



Explore, Learn and Grow Together

Brewery Road  
Wooller  
Northumberland  
NE71 6QF

Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2020

Dear Parents/Carers

I am writing to share with you all how we are planning to reopen the school next month. I am sure that you will all be aware of the announcement by the government encouraging schools to look at the possibility of being able to open to more children from 1<sup>st</sup> June. The government have indicated children in the Early Years, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 are the first to be prioritised and we have generated a plan to meet this ambition in a safe and considered way to enable us to start to reopen both of our schools from Monday 8<sup>th</sup> June.

Before I outline our plans I would like to take this opportunity to say a HUGE THANK YOU to the staff teams across the schools who have been working hard both in school and from home throughout the lockdown. They have enabled us to maintain our key worker/vulnerable provision in school every week since 23<sup>rd</sup> March, to support learning at home, to provide meals in school and to be delivered to homes, to maintain our buildings and to continue with essential administration on a daily basis. I would also like to recognise the incredible job that you have all been doing at home juggling your own family/work demands while actively supporting your child's learning. I know with three children at home how hard this is and how it will be even more challenging as the lockdown is hopefully eased and we all work to overcome the complex issues that these changes present.

Over the last week we have been in contact with all families with children in our early years, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 cohorts. Thank you for engaging with us in this process, your responses have been invaluable in our planning for reopening. After we have sent out this letter, we will be calling again later this morning to finalise these responses once parents and carers have been able to read and understand how school will operate as we start to reopen. As you will see from the information below, school will not be what we were used to before the lockdown and how we need to operate may not work for all. Parents will need to read this information to enable them to make an informed decision on whether their child returns to school or not next month. Schools and parents continue to receive guidance on how the easing of the lockdown could work and more is expected over the coming days. I have included the key guidance documents on our school websites so that we can all read and understand how this might be achieved. These documents can be found in the **Government Guidance** section of the **Important information during COVID-19 outbreak** tab.

[http://www.wooler.northumberland.sch.uk/website/government\\_guidance/481913](http://www.wooler.northumberland.sch.uk/website/government_guidance/481913)

[http://www.glendale.northumberland.sch.uk/website/government\\_guidance/481914](http://www.glendale.northumberland.sch.uk/website/government_guidance/481914)

I am continuing to work closely with all of the Head teachers in our partnership, with the Local Authority, with unions and our own governing body to ensure that we make progress in a safe and considered way. Attendance will not be compulsory as we seek to reopen the schools and we respect your right to decide what is best for your child. Schools will not be penalised and parents will not be fined for non-attendance at this time. Please note that children who are shielding, or who live with someone who is shielding, must NOT attend. However, those who share a home with a person in the clinically vulnerable category may return to school.

Our arrangements will evolve depending on the demand for places, staff availability and future changes to national expectations. Once we have started to reopen we can develop and modify our plans further to think about how to increase numbers of children and add our other year groups. As always, we are working with other schools in the Berwick area to share ideas and ensure the best possible provision for our pupils.

Below are the key elements of how we plan to reopen our schools to children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> June assuming all conditions are met. Nursery will not be reopened at this time.

**Phased school reopening – agreements within the Partnership, in line with government guidance.**

We have agreed the following key factors with all the Head teachers within the Berwick Partnership. Every Head teacher has to take into account the individual needs of their own children, families, staff and setting.

- Head teachers and Governors reserve the right to amend the offer of provision at any point based on the scientific evidence and guidance provided daily from the Government.
- The 5 main points, as specified by the Government, must be satisfied before we will begin a phased opening and schools can reduce provision at any point should this change i.e if the R rating increases above 1 we cannot open to anyone other than Disadvantaged, Vulnerable or Key Worker children.
  - **Making sure the NHS can cope**
  - **Evidence showing a sustained and consistent fall in daily death rates**
  - **Reliable data showing the rate of infection is decreasing to manageable levels ( $R < 1$ )**
  - **Being confident in the range of operational challenges, like ensuring testing and the right amount of PPE, are in hand**
  - **Being confident any adjustments will not risk a second peak**
- **The provision will be over 4 days per week, Mondays to Thursdays** to allow teachers preparation time for the home learning offer and deep cleaning on a Friday, which allows 72 hours of non-use period between one week and the next.
- Provision for critical workers who cannot keep their children at home and for vulnerable children will be provided on Fridays if necessary.
- The provision will be a modified version and not the typical school routine, groupings, class arrangements or curriculum content.
- Parents and staff accept that **2 metre distancing cannot be expected** in Early Years or Primary settings and **we can only mitigate risk** through:
  - Minimising contact and mixing of groups
  - Regular cleaning of the setting and resources
  - Frequent handwashing
- Berwick Partnership schools will adopt the Northumberland County Council Health and Safety Risk Assessment as a model and modify it to the individual needs of their schools.
- Children will be allocated to a mini-group (a bubble) of a maximum of 15 children, with a specified adult and they will remain together as a unit throughout the child's time in school to minimise cross over with other 'bubbles' in the school.
- Parents will not be fined for their child's non-attendance
- Schools will provide packed lunches as part of the Universal Infant Free School Meals package to those children in the setting in Reception and Year 1.
- Children wear their own **clean** clothes each day, suitable for a range of fitness/outdoor/creative activities.
- PPE will not be worn as a general rule but must be worn by staff when administering First Aid or intimate care or if a child develops symptoms.
- Home-schooling provision will be modified to manage the workload of staff who are working in school and setting tasks and providing feedback for children at home.
- **Parents and staff must accept that if any one member of the group develops Covid 19 symptoms then all members of the group and their families must self-isolate for 14 days.**

Along with these partnership-wide agreed factors there are specific routines and procedures that we have established for our schools here in Wooler which respond to our local situation.

