



Sheepscombe Primary School
Far End
Sheepscombe
Gloucestershire
GL6 7RL
01452 813852

admin@sheepscombe.gloucs.sch.uk
head@sheepscombe.gloucs.sch.uk

Head teacher: Mrs Vicky Barron BSc Hons GTP Primary

Thursday 21st May

Dear Parents and Carers,

Thank you for all of your email replies over the past couple of weeks regarding a possible return to school. It has been very helpful to get an idea of your thoughts, questions and concerns and this has assisted us with forward planning.

As you would expect, we have been working hard over the past two weeks to prepare for the reopening of our premises at Sheepscombe School on June 1st. All previous provision at Cranham School will cease from June 1st onwards and we will all return to Sheepscombe school. Even if schools do not re-open on 1st June we will still be based at Sheepscombe School for those children who have already been accessing provision, for the remainder of the academic year.

You will also know that the first cohort (phase 1) of children to be offered places from June 1st will be Nursery, Reception, Year 1, Year 6 plus our Keyworker and Vulnerable children. We will then begin to roll this out to the remaining school year groups (phase 2) when we are asked to do so. Nearer the time, we will contact you again so you can state whether you wish to take up your school place.

Head teachers have been informed that we are not allowed to take children from other year groups at this time in order to keep numbers low. I know this poses a problem for many of you with siblings in older or younger groups, but schools cannot set their own rules regarding accepting other year groups and we apologise for this. If the situation changes, we will let you know.

The Government and Local Authority (Gloucestershire County Council) have provided extensive guidance, health and safety advice, checklists and a risk assessment that we have been working through. The information given here may therefore be subject to change, should the guidance for schools change. The GCC Safety, Health and Environment team developed their risk assessment model to assist schools make their own plans for reopening. The preventative measures suggested by them are not mandatory but were provided as guidance on reducing the risk of transmission. Each school/setting was asked to consider their own situation and adapt the assessment by editing the measures where appropriate, which we have done to the best of our ability.

The information provided in the remainder of this document sets out our plans for re-opening. It is detailed so please read it carefully. We are very happy to have your child/ren back in school but we



www.sheepscombeschool.co.uk





cannot plan for every eventuality. By bringing your child back in to school you are accepting our offer as outlined here.

Safety in our school is of course our main priority, combined with the well-being of your children and our staff team against this hidden virus. The measures we outline below have taken much thought and discussion. Whilst we are happy to receive feedback as always, please do not assume we will be able to respond to any specific requests you make. The document was prepared in conjunction with staff and governors (including parent governors) and as such stands as an agreement for our school. Amendments will be made if the guidance changes.

Our environment

As a small school, and with your co-operation and a common sense approach that is child centred, we are going to try and make the environment as non-threatening to children as possible so that school looks and feels as familiar as we can make it when they return.

We will not therefore be placing extensive markings on the floor to show you where to stand with your children when you arrive and leave our premises. As adults, you are now well practised at standing apart from others and we ask you to use your good sense when bringing your children in or collecting them from school. Please wait at a safe 2m minimum distance from others when dropping off or collecting your child. We will keep this under review.

Parking

Please park sensitively in the village and not near people's houses if you can avoid it, we are keen to protect our village neighbours as far as possible and they may be anxious about the increase in footfall in the village. Please keep your children near to you and do not let them run off. Please also maintain a 2m distance from any villager you meet.

The village hall car park is not currently open (at the time of writing) but there are less children attending school in these early weeks so this should not cause a problem. Please do not let your children use the village hall play area at this time, nor play in the village hall grounds before or after school.

Route to school – one way arrival and departure system.

We would like all parents to arrive with their children coming **UP** the footpath from below the school, keeping a suitable distance from other families. Then once you have dropped them off to exit the school grounds going on **UP** the hill and out of the top gate onto the road and to walk back round to your car along the lane.

