



26<sup>th</sup> February 2021

Dear Parents and Carers of children in Reception, Key Stage 1 (Years 1 & 2), Key Stage 2 (Years 3,4,5,6)

## **The wider opening of Gig Mill Primary School**

As you will be aware from the national news, the Prime Minister's announcement has confirmed that the Government's 4 key tests are currently being met. Following my last letter, I am writing to update you on how the return to school for the vast majority of pupils to Gig Mill Primary School will be organised **from March 8<sup>th</sup> onwards**.

We look forward to welcoming the children back to school safely using the same principles that were applied across the most recent National lockdown and for our September 2020 start.

Everyone is looking forward to being back together in school. Most of you that we have spoken to so far this week, have been excited about a return to school, please let us know if there is any new information we need to be aware of to support a return to school. We are all relieved that, after so many weeks at home, children will be able to return to school and be with their classmates for their learning.

I know that some parents and children may be anxious about returning and may still have ongoing concerns about COVID-19. I hope, therefore, that what is set out below gives everyone the reassurance they need about how the school will operate when it opens once again to all children so that everyone is looked after well. You will be aware that Gig Mill has been open over the lockdown period for almost 200 children, and the safety measures put in place have ensured this provision has been provided without issue.

**Preparations have started this week, and will continue over the coming week, with an updated risk assessment put in place following its release from the Local Authority today.**

The safety, health and wellbeing of everyone in the school is, of course our highest priority. We have already put in place the full recommendations that the government scientists have made for 'protective measures' so that the school can be run safely, hygienically and with appropriate social distancing in place wherever possible. In its advice, the government has set out a 'hierarchy of controls' - 5 important areas that schools can act on to significantly reduce the risk of infection. I am sharing some of these key actions we are taking because the government also wants us to make sure we communicate our plans with you.

## **Health and safety**

As a school we prioritise health and safety and we have revised the way our school runs to help reduce contact between children and to maximise distancing in our school community, whilst minimising the potential for transmission of the virus as far as is reasonably possible.

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At Gig Mill Primary School we have completed a detailed risk assessment and formulated our plans for reopening by implementing the Public Health England 'system of controls' which will help reduce the risk of transmission.

### **Minimising contact with those who have or live with someone with symptoms of COVID 19**

Essential measures include:

- Minimising contact with individuals who are unwell by ensuring that those who have coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms, or who have someone in their household who does, do not attend school.
- **Please do not send your child to school if they have any symptoms, or if they are generally unwell**
- Actively engaging with NHS Test and Trace.
- Managing confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) amongst the school community and containing any outbreak by following local health protection team advice.
- The government has made available lateral flow testing twice weekly for anyone in an educational setting, and parents and pupils can access both lateral flow tests, and PCR (COVID tests) in the community.
- Cleaning hands more often than usual - washing hands thoroughly for 20 seconds with running water and soap and drying them thoroughly (or using alcohol hand rub or sanitiser) ensuring that all parts of the hands are covered.
- Ensure good respiratory hygiene by promoting the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach.
- Continuing enhanced cleaning, including cleaning frequently touched surfaces often, using standard products such as detergents.
- Ensuring that children and young people are in the same groups each day - creating 'bubbles'.

### **Additional guidance on wider symptoms**

- Advice is to access community testing for wider symptoms, please see advice letter from Public Health England

### **Safeguarding**

Our Designated Safeguarding Leads Mrs Hannaway, Mrs Garratt, Mrs Powell and Mrs Suchomski will be on site daily so any safeguarding concerns raised can be reported through the normal processes. They will then follow our safeguarding procedures, if you wish to discuss any concerns, please contact the school office, either through email or telephone.

### **Pupil groups**

Consistent groups reduce the risk of transmission by limiting the numbers in contact with each other. Maintaining distinct groups or 'bubbles' that do not mix makes it quicker and easier in the event of a positive case to identify those who may need to self-isolate.

At Gig Mill Primary School we will operate as year group 'bubbles' with allocated classrooms, designated staggered arrival and collection times and a timetabled break and lunchtime with specific play areas. Whilst this organisation means that the children will

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spend most of the day within their class group, they will be able to mix with their year group friends during break and lunch, as well as allowing for mixing of same year group classes for learning purposes.

