



Dear Parents & Carers,

As you are aware the Prime Minister has said that he hopes schools will begin to reopen from 1st June 2020 to a wider group of children. This, we know, will be welcome news for families in our school community. This period of lockdown has been challenging and stressful but now we are finally seeing some light ahead. As welcome as this is, it is vital that schools proceed very carefully and seek to put the health and safety of our children and staff first. In turn this will enable us to do our best to try to ensure families are safe. To achieve as safe an environment as possible, you will understand that schools cannot operate as they did before lockdown. Hopefully, schools can emerge incrementally and over time return to the structures and routines with which we are all familiar, but we cannot know when this might finally be accomplished, and safety must continue to be our first and paramount consideration. We know parents and carers will appreciate this position. We wish to thank all of you for your continuing support and understanding.

Our second objective is to ensure we provide the highest standard of education possible, being one that will help our pupils make the greatest progress with a view to ensuring that none is disadvantaged by circumstances outside their control. Birklands has spent a considerable amount of time analysing, considering and planning what and how pupils will learn when they return to school. For most, this will likely be a blend of school-based teaching and home-based learning. This is a new way of working for everyone and we will all need to adapt swiftly to maximise the prospects and opportunities for our pupils.

This letter gives details of how we currently intend to provide schooling for our pupils.

Please read the details carefully. You may have further questions. Please visit our school **website** and go to the 'School reopening' page where you may find any concerns or issues addressed in the Frequently Asked Questions (**FAQ**) section. You will be able to post any questions through this facility. Please be aware that given the speed with which these plans have had to be formulated, and how dynamic the current situation is, we may not have complete answers to every question at this stage, but we shall do our very best to help.

Keeping Safe

The Trust requires schools to follow **procedures that ensures all are safe in every school environment** at all times during Phase One (1st June – 28th June 2020). As you will be aware this is an area of contention with schools caught up in the centre of a debate over scientific evidence of what is safe. This is a very challenging area for everyone, but especially so for families and staff. To maintain any level of effective separation, the number of learners in each classroom must be limited. In most cases this will mean about 10 children depending on the size of the classroom and the number of pupils attending, in each class base. Full classes in

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one area will not presently be possible for any year group. This will have a significant impact on how schools will be able to deliver learning.

Initially, we intend that **pupils will stay in one classroom (bubble), with an identified member of staff**, during their learning activities. This will **ensure minimal social contact**. Each classroom will be given a deep clean before pupils arrive for their lessons and after they have left. Upon entering a classroom every pupil will be required to use hand gel to reduce any possible transmission of the Covid-19 virus.

Pupils may wish to wear a face mask or a similar face covering but, if they do, their families will need to provide this. We will not require our pupils to follow the school's uniform policy. **We ask learners to wear clothes that are easily washable**, e.g. a T-shirt/Polo shirt. The government recommends that where there has been social contact with others, the person should wash their clothes and they should shower or take a bath. We ask everyone to support this guidance to keep everyone as safe as we possibly can.

If your child is **feeling unwell**, please **DO NOT SEND THEM TO SCHOOL**. We appreciate this can be a difficult assessment to make but, for the time being, we need, and we ask you, to act with caution and, if in doubt, please keep them away from school for the sake of the safety of their fellow learners and the staff. If any pupils begins to present with symptoms that indicate they are unwell they will be sent to the school's medical isolation room and parents/carers will be asked to collect them immediately. Our school will regularly take non-contact temperature checks on learners, especially any who appear to be unwell.

Break times for learners will be staggered to minimise accidental contact.

There will be no food available from the school at break times so learners are asked to bring their own snacks and drinks.

Any pupil in school will be required to bring their own water-bottle too. This will need to go home each day to be washed.

Toilet facilities will be open and regularly cleaned during the school day. Once again, we will allow pupils to use the facilities in small numbers to preserve social distancing, avoid accidental contact and keep everyone as safe as possible.

Entering and exiting school is a critical area of concern for schools as the risk of social distancing rules being forgotten or ignored is greatly enhanced. We therefore ask that only one adult brings their child to school. From the 1st June no parents will be allowed to bring their child into the school grounds. Pupils will be met at the gate by a member of staff. When parents arrive, at their allocated time, they will need to wait along the perimeter fence using the 2m markers.



What will learning look like?

In order to provide the best possible quality of education for our pupils, within the demands of social distancing, we have needed to construct very different learning environments for our pupils. The education we provide will be based upon a very simple model:

LOOK, LISTEN & LEARN

In simple terms our teachers will deliver the knowledge and understanding of the topics being studied. This will be taught directly by the member of staff from the front of the classroom. Pupils will then carry out learning activities, while sat at their table. Regrettably, until social distancing rules are relaxed, pupils will need to operate with a higher level of independence. Teacher support will be restricted to that which can be delivered from the front of the class. For this learning system to work it is vital that each pupil accepts a very high level of personal responsibility and completes their learning activities, without too much fuss.

Practical work, where possible, will be subject to controls to ensure equipment is always used or operated safely and social distancing can be followed comfortably.

Key Workers & Vulnerable Students

We will continue to support the provision of learning facilities for vulnerable learners and those learners who have parents/carers who are designated key workers. We will be asking parent/carers to book this provision, in advance, via our website.

Attendance & Behaviour

Attendance at school during the directed teaching session times **is expected** unless parents have opted not to send their child or they are in a category meaning they are sheltering. The school will follow national guidelines if a pupil fails to attend.

Our new way of working will be demanding for pupils and staff alike. It is important that everyone follows our Trust's mantra:

Work Hard; Be Kind

We ask that every pupil act and behave in a socially responsible manner and respects the guidance our school has set out.



It is plain that what has been described in this letter does not conform to 'normal' schooling as we have all known it in the past. Nevertheless, we will do our very best to support your child's learning and ensure they receive the very best education possible. The school, as always, relies upon your active support during this difficult and challenging period.

If you have any concerns or questions, please contact the school through our website or by phone.

Yours sincerely,

Tim Gibbon
(Chair of Governors for Birklands Primary School)