

# TWERTON INFANT SCHOOL & NURSERY

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

Dear Parents and Carers,

## **PLANS TO REOPEN THE NURSERY AND SCHOOL – DELAYED UNTIL MONDAY 8<sup>TH</sup> JUNE**

*It's quite a long letter but it's important that you read it*

Firstly, I want to thank you for the kindness and support that you have shown over the past days and throughout this challenging time. The pandemic is not over and it could be some time yet before things get back to normal, including schools.

Last week I wrote to explain that the Government is advising schools reopen from 1<sup>st</sup> June and that infant schools have been asked to focus on children who are in the Nursery and Reception (YR) first and then plan for year 1 and year 2 children returning later in the term.

I realise this puts many parents in a tricky position. You will need to make a decision whether or not to send part of your family back to school whilst keeping other children at home.

At the same time, you must be wondering whether it is safe for children to be in school at this time. It is fair to say there are mixed views on this and if you have been following any of the news over the last days you will know there has been a lot of discussion.

**Since the Prime Minister's announcement we have been working hard to plan for the safe reopening of our school. Whilst we have made considerable progress, there is still much more to do and so we will not be ready to reopen from the 1<sup>st</sup> June.**

Following discussion with the School's Governing Body yesterday afternoon and ongoing conversations with the Local Authority, **I have decided to delay reopening the school until Monday 8<sup>th</sup> June, at the earliest.**

This will be disappointing news for many parents as we know lots of children are really looking forward to returning to school, just as we are very keen to see them too. However, it is crucial that we manage the return of an increasing number of pupils and staff in a safe and well thought through manner.

This letter sets out some of the key changes that we already know will have to be in place when we reopen. These changes will require significant adjustments to the usual organisation of the school so that we can reduce the risk of the virus spreading between children and adults.

### **Children and Staff will be grouped in separate bubbles**

Children in school will be grouped in bubbles of no more than 15 children and each bubble will remain separate from other bubbles throughout the school day.

The children of key workers and pupils deemed 'vulnerable' who already have places will continue to attend, from Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> June. If you are a key worker and you have not previously used our key worker provision, we will do our best to accommodate you but the number of places will be limited. Please contact the school via the office or SMS if you wish to be considered for a key worker place.

We have surveyed parents of children in the Nursery and Reception and we are planning to support those children in the following 7 bubbles.

Bubble	Learning Base	Maximum no. pupils
Preschool Nursery	Owls Room	15
	SPOT	15
Priority Groups	Maple Class	15
	Chestnut Class	15
Elm	Elm Class	15
Ash	Ash Class	15
Oak	Oak Class	15

### **Children will not be expected to keep social distancing rules**

The Government has made it clear in guidance published last week that young children will not be able to keep to social distancing rules as it is impossible for them to do so. This has certainly been our experience over the past 8 weeks.

In choosing to send your child back to school you are accepting that it is impossible to maintain social distancing between the children and the staff. Whilst the staff will do their best to protect the children and remind them not to get too close to others we understand that being close to their peers and playing with them is a natural part of childhood.

### **Children returning should attend every day\***

The Government has advised that children returning to school should attend every day unless they are unwell. Children in the Owls Room are being offered two full days to attend the nursery. It is not possible for any additional sessions to be booked at this time.

\*If parents decide not to send their children to school in June we will not take any formal action against the parents. However, we will follow up to check that you are all OK and to understand your reasons for nonattendance, but there will not be pressure from the school to attend and parents will not be fined.

