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Dear Parents/Carers

### **PHASED RE-OPENING ARRANGEMENTS**

I hope this letter finds you safe and well.

As you can imagine, I have been very busy planning how to open our school to the children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 from early June. Whilst we long for the day that we can all safely return to Magical Meare, it is vitally important that - for now - we open the school in a way that is safe for everybody. The plans we have put in place allow us to gradually increase the number of children on site.

This stage is by no means a return to normal life at school. It is a stepping-stone: we will be reviewing our procedures each and every step of the way. Your support with these procedures is vital and your flexibility to meet our new approach is critical if it is to work. In drawing up our plans, we have sought to follow the expectations from the Department for Education but have adapted these slightly in line with Local Authority Guidance. We think this gives us the best chance of keeping children and staff safe with the additional restrictions that are needed.

It is important that you and your child(ren) understand that this will not be school as you or they know it. For the vast majority of the day, children will be sat at individual desks that will be spaced out and there will be no real collaborative learning. Any outside play equipment will be limited and contact games such as football and tag will not be possible as they have been deemed too unsafe to allow. All learning environments will be 'controlled' - with limited movement. Obviously, this is not at all the type of creative learning environment that the children of Meare Village Primary School are used to.

The Senior Leadership Team and School Governors have been working hard to ensure that the Risk Assessments required for the broader opening of our school are all in place. However, in order to prepare our staff to manage these new procedures, **we will be CLOSED TO ALL EXCEPT THE CHILDREN OF KEY WORKERS on MONDAY 1<sup>st</sup> JUNE and TUESDAY 2<sup>nd</sup> JUNE.**

We must accept that none of these plans are cast in iron and we cannot guarantee that our provisions will stop the spread of Coronavirus. We are all aware of how illnesses can spread within any school setting. Therefore, if your child has an underlying health condition then you may want to consider keeping them at home **even if they are currently eligible to attend.** Please do not hesitate



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



to call the school office, **from Monday 1 June**, if you are not sure or would like to discuss specific circumstances in more detail.

We have worked hard to create plans which maintain social distancing for our children and staff as much as possible. However, we must acknowledge – as the Government have - that, **“Unlike older children and adults, early years and primary age children cannot be expected to remain 2 meters apart from others.”** This does not mean we will relax procedures and allow close proximity or contact, but rather that we cannot guarantee this. Nevertheless, I hope this letter clearly outlines the precautions we will have in place when your child(ren) return to school.

### Daily Routines & Bubbles?

We are limiting group sizes to a maximum of 15 children at any one point and placing children into ‘bubbles’. It is important to stress that children will be allocated a ‘bubble’ teacher who may be different to their usual teacher and that we cannot move children between ‘bubbles’ to be with friends. In line with government guidelines, from Wednesday 3 June, Key worker children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 will be with their year groups during the school day. **Bubble groups are non-negotiable.**

The Governing Body and Senior Leadership Team have decided that to admit every child in Reception, Year 1 & Year 6 in to school at the same time every day would be too high a risk. We have decided to employ a staggered approach to the start and end of the school day, as well as break and lunchtimes. This will ensure that children will only mix with others within their bubble, therefore minimising the risk of exposure or infection.

As you can imagine, we also have limited staff as some have underlying health concerns which make them vulnerable and so they are shielding or isolating at home.

The table below outlines who will be in each bubble and the timings for their school day.