A one-way system such as this will help avoid congestion on the narrow footpath at the beginning and end of the day. The only exception to this may be if you have a year 6 child who is able to be dropped





at the top gate and walk down into school themselves as we can see them on our CCTV. Please let us know if your y6 child will be arriving in this way so we can look out for them.

Arrival and Departure times

We don't feel that a staggered arrival time for each year group is especially helpful in our setting, nor does it help families with multiple children. Therefore, children can arrive at school between 8.40 and 9.10 each day. Please do not arrive after these times - we have allowed a bigger window for drop off so please do not be later than this.

Children in Year 6 and Keyworker children in years 2-5 should come straight into the main building via the cloakroom as they usually would, wash their hands (a new rule) and go into class directly. Numbers dependent, Year 6 will be in Eagle classroom and Keyworker children will be in Kestrel Classroom. This may be subject to change.

We are sorry, but no parents may come into the building at any time. If you need to speak to a teacher or member of staff they will happily come out to you, just ask your child to fetch them.

Only one parent or carer should bring your child/ren to school and pick them up. Please do not stay long on the playground at either end of the day as we need to keep the playground as clear as possible. If you want to chat to other parents please do so on the move. Staff may need to ask you to move on at the end of the day, so please don't put them in a tricky position.

For Nursery/Reception and Year 1 children in Merlin class -we will come out to meet you and your child. This will avoid congestion in our cloakroom. If your child is happy to come in with us directly that's great, we will then wave to you from the window or door with them if you wish.

However, we know that some children in Merlin class may need their adult to come in briefly to say goodbye as they usually would especially in these early weeks - hence why we will allow, where needed, one family into the cloakroom at a time. This may mean you have to wait outside for a short time. Please keep a reasonable distance from others while waiting. If we have a busy period staff will take children from both doors.

We will of course still hold a child's hand if they need us to and offer the usual emotional support. We honestly believe that refusing contact with young children is potentially damaging to their confidence and feeling of security - we would rather just wash our hands, and theirs, afterwards. We will take each child to wash their hands when they arrive inside the classroom and will have staff available to help with this.

Daily attendance

If you have asked us for a place in phase 1 from 1st June we do expect your child in school every day as normal, for all of the days we are open. Little Lambs should come in on their usual days other than Fridays when we anticipate we will be closed to pupils in the first instance (see later section) but if you would like to add additional days for your nursery child just speak to Mrs Powell as this should be possible.





If your child is unwell and not attending school that day then please ring school first thing in the morning as you usually would to report them absent as we will still be taking registers. Our safeguarding procedures still apply, so if we don't hear from you we will call you.

Changing your mind about coming to school

If you have told us you will be keeping your child at home at this time and you change your mind and want to bring them in to school after all, please book this in with Mrs Powell or Mrs Barron. We cannot take children who are not booked in with us ahead of time as this may alter our ratios and we may need to adjust our groups or staff accordingly.

Speaking to Mrs Powell in the office.

As our office is small, parents will not be allowed into the office at all. If you need to speak to Mrs Powell please ring the bell and open the door when the buzzer goes but then stay outside to speak from a distance. On warmer days we will try to prop the door open for easier access but please still stay outside. Bear in mind that others will have used the door handle so you may wish to sanitise or wash your own hands afterwards.

Uniform

We require that children wear a clean set of clothes each day, so we will remove the need to wear uniform for the remainder of the school year. School uniform will be needed only from September. Please help us by dressing your child in clean clothes every day. Sensible shoes will be needed - trainers would be helpful as we will still be doing outside learning and PE. If your child does not wear trainer type shoes to school they will need to bring them in each day in a bag. For children in skirts a pair of shorts in their bag would be helpful for PE times, which may vary over the week. We will not be getting children changed for PE sessions. They may like to have a spare T shirt in their bag in case they get especially hot.

Sickness

Our staff are reliant on your honesty to keep your child at home if they are unwell, with any symptoms of any illness. **This is really important and is our best preventative measure - we all rely on each other for this.** Children who have needed Calpol or similar in the morning before school or who 'don't seem quite right' should be kept at home. We cannot have children in school even with mild symptoms. Please help us with this. The same applies to staff who will not come to work if they are feeling even slightly unwell.

