

Cornerstone Church of England (VA) Primary School

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Mr T Clarke Headteacher



*Building our Community with Love, Forgiveness and Hope
Growing an Inspirational Learning Community*

20 May 2020

Cornerstone phased re-opening

Dear Parents / Carers

I am writing to you to explain our plans for re-opening Cornerstone in a safe and phased approach in line with the Department for Education's (DfE) guidance. I appreciate that this is a long letter, but hope that the level of detail is helpful for you.

The exact timing / dates of different phases are dependent on national decisions. Currently in England schools are being asked to aim to open for YR, Y1 and Y6 children, whilst also maintaining the Childcare Provision for vulnerable children and children of Key Workers. Our utmost priority during this process is to **maximise safety and minimise risk** for all the children, staff and families who come on the school site.

Please be assured that **it remains your decision as parents / carers** whether to send your children to school during this period of phased re-opening, and that we will fully support the decisions you make. I can also clarify that there will be no penalty notices issued for non-attendance during this period. Thank you for sharing your initial thoughts in the polls last week which has helped support our planning.

Please be aware that we have received a number of daily updates on guidance from the DfE since prior to the national school's closure, and therefore guidance and rules are regularly evolving. It has been made clear by the DfE and also the Hampshire Education that schools have to risk assess and make local decisions based on the context of their own individual school. We have put a great deal of time and consultation with staff into this plan to do our best to keep everyone safe.

Key points from the DfE guidance that we will work from include:

- **"The safety of children and staff is our utmost priority."**
- "Focusing on measures they can put in place to help limit risk of the virus spreading."
- Where the physical layout of a setting does not allow small groups of children to be kept at a safe distance apart, we expect practitioners to exercise judgement in ensuring the highest standards of safety are maintained. In some cases, it may be necessary for providers to introduce a temporary cap on numbers to ensure that safety is prioritised."

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- “Dealing with direct transmission (for instance, when in close contact with those sneezing and coughing) and indirect transmission (via touching contaminated surfaces).”

Cornerstone specific details.

We have created a **social story** to support the children’s transition back into school, as it will not be operating at this time as they remember it from prior to the national school closure. A copy of this will be sent to you to share with your child. We have also undertaken a detailed risk assessment process to plan for this phased re-opening. If you would like to see a copy of the current **Risk Assessment** please contact the office on adminoffice@cornerstoneprimary.hants.sch.uk to request a copy.

Drop offs and pick-ups.

	Year R	Year 1	Year 6	Childcare provision
Drop off time	9.15 am	9.00 am	8.30 am	8.45 am
Pick up time	3.00 pm	3.15 pm	3.30 pm	3.15 pm
Place	Playground	Playground	Hall door facing the car park	External Y5 and Y6 doors

We will also be using a **one way system** for movement around the building. Therefore all parents and children arriving (except Year 6) must **enter the playground from the gate by Year R** and **exit via the gate by the Hall**. Children should only be **accompanied on site by one parent** to minimise the number of people. Year 6 children do not need to enter the playground but will come straight to the Hall where they will be based each day. Year 6 do not need to be accompanied by a parent from the car park to the school.

We ask parents to **stay on the playground when dropping off and picking up**, i.e. not coming within the wooden fenced areas outside the Years R and classrooms. We also ask parents and their children **maintain 2 metre social distancing gaps** as they move around the school site at these times, and also parents maintain these gaps whilst waiting for their children at the end of the day.

Please also be aware that we will not be allowing parents or other family members to enter the reception area. If you have letters to hand into school please use the letter box. You can always email the school via the adminoffice@cornerstoneprimary.hants.sch.uk address or phone on 01489 660750. Mr Clarke or another member of staff will be stood outside the school front door at both drop off and pick up times each day if you have a message or query.

Childcare Provision

Please be aware that staff will also be continuing to provide childcare for those children whose family circumstances meet the national criteria. If your child attends Childcare Provision, **they will not be able to join their classmates** in Years R, 1 or 6 on other days of the week. This is to maintain isolated groups of children to minimise the risk of sharing the virus.

Numbers in classes

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We have spent time measuring classrooms and trialling different layouts of furniture to **maximise the number of children** in a room, whilst also managing to **maintain a 2 metre social distancing plan** for the majority of the day. Our aim is to maintain social distancing for the majority of time that children are in school, however please be aware this cannot be fully guaranteed, particularly with the younger children

We have concluded that **10 is the maximum number of children we can safely accommodate in a classroom with a member of staff**. Therefore I have decided that for **Year R and Year 1** (*and Years 2-5 if we are asked for these classes to re-join school life in coming weeks*) the class will be **split into three groups** alphabetically by the register, with **one third of the class attending each day** on a rota basis.

