



27 May 2020

Dear Parent / Carer

The reopening of school for Year 6 pupils

Further to my letter to you on Friday, I am now writing with more specific details about year 6 pupils' return to school. Once you have read the intentions, I would be very grateful if you would let us know definitively whether your child will or won't be in for the initial days of the plan. This is very important so we know who to expect. **Please do this as soon as convenient and by 6pm on Thursday 28 May at the latest if you can.**

You can access the survey [here](#).

Parents and carers who choose not to send their child to school in the initial period, can change their minds. We would ask that you provide us with a week's notice, with a view to your child starting on a Monday, so we can make the necessary adaptations to our plans.

I have included the key arrangements for the first few weeks as an appendix to this letter, given the amount of detail there is. In arriving at these arrangements, we have followed carefully the government's guidance on reopening schools and drawn up a comprehensive health and safety risk assessment. Although the movement and activities of pupils will be much more stringently controlled than would normally be the case, we do intend to provide our usual warm, friendly and welcoming environment for our young people, very mindful of their wellbeing. All the changes will be explained to them so that they understand the reasoning behind the unusual arrangements.

Key immediate points to make you aware of are:

- On Monday 1st June, other than the children of key workers and those deemed vulnerable, only staff will be in school to be given training in the new arrangements.
- From Tuesday 2nd June, only one or two small groups of students will be invited in each day. The focus for each group's first day will be to welcome the children back, to find out how they have been getting on, to do various activities, mainly from a pastoral perspective, and to familiarise them with the new routines. Pupils are expected to be in uniform.
- You will be told the specific first day for your child this Friday afternoon, the 29th, with details of the specific school yard that they should report to. Those who need to let their school transport provider know their requirements, as per yesterday's letter from the County Council, will be scheduled later in the week to enable you to give your transport provider sufficient notice.
- Once each group has had its familiarisation day, all groups will be in together. We anticipate that this will be from Monday 8th June. At this point, all year 6s whose parents have indicated they will be in, will be expected in every day, other than if unwell.

- On the days in the first week that children of key workers and those deemed vulnerable are not required to be in as part of year 6 activity, they will still be able to access the regular provision that has been in place since the start of lockdown.

The general arrangements follow in the appendix. My hope is that they give you the confidence you need to send your child back in. However, should you decide you would rather keep your child at home for the time being, then we shall of course respect your decision and will continue to provide online resources. Either way, please do let us know your intentions via the [survey](#). Thank you in anticipation and please get in touch should you have any queries or concerns.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G. Akins', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Graeme Akins
Executive Headteacher

APPENDIX TO LETTER

Preparing and maintaining a safe school site

- Preparatory work is virtually complete to ensure that we have the safest possible environment for pupils returning. The site has been cleaned, including all rooms that will be used in the initial period. Surfaces in these rooms have been cleared of unnecessary materials to allow for ongoing, regular cleaning. Each day, cleaning staff will be on duty to ensure that regular, scheduled cleaning takes place throughout the school day, to include the regular cleaning of all surfaces (including desks), door handles, switches and the emptying of bins. Hand wash will be available in all toilets for pupils and staff. Anti-bacterial gel will also be available but this will be for use as a secondary measure; the emphasis will be on proper handwashing at a sink.
- In classrooms, desks have been placed two metres apart and have been marked with tape to indicate where pupils can safely sit.
- Markings of two metre distance are being placed in all corridor spaces and will be used to guide pupil movement and any queueing that can't be avoided. Arrows will indicate the direction of pupil movement. It is important to note that the government guidance does allow for corridor passing as an inevitable aspect of operating a school and, whilst we will try to avoid this, we cannot eliminate this entirely.
- Clear signage is being put up around school to give specific directions for key areas such as toilets, handwashing zones and corridors, as well as positive messages to encourage mental wellbeing for pupils and staff.

General arrangements in the initial weeks

- Pupils will be organised into classroom groups of no more than 10 children. Each group will be based in one room for all of their lessons except PE, and will be taught by as few teachers as possible. They will stay in their groups for breaks and lunches.
- In classrooms, children will be assigned a particular seat that will be 'theirs' throughout this initial period. We expect pupils to bring in only a very small number of personal items, such as coat, basic learning equipment and water bottle, with no items to be shared.
- A handwashing station is being established in one of our science labs and groups will be taken at key times in the day to wash their hands.
- Toilet breaks will be at set times with entry and exit managed carefully, although arrangements will also be in place for those who need the toilet outside of these times.
- Whilst they will see other children, pupils will socialise with those in their group only, in their own designated area. The yards will be used for arrival and the fields for break and lunch, taking advantage of the extensive outdoor space we have at HMS (weather permitting, of course, with contingency arrangements for very wet days). In their zones, the pupils can play and interact and we will encourage this. We will remind them about the need to respect social distancing and they should adhere to this, but they will be able to run around and play.
- All lunchtime dining will take place in the canteen, which is a large space that lends itself well to distancing. Groups will be scheduled two at a time, each group in their own area. Groups will be walked to the canteen by staff after being taken to wash their hands. School lunches will be pre-ordered and payments will be taken from your child's account. Initially, we will take lunch orders from the pupils in school. We will then be taking online orders in advance once more pupils return to school.

- Arrival and departure times will be staggered, with specific times being shared with parents at the end of this week. Two groups will arrive on site at one time, with each then going to a different yard, before being taken into the building for hand washing and then onto their classroom. We ask parents to ensure that their children do not arrive at school earlier than their scheduled time. If pupils do arrive on site early, duty staff will take them to a designated area where they will wait until their arrival time.
- As mentioned in the main letter, Northumberland County Council has written to parents whose children use school transport, requesting that parents contact providers directly with requirements. When we write to you on Friday, we will give you time to give the required notice to the provider. Pupils arriving by bus will be grouped, where possible, in a way that will ensure their arrival time coincides closely to their group's school day start time.
- The curriculum will include a daily maths and English session with the remainder of the time being made up of science, Explore (geography and history), PSHE and wellbeing support, with other project/engaging work planned for afternoon sessions. There will also be PE, outdoor learning and online time built into each group's week. Pupils will be allowed to wear their PE kit for the full day when they have their PE lesson timetabled.
- We are aware that pupils with additional needs may find the transition back to school difficult initially. By placing pupils in small groups with a regular, familiar face, who knows each child's individual needs, we believe they will quickly adapt to the new routine and will feel supported by school. Additional support will also be available as required.
- In lessons, we expect that everyone will try their best and behave very well. Teachers will deal with any issues in class as they usually would. They will use our behaviour system which gives pupils different warnings and a chance to make the right choices. There will not be a break time detention but instead there may be a call home or another sanction. We know that pupils will need reminders to follow the new routines and at the start they may forget. However, any pupil who is intentionally not following the guidance, and is putting the safety of others at risk, will be dealt with very firmly.
- If a child develops suspected Covid 19 symptoms whilst at school, they will be isolated in a classroom, under supervision, until a parent comes to collect them. Thereafter, we will follow the up-to-date government guidance on this situation.