Covid-19 symptoms or diagnosis

If a child or staff member develops symptoms compatible with coronavirus, they will be sent home and advised to self-isolate for 7 days. Their fellow household members should then self-isolate for 14 days. All staff and students who are attending school will have access to a test if they display symptoms of coronavirus, and are encouraged to get tested in this scenario.





Where the child or staff member tests negative, they can return to their school and the fellow household members can end their self-isolation.

Where the child or staff member tests positive, the rest of their class or group within the school will be sent home and advised to self-isolate for 14 days. The other household members of that wider class or group do not need to self-isolate unless the child or staff member they live with in that group subsequently develops symptoms

Covid-19 testing

As mentioned above, schools have been informed that all those children attending school from June 1st and members of their households, will have access to testing if they display symptoms of coronavirus. The reasoning behind this being to enable them to return to childcare or education, and their parents or carers to go back to work, if the test proves to be negative.

To access testing parents will be able to use the 111 online coronavirus service if their child is 5 or over. Parents will be able to call 111 if their child is aged under 5 to get further advice.

Classrooms

Eagle and Kestrel classrooms have had their tables re-organised to allow for each child to have their own table. Kestrel class has individual tables rather than the group tables for the time being. Children will keep their water bottle on their table and this will become their work station when they are in the classroom doing any written work. We actually think they will like having their own 'desk' and this has already been working well when we have been at Cranham school. We have prepared a set of stationery in a zip wallet for each child to use as their own for this period so that resources are not shared. This will remain in school.

Merlin classroom has had some items temporarily put away - dressing up clothes, cushions and soft toys, in order to be in line with guidance. We have not allocated set tables to children in Nursery or Reception as we do not feel this is appropriate for very young children. Instead we have stocked their drawers with resources - pens, pencils, glue stick, scissors etc. When they want to write or draw they will take their drawer to an available table. We will wipe surfaces down regularly and children will wash or sanitise their hands more frequently. We will wash toys after use where needed and at the end of the day. Children will still be able to play in small groups we do not intend to have them sat behind a desk all day.

The new furniture from Kestrel class has been moved to the conservatory to create a work space for year 1 children so they have a base as some of their work requires more writing and recording. Year 1 children will also be able to play and use the outside area and classroom as usual. If numbers in Merlin are below 15 they will be able to be in one group outside if needed but if numbers are over 15 we will divide into smaller groups.





Pencil Cases

The advice about the sharing of resources states that pencil cases from home should not be brought into school.

Staffing and pupil groupings for phase 1

There will be some changes to our staffing structure and deployment during this time. Plans are subject to change and final decisions rest with Mrs Barron and will be made once final numbers are known after 28th May when the Government takes its decision. Where numbers are very small classes may be combined.

Draft plans are for the first weeks (phase 1)

Merlin Classroom (groups may combine if numbers are small initially)

- Nursery and Reception - Mrs Lane and Mr Dangerfield
- Year 1 - Mrs Barron (mornings) Mrs George (afternoons)

Kestrel classroom (Keyworker children from year 2,3,4 & 5)

- Mrs Wellings Monday and Wednesday
- Mr Ringer Tuesday and Thursday
- Mrs George 1-1 support (mornings)

Eagle classroom

Year 6 - Mr Tylour

All groups will still be able to use the outside areas within their groups or classes

Lunchtime staff -outside (groups rotating) : Mr King & Mrs Fielder

Break and Lunchtimes

The guidance says schools should have staggered lunch and break times. Break times will be run by the staff in class either in rotation or in separate areas -eg Merlin outdoor area, playground or orchard as appropriate.

Children will eat their packed lunch outdoors when possible and when the weather is fine.

Each group will then have a separate lunchtime playtime in rotation (we may decide to combine groups where the total combined number remains less than 15 pupils).

