

Falconhurst School

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**“Proud to be learning, succeeding
and caring together”**

Tuesday 19th May 2020,

Dear Families for children in Nursery, Reception, Years 1 and 6,

Further to my letter dated 13th May 2020, I am now writing to provide general information that is relevant to all of you regardless of your child's year group. Details about entry and exit routes, session times, learning spaces and adults specific to your child's year group will be sent separately before half term.

As always, your children's health and safety remains of paramount importance and it is with this in mind that I have consulted with staff and governors to make the following decisions should the return to school on 1st June proceed. It is important however for families to note that the decisions we make or propose could well be subject to change in response to any government directive or guidance; therefore, please be advised that plans will be under constant review with the potential for changes as we transition towards a time of more pupils returning.

Social Distancing Measures:

It is our view that a social distance of 2m should be provided for children and staff wherever possible in school. This remains the message for the general public whilst outside of their home and therefore it should be replicated within school also. Whilst you may have heard or read that class sizes *may* run at numbers of up to 15, this cannot be the case if we are to provide the safety that social distancing affords. Consequently, our initial return to school will see children being grouped in very small bubbles with the same allocated adult, room, seating area and equipment (where appropriate) provided to them. In practice this means that we will have to operate morning and afternoon sessions with staggered start and end times. Morning or afternoon sessions will facilitate groups of children being no larger than 7 and in some cases as small as 5. Staggering the start and end times is also necessary to ensure minimal crossover between families as they enter or exit the building.

Families are asked to stick rigidly to the timings that they are given so that they arrive and depart promptly, we have only allowed 10 minutes between session start and end times so that families can be in as small groups as is possible. We would also urge all families to uphold 2m social distancing whilst walking down the paths to schools or awaiting entry into or out of the school site and buildings.



Signage and floor marking will be present in and around school to remind everyone that 2m space should be observed wherever possible and in which direction they should be walking. Wherever a single pathway or corridor is to be used, then it is expected that people will walk on the left hand side.

In preparation for their return, it would be really helpful if families could talk to their child at home about the importance of everyone staying safe and having lots of space around them. We don't want to frighten the children but if they can hear consistent and encouraging messages at school and home we can make a positive difference to their understanding of this difficult time with unrealistic expectations for so many.

In returning to school, all adults have been reminded about the need to maintain a 2m distance between themselves and children; however in the event of children becoming distressed or injured I would be entirely unsurprised if a member of staff offered some form of comfort that crossed into the 2m space. Staff at Falconhurst care deeply about the children and we are all mindful that with such little ones returning first, it is highly probable that they will be anxious about being separated from their parent or carer. Please know that in the event of a child being hurt or extremely distressed, care in the form of a comforting arm around them or tending to a grazed knee will still happen.

We are also aware that socially distancing children of any age is extremely difficult and perhaps impossible; however, we will be sensible and supportive in trying to help all children understand and demonstrate the importance of personal space whilst in school. It is certainly our view that the oldest children should be able to respect the ruling of 2m distancing wherever possible; therefore, any situations in which a Year 6 pupil deliberately breaches the expectation, parents will be contacted and consequences may be serious.

Sibling Group:

Please be aware that at this time the government directive is for children in Nursery, Reception, Years 1 and 6 only. The only exception to this are the children in other year groups who have met the eligible criteria to attend throughout lockdown (key worker children when on shift and those deemed vulnerable). I can confirm that school is not open to children or siblings in Years 2,3,4 or 5 and therefore they must remain at home (unless they are in the aforementioned eligible group). It is hoped and indicated that in time other year groups may well be able to start attending but this is at a point in the future and there is much to be proven and achieved before then.

Hygiene Arrangements:

During the course of the school day, children will be expected to wash their hands thoroughly on a regular basis. All children will wash their hands when they first arrive, after a snack time, after handling Chromebook or attending an activity station, after visiting the toilet and before going home. Hand sanitiser will also be provided for the children alongside soap and warm running water.