### **Staggered and segregated arrivals and departures**

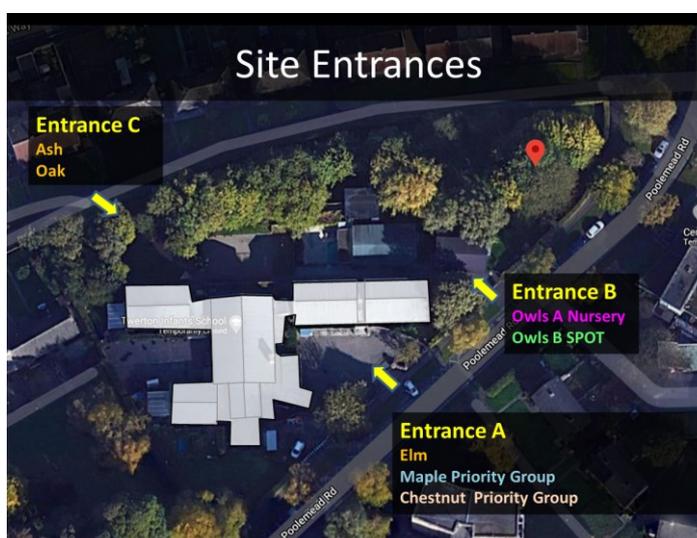
One of the key safety measures is reducing the chance of contact between children, parents and staff. Each bubble will have its own timetable for dropping off and collecting children. Only one parent should accompany their child to school each day and enter the school by a designated entrance. It must be a parent accompanying a child, from the child's household and not a family friend.

The **Nursery** entrance will be the usual one from Poolemead Road, through the gate by the SPOT. Do not enter the site from Shaws ways. The route across the site will be blocked.

Children in **Elm, Maple** and **Chestnut** bubbles should arrive by the main entrance to the school, from **Poolemead Road**.

Children in **Ash** and **Oak** bubbles will arrive from the footpath on **Shaws Way**.

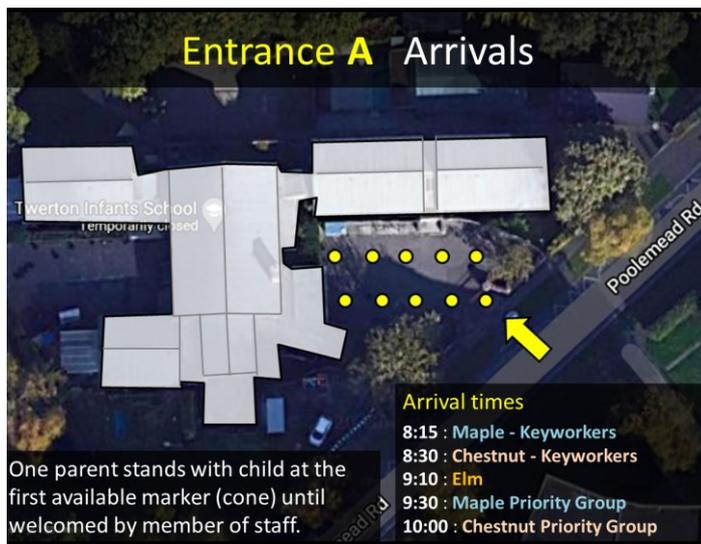
**Parents must stay separate from other parents and will not be allowed to enter the school buildings at any time.**



On arrival each parent and child will wait at the first available marker in the playground. The markers will be placed over 2 m apart to maintain social distancing.

A member of staff will be positioned by the entrance to the building and will welcome children one at a time, starting with the child standing at the first marker.

**Please ensure you arrive promptly at school at the times required. This is important to maintain safety by minimising mixing.**



**If you are late and there are other groups present, you will need to wait outside of the school grounds, at a safe distance from any other parents, until they have all left.**

### **Minimise contact with individuals who are unwell**

Each day when a child arrives we will first check with the parent that all members of the household are well and currently symptom-free. If any member of a family is unwell then a child will not be able to attend until a period of isolation has been completed or the household have been tested for the virus and the results are negative.

### **Avoiding unnecessary social contact**

**Once a child has been dropped off at school the child's parent must leave the school site immediately and avoid all unnecessary contact with other parents and children. Do not stay and chat with other parents they will understand you are not being rude, just acting responsibly.**

