



Orchard Community Primary School

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Deputy Headteacher: Mr John Patching

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www.orchardprimary.org

18.8.2021

Confirmation - August opening and Covid safety measures

Dear Parents/Carers,

Following my letter on 29th June, I can confirm that there are no changes to provisional opening arrangements. (I have included this information again at the end of the letter in case you missed the email).

Based on Stage 4 guidance produced by the government in July and updated yesterday, we have finalised our Covid safety measures for the first half of the Autumn Term. A summary of the procedures that we will be adopting is included in this letter. Our Risk Assessment and Outbreak Management Plan will be available to view on the school website.

Covid safety measures will be stepped up or down according to the local and national context, as well as the number of cases within school. In the event of a 'Variant of Concern' (VoC) we will have to resort to the tighter measures outlined in the Outbreak Management Plan.

Please forgive the long letter but there is a lot of information to share.

Covid Safety Measures

As you'll be aware, since 19 July the vast majority of coronavirus restrictions have been lifted. The general regulations affecting Covid risk assessment remain in place however and schools and employers remain obliged to risk assess and take all reasonably practicable steps to ensure the health, safety and welfare of staff, pupils and visitors to the site.

It remains vital therefore that appropriate mitigating measures are put in place to minimise the potential for contamination so far as is reasonably practicable.

Following a lot of consideration, whilst it is appropriate for us to move beyond the very restrictive approach to dealing with COVID that has been necessary to date, as a school leader, I would like to relax Covid restrictions *cautiously* during the first half-term, with the objective of returning to 'normality' for Autumn Term 2.

'Bubbles'

The requirement to organise pupils into bubbles has ceased. However, preventing mixing of pupils is a very effective way of stopping large-scale transmission of the virus and unions are advising schools to continue to consider limiting the mixing of pupils as part of their risk assessment.

- To reduce the potential risk of a spike in infections at the start of the Autumn Term, pupils will be organised into 'Phase/Key Stage' bubbles initially so that the numbers of pupils mixing fully are still restricted. This means that whilst pupils will mostly be working in their own class groups during the day as per the norm, pupils in the same phase (EYFS; Key Stage 1; Lower Key Stage 2 or Upper Key Stage 2) are able to mix for inspiration days, break/lunchtimes, interventions, changing books.
- I am keen to reduce 'close contact' interactions between individuals across phases at the very start of the new academic year until I can see 'how the land lies' re: positive cases in school. All whole school assemblies held in the hall will therefore not resume until Monday 13th September.



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- Pupils from different year groups will be able to mix for Wraparound Care and extra-curricular clubs as close contacts can be easily identifiable.

Contact tracing & self-isolation guidance (info taken from updated DfE document August 2021)

- Schools are no longer required to undertake contact tracing - Test, Trace, Protect (TTP) teams will be responsible for contacting each positive case and collecting information about their close contacts both within and outside the school/setting.
- It is their role to identify which individuals meet the definition of a close contact and therefore may need to self-isolate. They will still need to work with the school however to agree on communication with those who are required to self-isolate and those who may return to school; initial precautionary action by school may be required.
- Government guidance now states that children under the age of 18 years old no longer need to self-isolate if they're contacted by NHS Test and Trace as a close contact of a positive COVID-19 case. Instead, they'll be advised to take a PCR test and should attend school whilst awaiting the result of PCR test.
- Similarly, fully vaccinated adults are exempt from isolation requirements. Double vaccinated individuals identified by TTP as close contacts are advised to take a PCR test. Anyone who tests positive following the PCR test will then be legally required to self-isolate, irrespective of their vaccination status. In the event of a negative PCR test, a double vaccinated person does not need to complete the 10 day isolation period.
- **We are not following this guidance initially however. Senior Leaders and I don't believe that this is the most robust method of protecting others from potential infection in school, and would politely request that Orchard pupils (and staff) identified by TTP as close contacts *should* self-isolate until a negative PCR test result has been obtained. I would also politely request that any parents/carers identified as a close contact do not visit the school site until they have had a negative PCR result.**
- **I appreciate that this action is different to the official 'rule' but guidance states that "close contacts *may* wish to consider additional measures after taking a PCR test, including limiting close contact with other people outside their household, especially in enclosed spaces". I am therefore enforcing this additional government advice in order to keep everyone at Orchard as safe as possible. We really do not want to have a scenario where an asymptomatic pupil/staff member attends school for a day or two whilst they're waiting for a PCR result, only to then test positive after bringing the virus back into the classroom and causing an outbreak in school.**
- NB: Isolation periods start immediately from when symptoms started, or, if no symptoms, from when a test was taken. The isolation period includes the day the symptoms started (or the day the test was taken if no symptoms), **and** the next 10 full days.
- Adults who are not fully vaccinated must still self-isolate.
- The government state that learners, staff and other adults must not come into a school or setting if they:
 - have COVID-19 symptoms
 - have tested positive for COVID-19
 - live with someone who has COVID-19 symptoms
 - live with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19
 - have been identified as a contact of a positive case in the last 10 days