This will be run by Mrs Fielder, Mr King and Mr Dangerfield so that teaching staff have a short break.





Toys from home

Whilst we know Merlin children may like to bring toys from home we are not going to be able to allow this during this next period - if they do bring something in please can you pop it in their bag and it can be safely on their peg ready for the end of the day. The same applies to all other children.

PE sessions

Sean from Atlas sports will continue to come into school to teach PE. As you would expect, groups will be taught separately. All PE will be taught in school for the remainder of the academic year. Children will not need to change clothes so should come to school in clothes suitable to do outdoor PE.

School lunches

Our catering provider Caterlink has furloughed the majority of their staff. They will bring back from furlough staff catering for schools where the demand for school lunches is over 60 pupils. This means our kitchen will remain closed from 1st June and most likely this will continue into phase 2. Caterlink will be able to provide a packed lunch for any pupils who need one, these will be delivered to school.

Mrs Powell needs to know how many children require a Caterlink packed lunch for phase 1 - please can you email the office, otherwise will assume you are bringing a packed lunch from home.

Children should be able to manage their own packed lunches - please can we ask that young children have pots or flasks they can open by themselves if you use them.

Of course we will not refuse to help them but it would help us if they can be independent. For example - snack bars in wrappers - wrappers could be removed at home or you could 'start them off' at the top when you pack them so the child can easily remove the remainder of the wrapper.

Outdoor learning

We are hoping for some lovely weather and will use the outdoor environment where we can (as we usually would). At the time of writing I don't know if Forest School is possible or sensible, we assume not and the same goes for being able to use the cricket pitch as we normally would but in due course we will look at this further. We are very lucky though to have the orchard and the Merlin play area, both of which the children love.

Fridays

At the current time I cannot open the school on Fridays to children, otherwise my Monday to Thursday staff system does not work. **On Fridays school will be closed to children** in the first instance (we will keep this under review each week). On Fridays full time staff will still be working and connecting with those pupils who remain at home, via Google Classrooms, Hangouts, emails and telephone calls.





Other schools are in a very similar position and there are a wide variety of plans, all of which involve an element of part time school. Running a 4 day week means we can continue into phase 2 (if we get that far) with all siblings being able to come to school at the same time.

Home learning

Home learning will continue to be provided each week by school staff via Google Classrooms. Parents will remain free to choose how much or little they do in the same way as they are now, or to continue to choose their own path. Please bear with us in the first couple of weeks as juggling online learning and classroom teaching will require some adjusting to.

Parents are also signposted to the online Oak Primary Academy, see below:

Oak Primary Academy <https://www.thenational.academy/>

Some parents at home may prefer to access direct online lessons for their children. The Government has set up this national online academy where structured video lessons are available for each year group. If you would prefer it to our offer, or wish to combine it with our work, or your own, then it would be a good place to start. Follow the link above, press Online Classroom, then Schedule, then click on your child's Year group.

There are lessons in English, Maths and Foundation (which means the other subjects like Science and Art). As we have such huge variation across our school in relation to technology and parental preference for using it as a teaching method, this it is not part of our regular set work, but if you would like this lesson delivery method we can highly recommend it.

Staff support for families at home

I would re-iterate that staff are available to help so please do email them if you need something extra to that on offer. Assuming a 4 day week will be possible, the fifth day will be a chance for teachers to keep in touch with those working at home, to speak to children on Google Hangouts or to make 1-1 phone calls and to plan for the following week. Part time staff who don't work on a Friday have had their own working week adjusted to give them time during the week.

You can ring school during the school day if you have a 'quick question', otherwise school staff will reply to emails at the end of the day as they will have a reduced marking and feedback burden in these early weeks.

Breakfast and After school clubs

We will sadly not be able to offer breakfast or after school clubs during this first period of reopening.