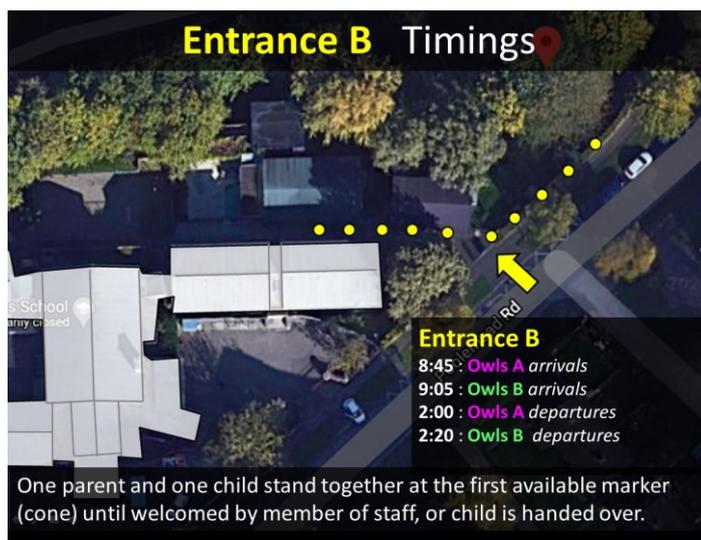
This will be an alien behaviour for many of our parents, especially those who are renowned for their friendliness and good conversational skills. However, it is vitally important that we avoid parents gathering on the school site or close to the school site as this contact would pose a risk of the virus spreading through the community.

The first drop off for new children will be for children in the **Nursery**. Parents will enter from **Poolmead Road** at the usual gate (Entrance B).

There will be markers on the ground to make sure parents and children can stay a safe distance from other parents.

The nursery day will be a little shorter and children will need to be collected from the Nursery at 2:00pm, or the SPOT from 2:20pm. The shorter day is necessary to avoid congestion at the school site with other parents.

When collecting at the end of the day, again, please wait in turn at the markers and a member of the nursery team will bring your child to the door and then handover your child into your care at a safe distance.



For children in the **Ash** and **Oak** bubbles, entry to the school will be by the gate from the footpath on Shaws Way.

Children in **Ash bubble** should arrive, with one parent, at 9:10am and for **Oak bubble** it's 9:30. This again, the different times are to avoid mixing of the two bubble groups.

Please wait in line at the first available marker and shuffle up as each child is welcomed.

**Please ensure you arrive promptly at school at the times required. This is important to maintain safety by minimising mixing.**



### **Bubble Groups**

- Based on current information, the reception bubbles will have a maximum size of 15 children, but initially we are expecting only 9 children to attend. Each bubble will be supported by a teacher and teaching assistant.
- The children will not necessarily be taught by their current teacher. But children who have been attending our Priority Group over the past 8 weeks have quickly adjusted to the staff teaching them. Under the new arrangements they will have the same staff each day, as much as possible.
- If one child in the bubble becomes unwell with COVID-19 symptoms then the entire bubble will isolate for the required period, unless a test has been completed and the results are negative.

### **School Packed Lunches**

Packed lunch boxes are a potential hazard as they can carry the virus which can then be transmitted to others. Therefore we will encourage all children in the school to have a free lunch of ham or cheese sandwiches provided by our catering service. This includes a piece of fruit, yoghurt or jelly and a piece of flapjack or shortbread.

If your child has a real difficulty with the school lunch then they can bring in a packed lunch in a box (plastic ideally). The packed lunch box will be sprayed with an antibacterial cleaner on arrival.

Children will eat lunch in their own classroom or as a picnic in their designated outdoor play area

### **Key measures to stop the virus spreading**

The key priority will remain keeping each other safe and this will require a range of measures that would usually seem quite extreme, but will be necessary to reduce the risk of the virus spreading.

- No parents will be able to enter the school;
- Parents will arrive promptly and queue with their child following social distancing requirements, 2m apart from other households in the playground as indicated by markers and as directed by staff;
- Only one adult should accompany their child onto school premises and this must be a member of family from their own household;
- Any book bags and lunch boxes will be sprayed with an antibacterial cleaner before being taken into the school.
- Children should wear clean clothes each day. This does not need to be school uniform. We do have a limited supply of spare clothes if you do not have quite enough clothes.
- Do not bring in any drinks bottles. We have a water bottle for one for each child and these will be soaked each night in Milton.
- Long hair must be tied back securely.

