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10th July 2020

Dear Parents

As I am sure you are aware, pupil attendance in the new academic year is **compulsory** as outlined by the Department for Education (DfE) in their guidance to schools about fully opening in September. Guidance in this regard was received last Thursday and we have therefore spent the past week putting plans together so that we are prepared. I feel the guidance and subsequent preparations gives us the chance to remain as safe as possible whilst also feeling normal (ish). Here is the link to the DfE guidance:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools>

We have tried to keep you informed of our plans as much as is possible throughout this period and this is another step in those efforts. **We feel that it is really important that you know and understand our procedures and safety measures.**

The government has shared what they call the 'systems of control', which are protective measures that reduce risk in school. We have planned to follow these and apply them at Quarry Bank Primary. You can find the entire 'Quarry Bank Full Opening – September 2020' plan on the school website. The risk assessment will be published soon.

Here is a link to the school website:

<http://www.quarry.dudley.sch.uk/Page/Detail/coronavirus-response>

I have written a summary below that will help you to understand the measures that we have taken and how this affects you and your children. We understand that some of the measures are disruptive to your routine, but please bear in mind that the safety of all the children and adults in school is our collective priority. However, we have tried to limit this disruption by making sensible decisions about how we adopt the measures.

Here are some of the key changes:

- **Children who have coronavirus symptoms must stay at home;**
- There will be a continued **increased focus on washing hands and respiratory hygiene** within school – further lessons on hand washing and 'catch it, bin it, kill it' will take place;
- An **increased cleaning schedule** will be introduced so even more cleaning takes place during the school day;
- **Children will be in 'phase bubbles'** i.e. N/R, 1/2, 3/4, 5/6. They will only come into contact with children and adults in that phase. I have included more detail about this measure in the main plan. Ultimately, if we used 'class bubbles', then we wouldn't be able to teach the children well enough to help them 'catch-

up' and we would have needed to close school every Friday afternoon to release teachers for their planning time, or bring in supply teachers who will have taught at various schools throughout the week, compromising the bubbles;

- **School start and finish times will be staggered** so that there are not too many adults (one per family) on site at any one time. They will be as follows:
 - Nursery am: 8.45am – 11.45am
 - Nursery pm: 12.30pm – 3.30pm
 - Reception: 8.40am – 2.55pm
 - Key Stage 1: 8.30am – 2.45pm
 - Lower Key Stage 2 (Y3/4): 8.50am – 3.05pm
 - Upper Key Stage 2 (Y5/6): 9.00am – 3.15pm;
- **Children are not required to distance within their bubbles.** The DfE has acknowledged that it is impossible to distance children, which is why they will remain in their bubbles;
- Adults are to still try to distance from children and **reduce 'face-to-face' contact**;
- All classrooms from Year 1 – Year 6 will arrange their tables so children are **facing the front** and are sat side-by-side to one another;
- There will be **no whole-school assemblies or parent events** - only phase assemblies are permitted;
- Children are not allowed to sing in groups of more than 15, therefore we are **not teaching the music** curriculum until we can do it properly;
- **PE will be mainly based outside** and coaches can be used as long as distancing is adhered to. Children can attend school in their PE kit on PE days, rather than getting changed and bringing additional bags;
- **Lunch and break times will be staggered.** Lunches will be eaten in classrooms and the school dinner menu has been adapted so that some meals can be cooked and served in boxes (like a happy meal box);
- The DfE state clearly that **school offices are not to be accessed by parents** unless through appointment via a call or email;
- Contact details of children will be made available to **NHS Test and Trace** workers should they need to access information;
- Children from Reception – Year 6 will all have their **own school pencil case with individual stationery.** They are not to bring anything into school from home, other than clothes, books and lunch/snack;
- **Wraparound care is still permitted** as long as the children are in small consistent groups. We will share information about our wraparound care soon.

We know that pupils thrive best when they have routine, consistency and stability supporting them. We will therefore be doing everything we can to ensure that, wherever possible, school life is as close to what they are familiar with. **All the school's existing policies and expectations on issues such as behaviour, uniform, attendance and punctuality will be in place as normal with updates as required to reflect adherence to safety and hygiene measures.**

Unfortunately, this means that our plans for transition have now had to be reconsidered. We were planning for all children to return to their Classteacher from this year, and then move to their new Classteacher in the second week of term. Sadly, this can't happen as we would not be able to control the bubbles when we place the children in their new classes. This is very disappointing as we will not be able to gently transition children to their new classes as planned. However, I'm sure they will be incredibly excited to start a fresh year with their new teacher

from day 1 – their teachers are certainly excited to meet them and we shall naturally support them as they ‘find their way’ in their new year group!

Some parents and children will be anxious about returning to school, and that is completely to be expected. But what I will say is that we have had a fantastic time during our reopening period this term and the children have loved it. They have managed the changes well and for a lot of them it is now the ‘new normal’ in school. I expect that all returning children and parents will adapt to the new measures fantastically well too. Please try not to worry and do be as positive as you can encouraging the children back to the ‘norm’.

If you are particularly anxious about anything, then please do get in touch and we will try to put your mind at ease!

We have big plans for the start of term, especially ‘Step-Up September’! We are going to ‘hit the ground running’ so that the children can catch up with any lost time as quick as possible. During Step-Up September, children are going to be practising plenty of the basic skills that they may have forgotten and they will be covering some essentials to make sure their learning behaviours are really up-to-speed. We will have a heavy focus on PSHE and wellbeing to make sure that they are also emotionally supported. I’ll share more plans about this initiative at the start of the next academic year.

Needless to say, these have been a tricky few months to say the least. We have all had to adapt to the changing landscape almost overnight and it has been difficult at times. But, truthfully, the way that we have navigated this has only been made possible because parents, staff and children have all done their bit and mucked in when needed. This will be remembered as a time of great challenge, but also a time of great togetherness and community spirit.

As ever, thank you for your support.

Yours sincerely



Alex Rawlings
Headteacher