



# Writtle Infant School

A very special place, where learning has no limits.

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Friday 15<sup>th</sup> May 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

Firstly may I thank you for your wonderful cooperation during these strange times. You are doing a fantastic job with your children and seeing the pictures and work that they are doing really helps to lift our staff in what are challenging times. To those with Year Two children, we will celebrate your time with us when it is safe to do so. I know how hard you are all working to support your child's well-being. We are always here - I know your teachers are keeping in touch but I am also in the school office most days if you want to call me!

As you are aware there was a surprise Government announcement that both EYFS and Year One may be offered a phased return to school, from 1<sup>st</sup> June 2020 at the earliest. We have spent many hours planning how we can apply the Government guidance to our small school environment. However, late last night we received conflicting advice from the Government. While we await further clarification, we do still need to get an idea of the number of parents who wish to send their child to school. This will give us time to prepare for June 1<sup>st</sup>, if the Government's conditions to return are met and our Governing Body is satisfied with our final risk assessment, which takes into account factors such as suitable levels of staffing and cleaning.

Key workers remain the priority group and therefore places available depend on the number of key worker children. If you think you qualify as a key worker and have not asked us for places before now, please let us know.

Our initial risk assessment shows that we cannot safely accommodate more than ten in a class and that we cannot always maintain a safe distance between such young children. We also have a number of staff who cannot return to work and therefore this reduces our capacity to offer places safely. Despite our best endeavours, we will not be able to guarantee a risk-free environment, but we will impose significant restrictions in order to re-open as safely as we can. I therefore want to share as many of those as possible with you, to help you make your decision as to how safe it is for your child to return.

Some of the measures we have to take really go against our key aim to be a welcoming and open school. However we are dealing with a situation that has no precedent and it will be very challenging to maintain the nurturing environment and broad curriculum that we would normally offer while trying to socially distance children of this age group. The measures outlined below reflect our current understanding of how we reduce the risks to children and staff. These are just an indication, as until we have received further guidance from the government and completed our risk assessment, we cannot confirm our educational offer.

- We will teach the children in groups of max 10, each of whom will be taught in a separate classroom. Groups should not change from day to day and they will not be permitted to mix, including during break and lunch times. This may mean that your child is in school for only part of the week or even different weeks.
- We cannot guarantee that different children will not come into the groups if other children need to return to school.
- We will give children of key workers priority for places in school and they may be placed in groups with your child.
- You will not be able to request days of the week that the children are in school, or who is in their group, as we may be working to group over 120 children.
- We will endeavour to have siblings in school on the same day, as long as we have the capacity to have their year groups in school together. If we can only accommodate very small numbers of children, that may not be the case. This may be different to what you have been led to expect, but the Government advice to us has changed about how we facilitate re-opening.
- The children may be taught in different classrooms to their own and by different teachers to their usual class teacher. We will do our best to maintain the same staff from day to day and use teachers to teach the groups as much as possible. However, circumstances may mean that a group is taught by one of our very experienced support staff.
- Children will be guided to maintain social distancing. However, the Government has stated that early years/primary children cannot always be expected to remain 2 metres apart.
- Staff will maintain a distance of 2 metres from the children wherever possible.
- Classrooms and outdoor spaces will look different, with equipment and resources kept to a minimum and furniture moved to ensure the children remain distant. All soft furnishings and toys that cannot be cleaned between uses will be removed. Other equipment will be cleaned on a regular basis and where necessary children will be given their own individual resources.
- We will follow a modified curriculum with an initial emphasis on well-being and settling back into school.

**Our values: Honesty, Independence, Perseverance, Inclusivity, Politeness**  
School documents can be printed, translated, or made available in alternative formats (e.g. large print), on request.



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- We will stagger drop off and pick up times (*details to follow*), so the school day may start later or finish earlier than normal.
- Break time and lunchtimes will also be staggered to reduce numbers on the playground.
- We will guide the children to wash their hands frequently and maintain standards of hygiene.
- Additional cleaning in the classrooms will be required during the day and may have an impact on the activities that can take place and the resources that the children might usually use. Regular deep cleaning will also be required.
- We will not administer medicines unless it is an inhaler, epipen or as part of an agreed medical needs plan.
- PPE equipment is not available or required to be worn in school, so neither the children nor the staff will be able to wear face-masks, unless staff are dealing with a child displaying symptoms.

**Procedure if a child or member of staff has symptoms of coronavirus**

If your child or a member of staff displays symptoms of coronavirus, then as before they will be immediately sent home and asked to isolate for 7 days. Members of their household will also need to isolate for 14 days, as per the current guidance, so in effect it is likely that a child will not be able to return to school for 14 days. We will inform you if a child or member of staff self-isolating with symptoms of coronavirus has had contact with your child. If schools are directed to re-open then not only all staff but also all students will have access to a test if they display symptoms, so in this scenario we will ask you to arrange for your child to be tested, staying away from school until there is a negative result. If a child (or staff member) tests negative, they can return to school and the fellow household members can end their self-isolation.

**If a child or staff member tests positive, all children and members of staff in their group will need to self-isolate for 14 days.**

The other household members of that wider group do not need to self-isolate unless the child or staff member they live with in that group subsequently develops symptoms. **We will adhere strictly to this expectation.**

As a school we will ask that:

- You ensure that your child does not attend school if they or a member of your household has symptoms of coronavirus, or if your child is otherwise unwell. The 48 hour rule following sickness or diarrhoea will still apply.
- Parents read Government guidance regarding shielding of vulnerable children and people, to ensure it is appropriate for your child to attend.
- Parents do not enter the school building unless by prior appointment, or in an emergency. The reception toilet will be closed.
- All family members strictly adhere to the drop off/ pick up times and protocols that we establish.
- Only one adult enters the school grounds with each child. We will ask you to try to keep siblings at home to help with social distancing, as pathways to the school are narrow.
- All families adhere to social distancing when bringing children to school.
- If a parent needs to communicate with a member of staff this can be done via phone/email, or by appointment.
- You follow Government guidance which suggests daily washing of school uniform. *“There is no need for anything other than normal personal hygiene and washing of clothes following a day in a school. Uniform that cannot be machine washed should be avoided.”*

I hope that this gives you enough information to consider whether a return to school is the right option for your child. As a school we recognise that this is a difficult decision for each family to make and one that will reflect your individual circumstances. **The Government guidance has confirmed that parents will not be fined for non-attendance at this time.** If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me.

In order for us to continue our planning, we have sent home a form for you to complete via ParentMail as soon as you are able. This will ask whether or not you wish your child to return to school, having taken into account the many restrictions that we have outlined. We ask that you respond by Monday 18<sup>th</sup> May at 10am.

Can I reiterate my thanks for the wonderful work you have done so far in supporting your child’s learning and wellbeing at home. We will continue to support you, whether your decision is to keep your child at home or whether you take up the offer of a place at school if we re-open.

With best wishes and thank you for all your support.

Helen Castell  
Headteacher