In addition to the above our 'bubbles' the following changes to school routines will be in place:

- Avoiding large gatherings such as assemblies or workshops.
- Making adaptations to our classrooms to support distancing. This includes seating pupils side by side rather than face to face.
- Pupils will have their own items that cannot be shared e.g. pens and pencils, these will be provided by school to minimise contact from home.
- Classroom based resources, such as books/games shared in class will be cleaned regularly, along with all frequently touched surfaces. Many of the resources will only be used by the class and not across the whole year group bubble.
- Resources that are shared between bubbles, such as sports, art and science equipment will either be cleaned between use by each bubble, or used after 72 hours quarantine.
- Staff maintaining distance from pupils and other staff as much as possible - avoiding close face to face contact and minimise time spent within 1 metre of anyone.
- We recognise that younger children will not be able to maintain social distancing, and it is acceptable for them not to distance within their group, subject to good respiratory hygiene and handwashing.

We have also had to make some amendments to our school day to allow time for hygiene and health and safety procedures and to minimise mixing, and allow sufficient staff to be on duty with staggered starts and finishes.

### **Years 4,5,6**

**Start and end of day routines will remain the same as last term for Heath Farm Road, and for siblings in Y4,5,6**

Year group	Drop off	Pick up	Location
Year 4	8.30-8.50	3.10pm	Enter Heath Farm Road gate Exit one way KS2 playground
Year 5	8.30-8.50	3.15pm	Enter Heath Farm Road gate Exit one way KS2 playground
Year 6	8.30-8.50	3.20pm	Enter Heath Farm Road gate Exit one way KS2 playground

**There is a slight change to start of day for Broadway entrance**, this is to take account of parents' previous concerns regarding queuing inside the school gates, and proximity to other parents. Since January gates have opened initially for sibling groups, then other families, this allows more pupils to come in quickly, and is working well.

**From 8.30 – 8.40 families with sibling groups only will come through Broadway pedestrian gate and into school via the front entrance.**

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8.40 onwards all parents and children in Years N,R,1,2,3 will come through the pedestrian gates at allocated times outlined below, and will then use the same arrangements as last term:

8.40 – 8.50 Years 2 & 3 through front Broadway entrance, exit via carpark

8.40 – 8.45 Year 1 Through Broadway entrance and onto field for drop off, exit via carpark.

8.45 – 8.55 Reception Through Broadway entrance and onto field for drop off, exit via carpark.

Existing Nursery children will come up the drive and round to the silver gate for the KS1 playground, then exit via carpark. New Nursery parents will be contacted individually next week regarding arrangements.

As last term only one parent may bring/collect a child to/from school to minimise congestion at Broadway and Heath Farm and follow 2m social distancing government legislation.

Whilst waiting and whilst on school premises, you will be asked to wear a mask (unless exempt) and wait at a socially acceptable distance until your child can be released to you safely.

Please remember it is a 'drop and go' system to avoid any congestion at the 4 allocated school entrances. We must also ask that you do not stop and chat with other parents or a teacher apart from a 'hello' as our aim is to ensure a safe but swift entry and exit from the school site. Please contact the school office if there is something that needs to be shared urgently with us.

**Just a reminder about Broadway end of day arrangements which are unchanged:**

Year group	Pick up	Location
Reception	3.00-3.05	Broadway silver gate one way via School field, exit via carpark
Year 1	3.05-3.10	Broadway silver gate one way via School field, exit via carpark
Year 2	3.05-3.10	Broadway main entrance Exit KS1 playground & via carpark
Year 3	3.10-3.15	Broadway main entrance Exit KS1 playground & via carpark

**OSCA**

Parents currently accessing OSCA will be contacted individually re provision next week. This will hopefully restart on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> March.

**Uniform and equipment**

All pupils will be expected to wear school uniform as normal. School uniforms do not need to be cleaned any more often than usual, nor do they need to be cleaned using methods which are different from normal.