If your work schedule means that you need an earlier drop off in order to get to work for 9.00 a.m then we may be able to offer an 8.30 drop off with children coming straight into their classroom. Please let Mrs Powell know if this is required. Please only use this option if you have no viable alternative. Thank you.



www.sheepscombeschool.co.uk





Pick up time

All children must be collected at or by their allocated pick up time. We have staggered pick up times for each group so as to limit the amount of waiting and contact on the playground. Please keep apart from other adults while waiting, we will bring children out to you.

Times for pick up are:

- **Nursery (where there are no siblings in school) 2.50 pm**
- **Reception (and any Nursery siblings) and Year 1 3.00 p.m (and any other siblings)**
- **Year 6 and Key worker children 3.15p.m**

Please exit the playground from the top gate onto the road, as mentioned previously. We know this gives you a longer walk, but it is our best chance of avoiding contact on the footpath.

Fines for non attendance

Schools have been told that no parent will be fined for non-attendance during this period and schools will not be held to account for their attendance levels. We are relieved to hear this!

Forward plans for school being open to all year groups and Village Hall use

The forward plan (should school reopen for all children for phase 2 in June/July) is to continue to try to reduce class sizes to 15 or less and to continue teaching in a similar manner to that which we will already have in place.

To this end, we will require more teaching spaces to make this happen. The Village Hall committee have this week kindly agreed to rent the village hall to us (it is closed to everyone else and will remain so) for a 5 week block.

This way we should be able to continue to offer at least a 4 day week to all children, with all children in school at the same time. We would have the village hall cleaned each day by our cleaning contractors as it would temporarily become part of the school premises.

This is just a plan at the time of writing - we cannot yet say which year groups will be taught together for phase 2 as this will depend on the number of families returning to school. Nearer the time we will ask you whether you wish to take up a school place - as the situation and your own opinion may have changed between now and then.

Additional hygiene

As you would expect, we have purchased additional cleaning products and sanitisers in readiness for re-opening. Children will be asked to wash or sanitise their hands regularly, including on arrival at school each day. The children who have been coming to Cranham school have been doing this for many weeks and it soon becomes an automated habit.





We will carry out additional cleaning of surfaces and door handles etc during break and lunchtimes. Play equipment will be washed more frequently than usual by staff during the day and after school.

One of Mrs Barron's daughters (likely Poppy) may be in school to support with the washing of equipment if we find we need it - as she is in the same family group as Mrs Barron, Mr Dangerfield (Mrs Barron's step-son if you didn't know) and Jemma in Year 6 this seems an acceptable risk. She is also a University Medical student who has passed all of her hygiene modules.

PPE

This has been the most frequently asked question by parents so far, with every parent that has mentioned it being worried about staff wearing PPE and causing anxiety and fear for their children.

To clarify our position:

Staff will not routinely be wearing PPE when working with children in our school. Government guidance does not approve face coverings in schools, nor the continued use of PPE equipment. The direct quote from the guidance is below (and may be subject to change)

The majority of staff in education, childcare and children's social care settings will not require PPE beyond what they would normally need for their work, even if they are not always able to maintain distance of 2 metres from others.

PPE is only needed in a very small number of cases:

- *children, young people and learners whose care routinely already involves the use of PPE due to their intimate care needs should continue to receive their care in the same way*
- *PPE should be worn if a distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained from any child, young person or other learner displaying coronavirus symptoms*

We do have a small amount of PPE in school as per the re-opening recommendations; this is for staff use if a child was to require personal care or became unwell and needed looking after away from other children until a parent arrived to fetch them

These are the conditions set out by the Government about the wearing of PPE and to which we will adhere:

...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





Hopefully this document will give you a clearer idea of how we plan to run our school in the coming weeks. I am happy to answer questions that are not covered here, but not to amend anything I have stated here at this current time.

We do not intend, in any way, for school to be a scary place for pupils.

Please email me if you have further questions and I will do my best to get back to you, questions may be collated into a FAQ document and sent out at a later date, as more detail is given by Government and the Local Authority.

I know this seems like a lot of information to take in and I apologise for that - our school is still a lovely place to be.

Kind regards,

Vicky Barron



www.sheepscombeschool.co.uk

