines and procedures in order to keep all staff and pupils as safe as possible. Please take time to talk with your child and to reinforce with them that they must behave responsibly and play a positive part in helping to control the pandemic.

We are very much hoping that when September comes, we will be able to welcome all pupils back into school. In the meantime, may I wish you a very happy and safe summer.

A great way to stay in touch with us is through our social media accounts on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#). Please follow / like these to stay up to date with all the latest information. You can also contact us through the summer at [school@orchard.emat.uk](mailto:school@orchard.emat.uk), should you have any questions or require any assistance.

Yours sincerely,



Mr. C. Brown  
Headteacher

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