

18th May 2020

Dear Parents

As you are aware, the Government had requested that Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 return on 1st June (pending certain health criteria being met by the country) with the rather ambitious target for other year groups returning at a later date before the Summer holiday.

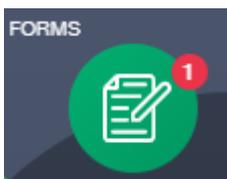
In our 'Lockdown' newsletter last Friday I mentioned that I would be sending further information regarding what the school would look like and how it would function, in the likelihood of us opening either on 1st June or thereafter. Please read this letter and then complete our parent survey which will support us in planning what will be a gradual return of the children to school. The survey will give us an indication of how many children to expect back to school and then we can plan how we do this whilst trying to meet the parameters set by the Government.

There are many and varied reasons for children to come back to school in terms of the children's academic education, boosting their physical and mental wellbeing having being isolated for so long, the children's general happiness and socialisation plus the wider arguments of economic growth, and allowing parents the opportunity to return to work. Our aim at Harpenden Academy has always been to "Educate Hearts and Minds" and we are not changing from that. However, we understand that this is a very personal decision to return to school or not. Some parents will be prepared to take that step and others will not be. I want to assure you that whatever you decide to do my staff and I will totally understand and respect that. It is your choice. If you are happy to send your child to school we will welcome them with open arms. If you decide having read the rest of this letter that it isn't for you and you won't be sending your child back the Local Authority will not take any action if you choose not to send your child. Online learning via Class Dojo will continue as before and so will BBC Bitesize and the Oak Wood Academy too. The survey is to gauge how our parents are feeling and does not commit you to a decision.

The deadline for the survey completion is Wed, 20th May

To access the survey please login to your child's Edulink account and you will see a red notification in the 'FORMS' app which will prompt you to click and complete the survey.

Unfortunately you need to complete one survey for each of your children. There is a restriction to the functionality of Edulink and how the feedback is collated so we are unable to produce only one survey per family. I appreciate that this is not ideal but sadly this is how Edulink functions.





The following guidelines offer you some information regarding what school will look like for children if they return which is in response to current Government guidance, supplemented by some Local Authority information and reflects our current thinking. This could change at any point, so the situation remains fluid. As a reminder we only have access to Government guidance at the same time as the general public.

Social Distancing

We will not be able to guarantee 100% social distancing between children and between children and staff. Teaching is a very personal and interactive activity and to promise that we can 100% guarantee social distancing would be an error. We will ask you to explain the importance of social distancing with your child before they return to school and we will also reinforce the importance of this in school. Of course staff will be asked to social distance from children as much as possible, but there are going to be times when that is not possible, administering first aid for example with a grazed knee.

We will particularly not be able to guarantee social distancing between children. As mentioned in my newsletter, we will set up classrooms to manage this as much as possible and remain in small groups of 10 children throughout the day, as per Governor guidelines, but we will not be able to stop children moving into each other's spaces.

To adhere to the social distancing in the classroom we can only have 10 desks in a room. This means that a class of 30 children, previously taught by 1 teacher in 1 room, will now take 3 rooms and 3 adults. Contrary to what the Government think, I do not have a filing cabinet full of spare classrooms and spare teachers waiting to pop out and be put to work! This may mean that your child will not be taught by their class teacher but by a TA instead. The TA will work under the guidance of the teacher but parents must be aware that this is a distinct possibility.

The children will be organised in to "bubbles" on their return. The children will operate solely within these bubbles and will not mix with any other bubble of children. This means that they will have playtime in their bubble with no other children and at lunchtime they will eat too in their bubble. The children will stay in their small bubbles in the same room or outdoors throughout the day. I know, I know, it sounds crazy but that is the situation I am afraid if we are to minimise social contact.

I heard a fellow Headteacher say the other day that while the staff may be friendly and smiley the classrooms will not be which sadly will be true. The classrooms have been reorganised so that each child has their own desk. They will have trays and their water bottle and coat will stay there for the duration of the day. There will be extra bin emptying, surface wiping and an emphasis on good ventilation. Each classroom will have its own wipes, soap, hand sanitizer, disinfectant spray, tissues and a selection of PE equipment that can be sanitized at the end of each day.



We will ensure the classroom and equipment is kept clean and disinfected regularly throughout the day and we ask for the children to bring in their own pencil cases with the following basic stationery. The pencil case will not be able to go back and forth to home. This is also true of home-school link books and reading books.