Whilst the children are in school, the site team will be constantly maintaining the cleaning and disinfecting of 'high risk/high contact' areas around school such as bannisters, handles, door pushes, buttons, Chromebook trolleys, toilets and sinks etc... In between the morning and the afternoon sessions, the site support team will also be using antibacterial sanitising products to wipe the tables and chairs for children.

Any child attending school who complains of feeling unwell with Covid type symptoms (dry persistent cough and high temperature) will be cared for in our medical room away from others but close to the School Admin team. They will take their temperature with a non-contact forehead thermometer and care for their immediate health needs (water and removing jumper or cardigan) before then telephoning home. Coronavirus has not gone away and so our level of vigilance about this virus within our school remains high. We are not medical professionals and can only act in the children's best interests; however, if we are concerned then we will ask you to take your child home so that you can keep a watchful caring eye on them. No child should attend school if they present with symptoms whilst at home.

Welfare Needs:

During a morning or afternoon session, we believe that many children may feel hungry. Most children appear to have resorted to 'grazing' whilst at home and they will miss the ability to do this upon their return to school. Similarly, their stamina for learning and socialising may well have diminished so during their session we will be encouraging them to bring a snack bar or piece of fruit to eat and a named water bottle. This means that when they are having a rest from activity, they can re-energise their sugar and hydration levels in the same way that they might have done at home. All children must have a water bottle as no reusable cups will be provided in school.

Because school is operating in morning or afternoon sessions, there will be no designated lunch period or hot meal provision for the children (the only exception to this will be the children already attending full time who will continue to be separated into very small groups throughout the day and fed at separate tables). If your child is allocated a morning slot and you are entitled to Free School Meals, we can organise a packed lunch for them to take home with them at the end of the session. If your child is allocated an afternoon session, you can either send your child in with a packed lunch or you can order one from Dolce in the usual way (children eligible for Free School Meals) can also be provided for upon request.

Any of our children in Early Years or Year 1 who still require a level of intimate care with nappies or toileting will still receive this from the adults within the setting as the wearing of gloves has always been a requirement and this will continue in accordance with the government guidance. Face masks are not recommended to be worn by those working in schools or by children whilst attending school¹. Whilst we understand that this is a point of parental choice, we are obliged to make you aware of the government recommendations. For children who are distressed I have already made mention of how adults will support and comfort them in school. In addition, I would ask that families do not stay any longer than is

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-protective-measures-in-education-and-childcare-settings>



absolutely necessary when dropping off their child with an adult for their session. If you have concerns or information that needs to be shared with your child's adult, we ask that you use Class Dojo to message your teacher or send an email or telephone call to the main office. Handovers will need to be very slick if we are to maintain the levels of distancing and safety we are aiming for.

Whilst school may have stopped in the way that we know it, children have not stopped growing and it is possible that some children may have grown out of uniform or shoes. Some families may have found a solution to the problem at the local supermarket or the trusted 'hand-me-down' from friends or older siblings. If this is not the case and you are worried that there is no way your child will fit in their uniform, we would support you and understand. We ask that clothing your child in uniform remains our expectation but if you are unable to do this then please ensure that they are dressed in something smart which is as close as you can get to a uniform at the moment. For families who would welcome support, a member of our learning mentor team can chat with you directly if you make contact with us at school.

And Finally...

Apologies that this has been such a long letter but there is so much to share with you. It may be the case that school does not re-open but we have to be prepared and ready in case. As with a lot of things in life, this really is a time of choices and decisions. I hope that by giving you this detailed initial account of what we are doing in school, you will feel able to decide whether or not you wish for your child to attend from 1st June. We are very excited about seeing them again and are making final arrangements for their return. **Should you decide that you are not intending to bring your child/ren for their designated sessions in school, you must make contact with the School Office to advise us** so that we can be aware. Should you have further questions about specific arrangements I would respectfully ask that you wait until the further guidance is issued next week as many of your questions may well be answered then.

Please continue to look after yourselves and keep in touch with us at school.

Kindest Regards,

Louise Aird