- Please bring in a sun hat, which will be kept in school. This is important as children will be spending a large amount of time outdoors. Your child can bring in a bottle of sun-cream if they are able to apply it independently.
- Provide a raincoat.
- It is not recommended, but pupils may wear sensible face coverings if you feel this is necessary. If a child does wear a facemask they must be able to put it on and off themselves. If they are left around school they will be thrown away as they are a biohazard to others once removed.
- Gloves should not be worn, this is because they offer no protection unless changed after every activity and prevent good hand washing practices.

### **Cleaning**

A team of cleaners will be in school throughout the day to regularly clean and disinfect surfaces, taps, toilets, door handles, light switches etc.

Teachers and TAs will clean tables and equipment at intervals throughout the day with food safe disinfectant spray and paper towels.

### **Handwashing**

Pupils will be required and reminded to wash their hands regularly:

- on arrival in school,
- after each section of learning,
- before snack,
- after snack,
- after playtimes,
- before lunch,
- after lunch,
- after using the toilet,
- immediately before home time.

Soft toys and dressing up clothes will be removed from the Reception classrooms and Nursery. Plastic toys will be washed overnight in Milton on a cleaning schedule after use.

### **Work for pupils not attending school**

Home Learning Packs will continue to be provided for children not attending school and teachers will be in contact with parents of children not attending school. Please understand that the amount of time available to many staff to liaise with families will be reduced as many of the staff will be needed in the classrooms. We will do our best.

### **Illness**

Pupils who are ill will be sent home. Those showing even the mildest symptoms of COVID 19 will be isolated in an 'isolation room' with a member of staff nearby. Parents will be expected to book household testing and the child will not be allowed back to school until the results are known. Should any child test positive for COVID 19 the Government guidelines will be followed.

### **Families not following Government Guidance**

For the School to be as safe as it can be, under these new arrangements, we will all need to take responsibility for our actions; both in school and out of school. Whilst the guidance has changed slightly, the Public Health message is still to stay home as much as possible and not mingle with other people – except for meeting in the open with just one other person from outside your household and by maintaining a distance of 2m from them. It is vital that this guidance is followed by families, especially those whose children will start attending.

**If we become aware that family members are not following the guidance we will insist that the child does not attend school for the recommended period of isolation, or that the child first has a test to determine whether they have the virus.**

## Testing

Should any child over the age of 5 show symptoms of COVID 19, their whole household will be able to book testing to confirm presence of the Virus; this is taking place at Bristol Airport.

## Level of Risk

I understand that many of you will be struggling to decide whether or not to send your children back to school on 8<sup>th</sup> June. We will do everything we can to protect everyone but we will not be able to guarantee that the school will be completely safe from transmission of coronavirus.

Based on the information I am providing now and ongoing Governmental advice, you will need to decide for your own family whether you consider it to be safe enough. We will help you by being as clear as we can about the risks and what we are doing to minimise the risk.

## Risk Assessment and Timescale for reopening

The Risk Assessment is a vital document that will comprehensively identify and assess the risks to children and to members of staff when they return to school. For everyone to be safe this needs to be undertaken with great care and diligence. This document, if used properly, should give confidence to staff and stakeholders alike.

Once the Risk Assessment is complete it will be reviewed by the Governing Board and also by the Local Authority. This will happen in the first week of June.

We are also waiting for an announcement from the Government regarding their 5 key tests being met, as this is the requirement of the wider opening of schools. We are expecting an update on 28<sup>th</sup> May.

We need the first week of the next term to brief all members of staff, to reorganise classrooms and to remove resources that are now considered hazardous or too difficult to clean. This is vital to ensure the school environment will be as safe as it can be to minimise transmission of the virus.

We will then follow a phased approach to reopening the school and I will confirm these arrangements closer to the time. However, throughout the first week of term, children in the priority group of keyworkers and those deemed vulnerable will continue to attend on their usual days.

We do look forward to reopening the school as soon as it is safe and we are ready. We will not take any avoidable risks at this time when there is so much at stake.

In the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact the school if you need help.

- telephone **01225 423526** and press '4' to speak to a member of the team during the school day, or '3' to leave a message.
- Send an SMS to **07786 201170**
- You can also send an email to **twerton\_inf@bathnes.gov.uk**

Take good care,



**George Samios**  
**Headteacher**