



Upper Beeding Primary School

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Head Teacher: Mrs R Linford

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Dear Parents/Carers

First of all, I would like to thank you all for your patience at a time when there is so much uncertainty.

Although this email is unlikely to answer every question you might have, I do hope it covers the key points and clarifies the things we don't have answers to as yet. The Government guidance (links below) was finally published to schools Monday night and we are now able to begin to plan for the possible phased re-opening of our school. I would be grateful if you could take the time to read all of this email carefully and then respond to the **Parent Survey**.

As is always the case, the safety and well-being of all the children in our care is paramount and everything that we do will try to ensure the very best support for them, whether that is at home or in school. Although we will have some families (and the children themselves) that are extremely keen to get back to school, there will also be those that are worried and are very anxious about children returning, for a variety of understandable reasons. The 'family' aspect of our school has always been important, and this has never been more important than during these challenging times. As we potentially re-open, we are asking that you all extend your 'family', in terms of the risks from Covid-19, to a wider group, but we will ensure that whilst in school, that 'family' will only be the small number of children in each class (see below) and the staff who work with them. We will not be mixing classes during the school day and will have processes in place to keep parents apart at drop-off and pick-up times.

Initial Phase of Re-opening: As per the guidance, we are now working towards a potential **phased** re-opening for Year 6 pupils from **Tuesday 2nd June**, Year 1 pupils from **Thursday 4th June** and for Reception children from **Monday 8th June**. We aim for each group of children to be in their class base and with a member of staff they know e.g. class teacher. We will be creating our own little 'bubbles' of less than 15 children.

Clearly, we would only ever open the school to the children and our staff at the point that it was safe to do so, in accordance with the published guidance. We will now be working tirelessly over the coming days to plan the detail and have everything in place by **Tuesday 2nd June**. We will have detailed risk assessments in place and have plenty of time to enact the guidance around social distancing, pick-ups, drop-offs and so on. There are a couple of specific areas that I can address a little more today in the sections below, but we will communicate more specific details around how we will meet all the safety guidance by the beginning of next week. We hope that when you complete the **Parent Survey** that you will be able to do so with the confidence that we would never open the school until we could be completely sure it is as safe as possible to do so (again, based on the Government guidance).

Attendance at School: We are very pleased that the Government has chosen to mirror the stance that we had already planned to take if schools re-opened before the end of the current academic year, which is that there will be **no fines for non-attendance at school**. The guidance states that:

- "No one with symptoms should attend a setting for any reason. Eligible children – including priority groups - are strongly encouraged to attend their education setting, unless they are self-isolating or they are clinically vulnerable (in which case they should follow medical advice)."

Priority Groups: As well as opening for Reception, Year 1 and Year 6, the current expectation that schools will provide childcare for 'key worker' families and 'vulnerable children' remains.



Pupil Learning: Until there is a further change in the guidance, we believe that we will be able to continue to support home learning through the VLE for all year groups and we will use this as the basis for the provision for the children who are in school as well. There may be a slight change in how this looks and the amount of daily input we can provide for those at home, as potentially most teachers will be in school either with groups of children in year groups returning or providing childcare.

Parental Survey: On the basis of the information above (and taking account of the sections below), we would be very grateful if **every family** could complete the survey at the following link. Not every question will be relevant, but there are relevant questions for every family and it will help us a lot if everyone can complete it by the **end of tomorrow (Thursday 14th May)**. There is a question for you to give your family name – this is optional, but it would be really helpful if you could complete this, mainly so that we know which families have not responded as we will need to know everyone’s intentions by the time we get to the half-term ‘break’ in preparation for **Tuesday 2nd June**.

- **Survey Link:** <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/6723ZK6>

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE): The guidance is very clear on this:

- “Schools and other education or childcare settings should therefore not require staff, children and learners to wear face coverings. Changing habits, cleaning and hygiene are effective measures in controlling the spread of the virus. **Face coverings should not be worn in any circumstance by those who may not be able to handle them as directed (for example, young children)** as it may inadvertently increase the risk of transmission.”

We will be working to ensure we have a small amount of PPE available for staff as there are instances that this might be appropriate:

- “if a child, young person or other learner becomes unwell with symptoms of coronavirus while in their setting and needs direct personal care until they can return home. A face mask should be worn by the supervising adult if a distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained. If contact with the child or young person is necessary, then gloves, an apron and a face mask should be worn by the supervising adult. If a risk assessment determines that there is a risk of splashing to the eyes, for example from coughing, spitting, or vomiting, then eye protection should also be worn”

Although, even in this instance, we should be able to observe the 2 metre aspect without the need for staff to use PPE.

School Meals: We anticipate all children in Reception and Year 1 will be able to have a hot meal; any children who are in childcare with a key worker parent and /or vulnerable and finally any Year 6 children who are entitled to FSM.

Later Phases: At the moment, the only statement in the guidance regarding the children in other year groups is as follows:

- “Our ambition is to bring all primary year groups back to school before the summer holidays, for a month if feasible, although this will be kept under review. We will only welcome back additional year groups if the most up-to-date assessment of the risk posed by the virus indicates it is appropriate to have larger numbers of children within schools. The safety of children and staff is our utmost priority.”

There is no further clarity on what this means and whether it would be all children all of the time. Our approach at the moment is to try not to worry about that too much and to concentrate on what we do know and to plan for the things we have been asked to provide.

Published Guidance: We hope that everyone can appreciate that we need to take a consistent approach to what we do and our best way of doing this is to follow the Government guidance. The three key publications are listed



below alongside the link to them on www.gov.uk. I am in no doubt that not everyone will agree with the government approach, which is why we are asking everyone to complete the **Parent Survey** so that we have as much information as possible to help us plan a way forward.

- **Actions for education and childcare settings to prepare for wider opening from 1 June:** <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-educational-and-childcare-settings-to-prepare-for-wider-opening-from-1-june-2020>
- **Implementing protective measures in education and childcare settings:** <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-protective-measures-in-education-and-childcare-settings>
- **Guidance for parents and carers as schools and other education settings in England open to more children and young people:** <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers>

The guidance covers the rationale for inviting Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 back first and we are pleased that it fits with much of what we had already been discussing about the phased return of pupils. Our priority from the very start of this situation was to provide as much as we could in terms of experiences to our Year 6 pupils and we hope that by welcoming them back, we can try and give them the send-off from their primary school that they all so richly deserve – even if that doesn't quite end up looking the same as it would normally have done. For our youngest pupils, we know that those children have the potential to be losing the most from the extended time away from school – less in terms of academic learning, but more in terms of structure and social development.

Of course, everything above comes with the considerable caveat that these are all 'aims' and the situation may change between now and **Tuesday 2nd June**, but I am sure we will all want to work together to do our best with the continued challenges of this situation.

Once you have had time to digest the information in this email, please complete the **Parent Survey**. If you still have any comments, feedback or questions, please don't hesitate to get in touch – remembering that we will be providing more detail about how school will actually look and function on **Tuesday 2nd June** at the beginning of next week.

Best wishes

Becky Linford
Headteacher