Bubble 'closure'

- To enable the school to support the Test, Trace and Protect team to identify close contacts, staff will try to secure consistency in classroom and lunchtime seating for the first half-term. (Restricted seating arrangements should hopefully minimise the number of pupils needing to isolate in the event of a positive case).





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Social Distancing for parents/carers: Drop-off & Collection

In addition to the arrangements already communicated:

- I would like to ask parents to continue to wear a face-mask on site initially and until further notice - although this is of course now voluntary. I am basing this decision on the current government advice re: mask wearing ("We expect and recommend that members of the public continue to wear face coverings in crowded and enclosed spaces where you come into contact with people you don't normally meet"). NB: Orchard staff will be free to use their own judgement on wearing a face-mask within school although it is still recommended for communal areas.
- We are relaxing our previous 'one only' adult on site for drop off/collection measure.

Break-times & Lunchtime

- Staggered timings will continue with pupils playing and eating in their key stage phases.
- We will be serving hot meals in the hall at lunchtime for the first time in nearly 18 months. Please allow us time to embed this system again bearing in mind that 'new' lunchtime logistics will be very challenging with 320 pupils.

Visitors to the site

- I would like to ease restrictions on access to school by third parties for the first few weeks of the new term gradually (parents, members of the public, visitors etc).
- Parents are still encouraged to communicate with staff via Dojo or at drop off/collection times in the first instance. Any essential face to face meetings in school will ensure that a 1 metre physical/social distance can be maintained from the school staff member and the parent/visitor. Appointments are preferred please.
- Visitors will be asked if they have any symptoms of COVID19 or have had contact with anyone who has symptoms of COVID19, before they arrive on site.
- There will be reduced numbers in the school reception area still (one in/ one out).
- Parent volunteers can hopefully be booked in for after half-term providing positive cases remain low in school.

Hand washing & hygiene

- Pupils will still wash their hands regularly with soap and water, including when they arrive at school, when they return from break and before and after eating (hand gel will also still be available in school for use).

Ventilation and cleaning

- Advice around cleaning and ventilation remains in place and we will continue to ensure that enhanced cleaning takes place, with touch surfaces being cleaned and disinfected at least twice a day, people regularly washing or sanitising their hands, and good ventilation of all rooms being achieved through the opening of doors and windows.

Pupils who fall ill during school hours

- We will continue to implement our policy of sending any member of the school with a high temperature or potential Covid symptoms home immediately.





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Educational visits & Residential

- We will go ahead with domestic residentials and other education visits, as well as welcoming external visitors back into school.
- Whilst masks for secondary pupils travelling on public transport are commonplace still, there is no requirement for Orchard pupils to wear a mask when travelling in phases/small groups to sporting events, trips etc.

After-school/lunchtime clubs

- Outdoor after-school clubs will be run in mixed age groups. Details of clubs to follow.
- Lunchtime clubs/clubs held indoors, will be phased based for the first half-term.

Remote Education

- Where pupils are self-isolating, there is still a requirement to provide remote education. However, this will not extend to other situations, such as when pupils are off sick.

Testing for Staff

- Lateral Flow Testing is voluntary, but staff will still be strongly encouraged to continue to participate in twice weekly testing to further reduce the risk of asymptomatic transmission within the workplace.

Communications

- Pupils will get a full safety briefing on their first day. Updates to parents/carers will be communicated via email.