Bubble group	Who?	Start time	Procedures	End time	Procedures	Days open	Staff
1	Reception & Year 1 children	9:00am	Drop off along the back path to the <b>BACK GATE</b> following the <b>ONE WAY SYSTEM*</b>	2.40pm	Line up along the back path and wait for a staff member to bring your child out to you.	Monday – Thursday	<b>Mrs Taylor</b> Mrs Watts & Mrs Burrows
2	Year 6 Children	8.50am		2.50pm	Leave by following the <b>ONE WAY SYSTEM*</b> across the staff car-park	Monday – Thursday	<b>Mrs Noel</b> Mrs McCabe & Mrs Higgs

<b>3</b>	<b>Key Workers' children &amp; vulnerable children</b>	8.40am		3.00pm		Monday – Thursday <b>Miss Dare</b> Mrs Hicks & Mrs Hecks Friday <b>Mr North + 1</b>
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\*It is **vital** that you drop off and collect your child **FOR** the time stated in the table: please plan your morning appropriately so that these timings can be adhered to by everyone. **Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 children who have siblings in the Key workers and Vulnerable Pupil's Bubble should arrive at 8.40am and be picked up at 3pm.**

There will be yellow painted lines along the back path and across the staff car park to ensure social distancing. I will be overseeing drop off and pick up to ensure a smooth-running and safe system. Please **DO NOT** allow your children to mingle whilst waiting to enter the school. Once your child is with a member of staff, we ask that you leave the school site immediately via the staff car park. This should not be used as a time to be sociable: **we must all model safe social-distancing practices to our children at all times.**

Once in school, children will be taken to wash their hands straight away.

The staff carpark **must not** be used by parents or carers for either drop-offs or pick-ups. Please do not block the gate to the staff carpark.

#### **In Summary:**

- **Monday June 1<sup>st</sup> & Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> June school will be closed to all except the children of Key Workers.**
- Children will be placed in bubble groups and will have staggered start and finish times
- There will be no school on Fridays except for children of key workers: this will enable our fabulous cleaning team to carry out a deep clean across the whole school.
- Much like supermarkets and other public places, admission to site will be restricted and controlled which means there will be queues in place. We will be operating a one-way system.
- We regret that there will not be the opportunity to stop and talk to teachers at drop-off and pick-up times.

#### **Curriculum:**

Adjusting to new school routines after all of this time will be strange and challenging for many children. They have missed their friends, their teachers and the much-needed structures and routines of their daily life pre-Covid19 with very little warning. Our children have been unable to avoid the news with its tragic stories - this will have undoubtedly affected them deeply and in hidden ways. We are also aware that there are children who have flourished while being at home with their families and who may also struggle with these new routines. Therefore, for the remainder of this year, we will not be teaching the normal curriculum. Instead, our core curriculum priority will focus on the following five key areas:

- Relationships
- Community

- Metacognition
- Maths
- English

**We will not be sending home any reading books as this increases the risk and the sharing of resources is not advised.** Children will be writing on sheets of paper and work cannot be marked by the teacher. Equally, reading diaries should not be sent into school either. Instead reading will be taught to the whole bubble using comprehension texts and the interactive screen. The timings of the day and the work set will focus around these five areas only. Although PE is planned, **children do not need to bring a PE kit until September.**

#### **Lunch Arrangements & Playtimes:**

**All children will need to bring a packed lunch from home – this must be provided in a disposable bag.** Please ensure that lunches are packed with easy access foods so that staff do not need to support. No hot meals/lunches will be available on site initially. From 3 June children attending school who are in receipt of a universal free school meal will be provided with a packed lunch by our meal provider. Benefit based FSM children will still be provided with weekly food boxes. Those attending school should be provided with their own packed lunch using the food from the food box provided. Other than a water bottle and a coat, where required, **we do not want them bringing anything to school that could increase the risk of cross infection.** Children will eat their lunch in their classrooms with their bubble group sat at their individual desks. The school day has been carefully planned to limit the number of children allowed on to the playground or school field at any one time. Different bubbles will be allocated different areas in which to play and any form of contact play will be discouraged. Toys and other play-time resources will be limited. Children must not bring in pencil cases, reading books, book bags or rucksacks, toys or comforters. Every child will be given their own set of equipment that they alone will use.

