

Dear Parents / Carers

I am writing to you to set out as I promised what school would look like going forwards in light of the latest government guidance that states that '*Special schools, special post-16 institutions and hospital schools to work towards a phased return of more children and young people without a focus on specific year groups and informed by risk assessments*'.

The key driver here is the **individual risk assessment** for each child where we will identify who are the most vulnerable children who would benefit from some time in school. This will be based on a collaborative risk assessment between school, families and other agencies if appropriate. We must also take into account in our numbers the children already accessing our provision; key workers and most vulnerable (children with social workers). It is not the case that all children shall return to school.

I would like to thank you for the survey responses we have received and I aim through this letter to address your concerns and questions and to provide you with a clear way forwards.

I am writing and reviewing constantly risk assessments to identify risks and reduce them where possible. I will honestly state that I cannot provide 100% assurance to you that I can remove all risks for children and staff but that as a school we shall put in place the very best solutions that we can to reduce risks.

Social distancing is recognised in the latest government guidance as particularly hard to achieve and impossible to guarantee in special schools and we shall best mitigate this risk by taking very careful measures;

- Allocating a small number of children to a class base (max of 4) and this is where they will remain for the day with the same staff (max of 3) with access to 1 play area and an allocated toilet / changing area per group. This ensures only 1 group of children are using these places in the day. They shall have lunch in this room with FSM children being served a picnic bag as this will reduce the need for adult intervention.
- Activities will be carefully planned to reduce the need for adult intervention where possible; there will be a mix of learning activities and play.
- PPE will be provided for personal care and for administering first aid. Additional PPE is available for staff as required; as per the guidance document; 'Safe working in education, childcare and children's social care settings; including the use of PPE' (14.5.20). For a number of weeks we have provided face masks as an option for staff if they have preferred to wear them.
- Not all classrooms in school will be available as rooms need to have excellent ventilation and access to a play area easily. The corridor shall have a 1 way system and social distancing measures will be in place.

What this means: children will be allocated to a group (bubble) and this will roughly be done by age. Therefore there is no guarantee that they will be in their same room, with their usual peers or with their same staff. Routines will be very different throughout the school day. Additional spaces such as the Nurture Room, Sensory rooms and Pool will not be in use. There will be no Educational Visits. Across the day social distancing will be implemented where possible. I am very aware that this would be very disruptive and upsetting to many of our children as school will not appear as 'school' means for them, however in order to be as safe as possible these are the measures that must be implemented.

As we are all aware **good hand hygiene** is critical to **reducing transmission** rates of Covid-19. Therefore all class areas, offices, school entrance, bathrooms and communal areas have handwashing provision.

There are a high number of visuals throughout school making it clear the expectation of the school that from the moment of arrival until leaving regular handwashing is the expectation. In addition to good personal hygiene the **cleaning of school is critical**. Again all supplies for this are provided for use throughout the day by staff and cleaning team and we have a detailed risk assessment in place including clear cleaning guidance. In anticipation of a slight increase in numbers we will have a full time cleaner on site from 1st June 2020. It will be their responsibility to clean toilets, touch points and high frequency areas across the day.

What this means: Children will be supported to regularly wash their hands throughout the day e.g. before and after playing out, pre mealtimes etc. This and other 'hygiene guidance' will be supplied to families before their child takes up a place in school. This includes that children must wear clean uniform each day, lunch boxes must be replaced by disposable bags, and there will be no home school diaries (alternatives in place).

The school has a very clear plan as part of our risk assessment about the management of a child or staff member **displaying symptoms** and the implications for the school; staff, pupils and premises. This has been developed in line with PHE and Government guidance and our Trust Wide 'Health and Safety for Covid-19 Risk Assessment'. We use additional measures such as taking the temperature of pupils on arrival throughout the day to support our monitoring of pupils and staff and regular reminders to families and staff to adhere to current government guidance and to maintain open communication with us about health issues.

What this means: Within school we have systems for monitoring the health of our pupils and staff and we expect that families are adhering to the latest government guidance and are open with school about any health concerns of their child or another family member. We have a clear system in place in case of anyone starting to show symptoms in school with a 'quarantine' room identified and a plan of what would happen in this instance.

A number of parents asked about **testing and the latest Coronavirus data**. Adults and children (over 5) can now all access testing and staff can access testing in their role as key workers through Halton Public Health. Data changes on a daily basis and the Government when they make their next education announcement on 28 May will use the most up to date data available to them. What we are aware of is that the Northwest R Rate is very different at this point to that in London (on 15 May it was 0.73 and London was 0.4) and this is an important factor to be noted and will impact on our opening.

What this means: Testing is readily available but only once someone displays symptoms so someone could be in school with Covid-19 as their symptoms have not yet developed or they could be asymptomatic. If a staff member or child did display symptoms then we follow guidance detailed by the appropriate agencies as to school closure / cleaning.

We are following guidance provided by the Government in regards to individuals who are in Critically Vulnerable and Critically Extremely Vulnerable groups and do not have any staff or children in school from within these groups in order to keep them safe as we cannot guarantee social distancing at all times. This does mean that we have a number of staff who will be working at home but we shall not be using supply staff within school.

If your child or a family member falls into these groups there are very serious considerations to be made and medical guidance must be adhered to. We would not be offering a place to any child who has a medical condition listed in these groups and would be making consideration of family members also as part of our risk assessment.

We are working very closely with the **school transport** team in regards to transport being provided and ensuring that this allows for social distancing and good hygiene practises. In addition there will be 2 different entrance / exit points for the children into school to help us ensure social distancing. No transport staff or parents are allowed access into the school building.

What this means: If your child normally has transport provided then this would still happen, however this is most likely to be provided by a different bus / personnel and have different children on the route. Transport staff will be wearing PPE and the children seated to ensure social distancing.

In regards to **transition** we have very clear plans:

Year 6 transition; we are working very closely with the secondary schools to ensure that transition materials and support are provided to children and families and this will develop over the next half term and be shared with families and children. We will be looking at bespoke packages of support for each child to ensure they can be prepared the very best that they can and also will be sharing how we shall celebrate each child's time at Brookfields without the infamous Leavers Assembly and other markers.

In-school transitions; I am very aware of the massive impact of such a prolonged time away from school there will be for our pupils and therefore in September we shall have a period of time where children shall return to their current class, in the same room and with the same staff. This means we can support the children with their reintegration back into school and then support a positive move to their next class. We shall be implementing a 'recovery curriculum' for pupils to support their transition back into school incorporating support for their emotional response.

I have had a number of families who have asked already if they can keep their child at home until September rather than them come in for a short time and then be off for the Summer Holidays. **School attendance** during this next half term is not statutory and you can share your thoughts with us when we contact you. I fully understand your concerns as parents as you have not only the Coronavirus factors to consider but also the impact on your child of the provision being very different.

Please note children who currently have a place will maintain their place.

Next steps:

21.5.20 We shall commence the risk assessment process for each child. This will involve a phone call from school to you.

Once all of these calls are complete and the risk assessments undertaken we shall identify which children will be offered a place and what the offer will be.

8.6.20 Any additional children joining school will start from this date onwards; **if it is safe for us to do so. This may change at short notice.**

Home learning and family support will continue going forwards with the reminder that your children are still learning every day whilst at home; developing communication, self-help skills, play, adapting to change and many other valuable life skills!

I am aware that I have provided a lot of information for you in this letter but I wanted to ensure that you had all the information you requested. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for your incredible support over this very challenging time and to assure you that we shall continue to be here to support each and every child and family. We miss everyone dearly but our priority is to keep everyone happy and safe.