General school information previously communicated on 29th June

Classes

EYFS: Green Apples - Mrs T. McGravie & Red Apples - Mr L. Owen

Key Stage 1 (KS1)

Class 1 (Year 1) - Mrs I. Parker

Class 2 (Year 1) - Miss K. Sheldon

Class 3 (Year 2) - Miss T. Wrench

Class 4 (Year 2) - Mr A. Cooper

Lower Key Stage 2 (LKS2)

Class 5 (Year 3) - Mr J. Patching & Miss Webster

Class 6 (Year 3/4) - Mrs E. Wood

Class 7 (Year 4) - Miss J. Hudspith

Upper Key Stage 2 (UKS2)

Class 8 (Year 5) - Mrs M. Cotterill & Mrs G. Sheldon

Class 9 (Year 5/6) - Miss L Farrar

Class 10 (Year 6) - Miss C. Brown





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Opening arrangements

Monday 23rd & Tuesday 24th August - INSET (training day) for all staff

Wednesday 25th August - School opens for **all Year 1 – Year 6 classes**

EYFS: Pre-start session 1.15-2.45pm (Red Apples Thursday 26th August; Green Apples Friday 27th August). Official start days: Group 1 - Tuesday 31st August, Group 2 - Wednesday 1st September, Group 3 - Thursday 2nd September.

Timings of the school day

- Doors open at 8.35am.** Pupils **must** be in their classroom for the new registration time of 8.45am please. Pupils' punctuality will be closely monitored.

Year Group	EYFS	Y1 & 2 (Classes 1,2,3 & 4)	Y3 & 4 (Classes 5,6 & 7)	Y5 & 6 (Classes 8,9 & 10)
Morning Arrival Window	8.35-8.45am KS1 Playground	8.35-8.45am KS1 Playground	8.35-8.45am LKS2 verandah	8.35-8.45am LKS2 verandah (Class 8) Through car park/KS2 playground (Classes 9/10)
Registration	8.45am	8.45am	8.45am	8.45am
Finish/Collection	3.05pm KS1 playground	3.05pm KS1 playground	3.15pm KS1 playground Class 6 (Y3/4) & Class 7 (Y4) KS2 playground Class 5 (Y3)	3.15pm Classes 8, 9 & 10 via the KS2 playground

- Parents of older pupils are asked to drop their children off at the main gate - pupils can enter via the Lower Key Stage 2 verandah door at the bottom of the main pathway, or will walk through the KS2 playground to Classes 9 & 10.
- We would like to keep the one-way gate system to avoid congestion on the pathways.
- Entry to the school site will still be via the main drive pathway, whether walking round to KS1 or through the car park for KS2, again to avoid congestion.
- To exit the site, we would ask all parents/pupils who use the KS1 playground at home time to leave via the KS1 playground gate. Pupils/parents who use the KS2 playground should leave via the main entrance.
- Whilst the car park driveway as an exit route for KS2 parents/pupils will be closed, we would like to ask KS2 parents to still collect via the car park, to wait on the KS2 playground and use the side pathway as their exit.
- Parents of older pupils are also welcome to meet their children at the main gates. **If your child will be walking home by themselves, then please inform the class teacher of this arrangement.**
- Staff will continue to 'Meet and Greet' at drop off/collection times so that parents can continue to pass on any last minute messages. You are best however to message the class teacher directly via Dojo, or email the school office as we are still restricting access into school for the first half-term.

Lunchtimes & Wraparound Care

- Please book your child's hot meal via School Money.**
- Breakfast and After-school Club will run from Wednesday 25th August. A separate letter was sent out in May regarding arrangements. **Again, places can be booked via School Money. Please register with the office in order to be added to the booking system.**





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General Information

- Due to space restrictions in the cloakrooms, only pupils in Year 5 and 6 may bring in their own small school bags – other pupils are asked to use a school logo blue book bag.
- Pupils are asked to limit the amount of equipment they bring into school each day and should not bring in other possessions apart from a lunch box, reading book, cap/hat, homework book, mobile phone (if necessary) and/or a water bottle i.e. no card games, sticker albums, soft toys etc. as these so easily get lost.
- Pupils in Key Stage 2 may bring in their own pencil cases/stationery if they wish to do so although this is not really required as school provides all necessary resources.
- **Pupils should bring in a labelled water bottle as the water fountains will not be used in the near future.**
- Whilst we relaxed our uniform policy slightly during the pandemic, from August we will be returning to our standard uniform policy. No trainers please. Details can be found on the website.
- **A letter regarding our new PE Uniform policy was sent in May. Pupils will wear the official PE kit to school on their PE days. (See website).**
- **Pupils in Key Stage 2 should bring a pair of 'outdoor shoes' in a drawstring bag to change in to for field use at break and lunchtime (this footwear needs to be different to their school shoes and trainers used for PE please).**
- Please make sure that all of your child's belongings are labelled with their name.

Please feel free to get in touch with any questions or concerns you may have about the adjustments/protective measures in place from August.

Warmest regards

Fiona Shields - Headteacher