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Please ensure that your child brings a waterproof coat, this is essential due to changed routines.

Children will only require a named packed lunch (if provided by home), a named water bottle (we are not able to provide these in school), a healthy snack (for children in Years 3 – 6, these may be kept within their lunch box), and a school book bag. **Back packs or large bags will not be permitted.**

We will advise you regarding PE days for week commencing 15<sup>th</sup> March.

### **Behaviour expectations**

As a school we will continue to have the highest expectations for behaviour. If a child behaves in a way that is unacceptable and causes a risk to other children or staff (either physical or unhygienic i.e. licking, spitting) then you will be contacted by a member of staff to discuss their behaviour and our school behaviour policy (as amended for COVID) will be followed.

### **Attendance**

It is vital that all children return to school to minimise as far as possible the longer-term impact of the pandemic on children's education, well-being and wider development. School attendance will therefore be mandatory again from March 8th. This means from that point, the usual rules on school attendance will apply, including:

- Your duty to secure that their child attends regularly at school and on time.
- Our responsibilities to record attendance and follow up any absences.

### **First Aid**

- If a child hurts themselves (minor bump, graze) then we will treat this within our bubble as a 'caring parent' would.
- If they require anything more detailed, then staff will call the office and we will direct an adult to bring the child to the first aid area which will be manned by a designated adult with PPE equipment. If a child requires an ice pack these will be used with a disposal bag which can be thrown away.
- Please note that we will send you a text message rather than a letter. Any more serious matters/injuries will result in a phone call to you as per our current practice.

### **Pastoral care and Curriculum**

We are in a very different scenario from our return to school after the summer, when children were coming back to lots of unknowns. Children know their classmates and teachers well, and most of you have been in regular contact this term. As in September the initial focus will be on pastoral care, and supporting pupils' emotional well-being and mental health on their return as well as promoting core curriculum skills. Plans underway for the first week focus on pastoral care and social activities, as the classes once again get used to class routines.

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Our Spring curriculum will therefore be based on pastoral activities designed to:

- Support the rebuilding of friendships and social engagement.
- Address and equip pupils to respond to issues linked to coronavirus (COVID-19).
- Support pupils with approaches to improving their physical and mental wellbeing.

### **Health and hygiene curriculum**

We will continue to explicitly teach and supervise health and hygiene arrangements such as handwashing, tissue disposal and toilet flushing.

As a school we will:

- Ensure we remind everyone to clean hands on arrival at the setting, before and after eating, and after sneezing or coughing.
- Think about ways to modify our teaching approach to keep a distance from children in our class as much as possible, particularly close face to face support (noting that it's understood that this is not possible at all times, which is why hygiene and hand cleaning is so important).
- Prevent children from sharing equipment and resources (like stationery), where possible.
- Keep our classroom door and windows open if possible for ventilation and to limit use of door handles.
- Limit the number of children from our classes using the toilet at any one time. Children will also have timetabled slots to visit their designated toilets.
- Limit our contact with other staff members.

### **Sickness in school**

If anyone becomes unwell with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature, or has a loss of, or change in their normal sense of taste or smell, staff will contact a senior member of staff who will co-ordinate the child being sent home and advise them to follow the COVID-19: guidance for households with possible coronavirus infection guidance. This guidance states that they must self-isolate for 10 days and should arrange to have a test to see if they have coronavirus (COVID-19). Other members of their household (including any siblings) should self-isolate for 10 days from when the symptomatic person first had symptoms.

Whilst the child is awaiting collection from school, they will be moved to a room where they can be isolated, depending on the age of the child and with appropriate adult supervision. PPE will be worn by staff caring for the child while they await collection if a distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained (such as for a very young child or a child with complex needs).

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Public Health England is clear that routinely taking the temperature of pupils is not essential, however school may take the temperature of a child who becomes unwell on the school site, as a matter of routine and reassurance.

I do hope this information letter provides you with some reassurance about our plans moving forward. (Please see website for further documentation).

Thank you for your ongoing support and understanding. We look forward to welcoming you all back to school once again on March 8th 2021.

Kind regards,  
Mrs Hannaway  
Headteacher