#### **Movement in the Building & Bubble Arrangements:**

Children will remain in their bubbles during their time in school. They will not be allowed to move around the school freely or visit any other bubble. Similarly, staff movements will be controlled within certain areas to minimise the risk of spreading infection from one bubble to another. Any staff working across the school in a 'floating' role will take additional precautions with hand washing prior to entering any bubble. Cleaning staff will wear PPE. Additionally, visitors to the school are not permitted except for contractors who need to do statutory on-site checks and repairs. All parents are advised to contact the school via email or telephone. If anybody does need to visit the school, there is a strict maximum capacity on how many people can be in our entrance lobby. Adults will only be admitted beyond this point if there are exceptional circumstances e.g. to collect an unwell child. At this point, suitable precautions will be taken.

#### **Behaviour:**

We will talk to the children daily about our new expectations and school procedures. To ensure children feel safe, we will use stories and talk time so that they can freely discuss concerns and raise questions. We understand that this will be unsettling for some children, but we need to follow strict procedures to enable everyone to stay safe. If any child persistently and deliberately disrespects social distancing measures or new school procedures then parents will be called to collect their child immediately. We understand that expectations for younger children will be slightly different than for older children. We have included a social story for you to share with your child to help them understand.

### **Uniform:**

Children **must wear a clean set of clothes every day**. School uniform is not necessary as we believe this will make it easier for families to ensure the children come in clean clothes each day. Clothes should be sensible and practical for school. We would recommend that children change their clothes as soon as they arrive home from school each day and that these are washed immediately.

### **General Health & Safety:**

In addition to the logistical arrangements outlined above, there are a whole range of other Health and Safety measures we have taken to keep our children and staff safe. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Children will not be allowed to attend school if they, or anybody they have had contact with, has symptoms of Coronavirus. They will be asked to observe a 14 day isolation period.
- If a child or member of staff develops symptoms then the whole bubble they have worked with will be asked to isolate for 14 days.
- From 1st June, children and families will be able to access tests for Coronavirus if somebody in their bubble has developed symptoms.
- All children and staff will be asked to wash their hands as soon as they enter the building and regularly and routinely throughout the day.
- There will be no assemblies or gatherings.
- Cleaners will continue to follow enhanced cleaning measures. Additionally, on a Friday, cleaning staff will undertake a 'deeper' clean. All staff will support additional cleaning of resources as required.
- Bubbles of children (other than the core group of children who attend the childcare provision) will not attend on Fridays. This will provide the opportunity for additional enhanced cleaning of bubbles. It will also allow our teachers to take the planning time they need without adding an additional teacher into the bubble (this could increase the risk of cross infection)
- No before or after school clubs will operate until at least September to minimise the risk of cross infections from mixing groups of children.
- We would ask that parents/carers drop off/pick up children on their own wherever possible. This will help us limit the number of adults or additional children on site. If this is not possible, you should speak to a member of staff who will be available to support around the site.
- The number of toys children handle will be limited. Soft furnishing, soft toys and toys difficult to clean will be removed.
- Some staff may be using PPE as they have vulnerabilities themselves or vulnerable people in their family home. Cleaning staff will always use PPE. First aid will be administered with the use of PPE.

### **Online learning:**

Work will continue to be uploaded onto Class Dojo and the school website. However, as teachers have been allocated to bubbles, work will be uploaded by Mrs Stevens. The teachers will continue to respond to queries via Class Dojo or the school email account.

At the moment, the Government are encouraging people to send their children to school where they are eligible. However, they have also been clear with schools that there will be no prosecutions or fines issued if parents or carers choose not to do this. Therefore, as a school, we shall support you in making your decision, but it is just that: your decision. Of course, if you tell us your child is attending and they do not arrive, we will follow our usual procedures. However, if you tell us they are not then we will note your wishes. If you need any support or have any questions, then please do not hesitate to get in touch via the school office.

Please know that we have the health and safety of all our Magical Hooman Beans, parents and team at heart and we will continue to ensure that your children enjoy their time with us even with all these new and unusual rules and regulations in place. You cannot suppress the magic at Meare.

Kind Regards

Mrs Jan Fellows  
**Headteacher**

Four walls that hold tomorrow ...