



Dear Parents and Carers,

Return to school in September

22.7.2020

We are looking forward to welcoming children back to school full time from Thursday 3rd September.

The purpose of this letter is to let you know the routines, procedures and policies that we have been successfully implementing and will be adapting to enable us to bring back safely the vast majority of pupils in September.

School has reviewed the statutory risk assessment that is currently in place and is organising the school's reopening in line with the Government's guidance which can be found at the links below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-for-full-opening-special-schools-and-other-specialist-settings/guidance-for-full-opening-special-schools-and-other-specialist-settings>

All of the information provided below is intended to be in place for the autumn term but will be under constant review. However, if there is a peak in infection rate and more stringent conditions need to be enforced, the arrangement may need to change at short notice.

Essential Measures include:

- A requirement that children who are ill stay at home
- Robust hand and respiratory hygiene
- Enhanced cleaning arrangements
- Active engagement with NHS Test and Trace
- Formal consideration of how to reduce contacts and maximise distancing between those in school wherever possible and minimise potential for contamination so far as is reasonably practicable.

What should I do if my child is unwell?

At all times Valley School has a number of pupils in school who are exceptionally vulnerable to any infection. It is essential that children who are ill should stay at home. So far we have had no positive tests and we want this to remain the case.

Our children do not all have the capability to let us know they are ill; if you suspect your child maybe ill, we ask that you err on the side of caution and keep them at home. This is different to our usual practice.

For further information please read the letter to parents/carers on the website from the school nursing service (dated July 2020)

What will happen if an adult or child presents with COVID-19 symptoms in school?

We have a designated isolation room, which is separate from the other classrooms, well ventilated and is close to an exit and a sink/toilet. The child's parent will be notified to come and collect them immediately. Whilst the child is waiting, they will be supported by a member of staff who will wear PPE equipment. After they have left the building, the isolation room will be thoroughly cleaned. Any child or member or staff who displays symptoms will be strongly encouraged to be tested for COVID-19 and to notify school of the results.

What will happen if an adult or child has a positive test for COVID-19?

WE ASK THAT ALL FAMILIES CONTACT SCHOOL AS SOON AS THERE IS A CONFIRMED C19 CASE IN YOUR HOME.

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/self-isolation-and-treatment/>

How will children and staff be grouped in school?

As a small school we plan to operate as one 'bubble'; this will allow the greatest effectiveness with regard to:

- supporting the needs of children
 - delivering the curriculum
 - working with therapists
 - using staff flexibly
 - using all parts of the school including shared facilities including the white room and SI room
- Class groups will not come together during the day. They will eat lunches in their classrooms.
 - Large group gatherings such as assemblies will not happen.
 - The Key Stage 1 and 2 playgrounds will remain shared spaces used by several classes.

How will children and staff social distance?

The government acknowledges that we will not be able to maintain social distancing for young children and those with complex needs: this is all pupils at Valley. It is acceptable for these children not to observe social distancing within their class group.

The staff will maintain social distancing wherever possible and additional spaces will be created for staff breaks.

What is the policy around PPE?

We will continue to follow PPE guidelines and gloves and aprons will be worn when supporting pupils with intimate care. We may decide to risk assess staff to wear masks for short periods of time for specific activities which are considered high risk.

How will home/school transport operate?

School transport should stay as 'normal' as possible. You will receive information from the Local Authority Travel Co-ordination team in August as to specific routes.

If families who usually access transport feel they would like to bring children to school on a temporary basis please inform school and the Travel Co-ordination team (0161 474 2504).

How will you meet the children at the front door at the start at the school day?

Parents and school transport will arrive at the front entrance as normal but adults and children are asked not to enter the foyer but to wait remembering to social distance. From 9.00 school staff will come outside to meet children and escort them to classes as quickly as possible to keep access to school clear. You may choose to arrive between 9.00 and 9.15 to stagger the arrival times.

How will you collect your child at the end of the school day?

Parents collecting children should arrive between 3.00 – 3.10. Please make the office team aware that you have arrived and then wait outside until a member of staff brings your child to you.

Will teaching and learning be different?

Through autumn, the focus of the curriculum will be on each child's well-being and re-establishing the excellent relationships that your children have with the adults in school. We will also be moving them on in their personalised learning at an appropriate pace as well as assessing where children are in all areas of their learning so we can set realistic targets in their next IEPs.

We are planning to do more teaching through play and make even better use of our outdoor spaces. This is good for everyone's physical and mental health and will in turn give all children the very best chances of making the outstanding progress that is so typical of children at Valley.

Will my child be going on educational visits?

Some offsite visits will resume but with enhanced risk assessments however some activities such as horse riding will not be taking place in September. Class teachers will keep you informed.

What is the policy around attendance at school?

In March when the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak was increasing we made clear no parent would be penalised or sanctioned for their child's non-attendance at their education setting. Now the circumstances have changed guidance states that, "it is vital for all children to return to their education setting to minimise, as far as possible, the longer-term impact of the outbreak on children's education, wellbeing and wider development. Missing out on more time in the classroom risks pupils or students falling further behind."

Attendance will therefore be mandatory again from the beginning of the autumn term, however there may be a small number of students who will be following advice to continue to shield from a specialist health professional. If this is the case, please inform school at your earliest convenience and home learning work will be arranged.

What should I do if my child is anxious about returning to school?

If you feel that your child may struggle to transition back to school, let school know and the class teacher will contact you in September to discuss a very personalised approach.

What should I do if I have additional questions?

If you have any concerns please contact me at school and I will endeavour to ensure all those returning and joining us in September have full peace of mind. We are looking forward to getting back to relative normality and welcoming back children on the 3rd September.

I would like to reiterate my personal thanks to all parents, who have been so supportive of the school throughout this incredibly challenging time. It has been greatly appreciated. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any queries about the procedures in place. This letter and the full risk assessment are available on our website.

Kind regards

Debbie Thompson