A simple named pencil case (one that can be wiped down at the end of the day...no fluffy unicorns please)	A black whiteboard pen
A pencil	A rubber
Colouring pencils	A 30cm ruler
A pencil sharpener with a container	Child friendly scissors
A black Berol/Staedtler style handwriting pen (not biro or cartridge) for all children with pen licence	
A green editing pen (which we use for correcting and improving work)	
A glue stick	A protractor (Y4, Y5, Y6 only)
Please could we also ask that if you are able to bring in a box of tissues and ALCOHOL FREE hand gel, and hand cream. Please write your child's name on each.	

Please do not bring bags or any 'stuff' into school. The only thing the children will need is their water bottle, which they will take home for you to clean every day, their pencil case which will stay in the classroom, a packed lunch (if you do not wish to have the schools packed lunch) and either a coat or a hat (if it's sunny!).

Lesson Format

As I said in the newsletter "It is school parents, but not as we know it."

Harpenden Academy lives by its strap line, "Educating Hearts and Minds" and this has never been more important than the days that we are currently living in. We will continue to educate our children as best we can for example, the Year 6 children will be preparing for their new life in secondary school. Irrespective of their year group the children will focus on their emotional, social and mental well-being too. During this period of lockdown children may well have been out of their normal routine, they might have had to face illness within the family, they might have seen and heard things which they ordinarily would not have. They may have been fine on the surface but internally have worries which are yet to surface. We will do our very best to make sure that they are as happy and as centred as they can be ...while still learning.

Lunchtime

We will be operating packed lunches only on return back to school. The school kitchen will be offering either ham, cheese or jam sandwiches, with carrot or cucumber sticks, and water. These will be eaten in the classroom or in good weather the children can sit outside but again only within their bubble. Timings will be staggered to allow for different break times outside so small groups don't mix.



Feeling Unwell

If anyone feels unwell, they will be sent home. They will need to self-isolate for 14 days, or until tested negative. We would ask parents to come IMMEDIATELY to pick up their child.

Adults will wear PPE if they are working with a child who displays symptoms **while they are waiting to be picked up**. They will be isolated in a room which is well ventilated. We will not be able to stay with them. If a member of staff or a child becomes unwell and tests positive for COVID 19, then the whole bubble that they are working with will be sent home and they must self-isolate for 14 days. The staff will not be wearing PPE as a matter of course, only if they are dealing with a sick child.

The office and school building in general.

There will be no visitors in school, unless we have prior notification and anyone who visits will be sanitized on arrival and departure. Parents will not be able to come into the school or to the office. The office will not always be fully open so parents will need to either email in or call and we will get back to you. Equally, parents you will notice that there will be social distancing markings around the school entrances and within the school building, indicating where you or your children will need to stand.

Drop off and collection times will need to be staggered. We will be able to give further details of this when we know how many children are returning to us.

There will be no Wrap Around care until September unfortunately.

Depending on the survey results, we will then formulate a timetable for the returning to school. I must stress that school will not operate under its normal conditions. Parents must expect a reduction in hours and a reduction in days. Full time schooling 8.30-3.30, 5 days a week is highly unlikely to happen- please do not expect this. Once I have a clear idea of the numbers of children coming back I can determine which days or half days the school will be open to allow us to operate safely. I need to manage your expectations of what is and is not possible within the parameters of the government guidance. Please don't request specific days or specific friendships within certain bubbles as I will not be able to fulfil these, again, it is about the school being able to manage your and the children's expectations. Equally, I will not be able to take siblings of the children who are able to come in to school eg Reception, Year 1 and Year 6. What I do ask though is that you make a decision and don't suddenly send your child to school without any prior notice as this will have an impact on organisation.

Key worker children who have been coming in to school from the end of March will continue to do so.

I appreciate that the information in this letter is dense and there is a lot of it. I want parents to be as informed as possible before filling in the "Re-entry to school" survey. I know that it is not an easy decision to make and many of the staff, including myself, have the same challenge, which is why the decision was made to provide you with as much information regarding our current thinking as we can. As a staff we are obviously very keen to see the children again, when everything has been put in place to ensure it is as safe as possible, for everyone, to do so.



Harpenden Academy
Education for a changing world

Vaughan Road, Harpenden, Herts, AL5 4EL, Tel 01582 716910

We are all working incredibly hard at this time to facilitate the Government request in a limited space of time. We would welcome a swift response to the parent survey which, because of the nature of the situation, will close on **Wednesday. 20th May at 12 noon.**

I know that certain parents will have questions that are very specific to them and their needs, which I might not have been able to address in this letter. Please can you email those questions to the school office and Mrs Jackson will get them to me and I will answer them just as soon as I am able.

Many thanks and thank you for reading this rather long letter

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Mrs Lisa Davies'.

Mrs Lisa Davies