

Dear Parents,

Please find below a series of FAQs which I hope will help you to make your decision regarding your child returning to school. As I write, these details are correct, however we are literally receiving updated guidance daily so you will appreciate that some details may be subject to change.

Thank you to those 80 or so parents who have already completed our survey. There are 210 children in EYFS, Year 1 and Year 6. We really need ALL parents of children in EYFS, Year 1 and Year 6 to let us know of their decision through the google form by 10am Monday 18th May as without this, planning will be almost impossible. <https://forms.gle/tsuqbSiR3KmY6Qo6A>

If, after reading this document you need further questions answered, please email me at support@thundersley.essex.sch.uk

We will follow the DfE guidance where we feel it is appropriate. However, we feel that it is most important that we respond to the needs of our own community. You as parents know what you need us to do to support you. We have been asked to prepare for the June 1st date, but it has not yet been confirmed that school will open more widely on that date and if we feel that we are not ready for staff and children to return safely then, we may delay the start.

Can I say no to provision now and then change my mind later?

The answer to this is yes, however once we have numbers and can put together our final plan for wider opening, we will run the provision for 3 weeks before we add more children, as each home group of children should be kept apart as much as possible.

How will you organise the children?

Once we know numbers, the children will be put into a Home group or 'bubble' of no more than 10 pupils organised by classes/ year groups. These groups will be selected alphabetically to ensure that should we need to operate a part time system; siblings will be able attend on the same day. This will be particularly important once the rest of the school returns which is the government's ambition for early July.

Will the key workers group continue?

Yes, and we envisage that this group may expand. Due to the current guidance that Home groups should not mix, children who are in the key worker group will not be able to attend another Home Group. This is complex and will be kept under review.

Will my child be with their own teacher?

We cannot guarantee that your child will be with their class teacher. However, we will endeavour to ensure that they are with an adult with whom they are familiar. The class teacher - whether in school or working remotely - will still have the overarching responsibility for the education of the children in their class and safeguarding. Therefore, strong communication will take place between whichever adult is in school and your child's class teacher.

Wherever possible, we will endeavour to ensure your children are working with qualified teachers. However, where this is not possible, additional adults will support your children.

How will break times operate?

Each home group will be assigned a designated outdoor space and time to play to ensure that they do not mix with other children. We are at present putting together a pack of ideas of the types of games children can play whilst social distancing. Children will be strongly encouraged to play at a social distance of 2 metres.

How will lunch time operate?

We are working with Total Catering to sort out final details, but it is likely that initially at least, children will be offered packed lunches only and can also choose to bring in their own packed lunch. Lunches will be eaten in the classrooms and children will eat at their desk or outdoors if the weather is fine. Lunch time will be half an hour.

How will you ensure a safe drop off and collection of children to ensure that adults socially distance?

Each year group will have a set time and allocated point for drop off/pick up. Just as we have become used to in supermarkets, there will be markings painted on the pavements to ensure people can social distance. Adults MUST maintain a 2 metre distance from others.

Parents will not be permitted to enter the site for any other reason. All communication with the school office must be via email or telephone and parents can drop off letters.

How should children get to school?

Parents and children and young people should be encouraged to walk or cycle where possible and avoid public transport at peak times. If Year 6 children have been used to walking to school, we would encourage them to do so again. This will support them in their transition to secondary school and also decrease the number of parents coming to the school gate. We understand that in the first few days you may want to accompany your child.

How often will children wash their hands/will you provide hand sanitiser?

Most of the classes being used have sinks and where this is not the case hand sanitiser is provided. Hand sanitiser stations have been fitted in corridors, halls and in many classrooms. Hand washing will take place at set times and any other time, as determined by the adult in charge. These times will be: -

1. Upon arrival in school
2. Before break
3. After break
4. Before lunch
5. After lunch
6. Before home time

In Year 6, if your child would like to bring their own hand sanitiser, that is fine but this must be labelled and not shared.

In addition, children will be required to take the 'Catch it, Bin it, Kill it' approach with sneezes. Tissues will be readily available in every classroom. They will be encouraged to cough into the crook of their arm and actively discouraged from touching their own faces.

What regular cleaning routines will you put in place?

High touch areas as identified by the school will be cleaned every day at 10:30am and 12:30pm. This includes - toilet handles, door handles, taps, sinks, table tops. In addition, the school is cleaned daily. If classrooms are required to be used for more than one group, a deep clean will take place between groups.

Will you still provide Free School Meal Vouchers for those children not attending school?

If your child is entitled to a free school meal and is not in school, we will continue to send you the redeemable vouchers from Edenred.

What should my child bring to school?

We ask that children do not bring any toys, or personal items in from home, and that their school bag is kept to a complete minimum. This includes not bringing their reading diaries and planners for the time being. We ask that the children's bag includes their lunchbox, break time snack, drink bottle and reading book.

Year 6 children will be asked to bring their pencil cases which they will then leave in school at their desk.

They will still be able to bring their mobile phone to school

As the weather is likely to be warm, please ensure that your child is wearing all day sunscreen and has a hat.

Will you operate breakfast club or Treetops?

It will not be possible to operate Breakfast of Twilight Club for children other than those who are in the key worker bubble. This will be reviewed as the situation progresses.

What will be the process for dealing with a child unable to cope in this strange new environment? Either behaviour wise or upset?

We totally understand that this situation will be very hard for children. Once we know our plan, we will help you to prepare your child to return. Much of our curriculum to beginning with will be geared towards supporting the children's emotional well-being. Routines will be put in place to help them feel secure and safe. As always, we will work with parents to support their child. If a child is distressed, we will call home. If a child is finding the new rules tricky, we will ask you to meet with us, within the social distancing guidelines to support them.

Will staff be provided with PPE?

All staff will be provided with PPE. As the DfE does not require that we provide PPE, it will be up to individual staff members if they would like to wear it. As a result, staff may look different to the children. It would be prudent for parents to discuss this with their children, particularly younger children, before they return to school.