### Wooler & Glendale specific routines and procedures

- Parents and carers must comply with the drop off and collection arrangements in place at school. These will be communicated to families in good time before the schools start to reopen.
- Parents and carers must inform us of their childcare requirements by phone or email by 12noon on the Monday of the week before it is needed. Children will not be accepted on the day without warning.
- If we do not have the capacity to safely accommodate your child under the current regulations and guidance then they will not be accepted into school.
- You will be informed of what time to arrive at school and to when to collect your child and where and how this must be done.
- Parental vehicles will not be permitted to come into the school car park to drop off or collect children as this will compromise our social distancing one-way systems. Children and parents must walk or cycle to school where possible. If cars must be used parents must park well away from the school and observe social distancing rules to walk to the school.
- Only one parent or carer will be permitted beyond the main school entrance gate. The marked one-way system must be observed and parents will not be admitted into the school building.
- 'Bubble' teachers will meet children on arrival in the designated outside greeting areas and will escort them into school to wash their hands before moving to their classrooms.
- Bubble groups will have exclusive use of a classroom, a designated outside space and toilet block. There will be no interaction between staff and children in different bubbles. We will have routines in place for frequent hand-washing and cleaning during the school day in each bubble. First Aid will also be managed by bubble staff.
- **Any** symptoms of illness at home must be notified to the school and your child must not attend.
- Any symptoms that arise during the school day will lead to a child being isolated and a parent collecting them from site as soon as possible. Isolation will be outside if at all possible supervised by a member of staff. If isolation has to be inside school staff must wear PPE as described in Public Health England documentation.
- Children should wear clean clothing every day (preferably their school uniform where possible) and bring layers suitable for weather conditions so that we can take learning outside whenever possible.
- Children in Reception, Year 1 and those eligible for Free School Meals will be provided with a packed lunch by school – this is free as normal, the children will be able to choose their fillings daily. Children in other year groups will be able to purchase a packed lunch from school in the usual manner or will be allowed to bring a healthy packed lunch to school. Lunches will be eaten in bubble groups. This will be outside in designated play areas whenever possible or in their classrooms if it is wet.
- Children must not bring toys or equipment from home – water bottles will be kept in school and washed daily. Water will be available to children throughout the day.
- Reading books will be distributed but will be kept separate in a drop-off box in the classroom on return. After 72 hours they can be put back into circulation.
- Soft furnishings, soft toys and dressing up clothes have been removed so that surfaces are easier to clean.
- Two staff, initially a teacher and a teaching assistant, will be allocated to each bubble group. This may change as numbers of children in school change and more groups become necessary. Teaching assistants may also lead bubble groups under the direction of a teacher.
- Your child will not necessarily be with their usual teacher but staff will not move between bubble groups during the week.
- Staff in each bubble will have suitable cleaning materials to ensure regular ongoing cleaning of surfaces as well as before and after the school day. Our facilities team are following specific cleaning guidance for the circumstances.
- Our Behaviour Policy, Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy and Staff Code of Conducts are being amended to reflect these changes.

**School Transport** – At the time of writing, we have not received confirmation on how school transport will be operating. The information we have been given is that significant work is ongoing to establish how school transport will operate with particular regard to social distancing. We have been told that letters will be coming to school soon to outline how school transport will operate and that similar letters will be sent to parents and carers. It has however been indicated that they intend to operate with direct communication between parents/carers and

individual transport providers to manage locally the various requirements of schools in terms of start and finish times. I hope that more information will be shared over the coming days.

I appreciate that there is a lot to read and to take in within this letter as you make your decision about your child returning to school. Please be reassured that the safety of children and staff is our paramount concern and will continue to be so. Next week is half term so there is no expectation that 'school work' will be undertaken by children but please continue to post your activities on seesaw for teachers to see as next half term begins. Our online learning resources are prepared and ready to go and will be opened up as usual on Friday next week. Further work is ongoing on how we can maintain our distance learning arrangements as more staff are needed in school working directly with children in our bubbles – this will be a further challenge for my colleagues but I am confident that they will again rise to the challenge ahead. We are aiming to start making calls home to parents and carers of children in the prioritised year groups from around 10am this morning but please be patient as there will only be two of us making these calls from here in school. During the first week of next half term we will also be sharing who will be working with each class and form groups as teachers will be being redeployed as we get our bubbles ready.

To finish off this rather long letter I would also like to note our sadness and frustration that we will most likely not be able to have the usual end of year events that mark the achievements of the children and also recognise the milestones of their growth and development. It is highly likely that we will not 'see' our Year 8 pupils before they make the transition to high schools – Mr Tong is working hard to conjure up what we can do about that, any ideas are most welcome. We may also not be able to give our Year 4 children their usual end of First School experiences, but we will do our best if we can to mark this important transition. More information will be available about transition across all year groups including arrangements for our new starters into Nursery, Reception and Year 5 in September as we move into next half term as well as updates on our planned residential visits at both schools. At the moment the future is unclear but we are expecting updated guidance on this on 1<sup>st</sup> June so I remain hopeful that we may be able to do something in this area – fingers crossed!

Thank you again for your continued support, understanding, patience and cooperation during these challenging times. I hope my daft picture below brings a smile (and I hope to have some time next week to finish sorting my little blue 3-wheel Citroen car) If you see me heading to and from school please give me a wave!

Keep safe

M.Deane-Hall

Executive Headteacher