I appreciate that this will not perfectly align with families' working patterns but hope that you will understand that **my primary aim is to keep children and staff safe**, and that this phased return is an improvement on the school being closed. Each family will be **sent an email** explaining whether their child is in Group A, B or C in this pattern. We will ensure that if pupils have siblings in other classes that they attend on the same day.

Week 1 Group A	Week 1 Group B	Week 1 Group C	Week 1 Group A	Week 1 Group B
Week 2 Group A	Week 2 Group B	Week 2 Group C	Week 2 Group A	Week 2 Group C
Week 3 Group A	Week 3 Group B	Week 3 Group C	Week 3 Group B	Week 3 Group C

Year 6 will be working with a different pattern. Due to the small class size, the age and maturity of the children and their transition to secondary school in September: Year 6 will be based in the Hall rather than their classroom. This will allow **all children to attend every day** to help them prepare for the end of their time at primary school.

Hand hygiene

All children and staff must wash their hands for **at least 20 seconds** and then dry them thoroughly at the following times:

- On arrival.
- After playtimes.
- Before lunch and after lunchtimes
- After they have sneezed / coughed.
- If they sneeze or cough into a tissue, this must be placed in the nearest bin and then hands washed.

We will obviously be reminding the children of these expectations regularly and also be highlighting the slogan: **“catch it, bin it, kill it”**, when they are sneezing or coughing into tissue.

Feeling unwell

It is crucial that **if any child or adult has symptoms of Covid-19, they do not come to school** and follow the national guidance for self-isolating. The research shared with schools shows that children “The school’s values of Love, Forgiveness and Hope thread through the everyday life of the school. Pupils enjoy school life and their learning at Cornerstone. Teamwork permeates through the school, with staff motivated to ‘Growing an Inspirational Learning Community.’” (Ofsted 2019)



are likely to become infected with coronavirus (COVID-19) at roughly the same rate as adults. The symptoms are a **fever/high temperature**, a **new continuous cough** and/or a **loss of, or change in, your normal sense of taste or smell**. If your child is feeling unwell for any other reason, such as a heavy cold, please follow the usual procedure and keep them at home for their own and others' safety. **Please be aware that if we think your child is too unwell to be in school we will contact you to ask them to be collected.**

The following guidance from the DfE explains what the impact will be of a child or staff member testing positive for Covid-19.

“When a child, young person or staff member develops symptoms compatible with coronavirus, they should be sent home and advised to self-isolate for 7 days. Their fellow household members should self-isolate for 14 days.

Where the child, young person or staff member tests positive, the rest of their class or group within their childcare or education setting should be sent home and advised to self-isolate for 14 days. The other household members of that wider class or group do not need to self-isolate unless the child, young person or staff member they live with in that group subsequently develops symptoms.”

Cleaning

We have undertaken a **Deep Clean** of the whole school during the period of school closure. When we re-open a school for Years R, 1 and 6 we will **increase the amount of cleaning hours** so that every room, corridor, toilet and resource can be cleaned daily before children and staff return the following morning.

Classroom structure

To support the cleaning we will **minimise the amount of equipment and resources** the children and staff will use. We will also make sure that **Years 1 and 6** children will have their **own individual table and chair for the day**. They will place their coat on the back of their chair, their bag under their table and their tray or zippy wallet on their table. By doing so we aim to minimise indirect transmission. For **Year R** we will place **hoops on the carpet area** for them to sit in when in whole group situations, but we will maximise the amount of time we split them into **2 sub-groups**. 1 sub group will spend some time outside and the other in the classroom, and then swap at different points of the day.

Lunches

Hampshire caterers will continue to provide lunches and for children in Years R-2 these are still at no cost in line with the universal free school meals programme. However the **lunches ordered will be brought to the classroom** that the children are based in and they will eat it there.

Playtimes / lunchtimes

Each class will have a **designated staggered time for morning and afternoon playtime and lunchtime**. The **playground will be split into thirds** to support social distancing. The third nearest the YR classroom will be for Year R, the third in the middle for Year 1 and the third nearest the Hall for Year 6. **Please can parents also stand in these respective thirds when dropping off and picking up their**

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children. The Childcare Provision children will use the space behind the Years 4-6 classrooms as their outside area.

Learning

In school staff will focus on both the **academic** and the **personal, social and emotional** elements of learning. Lessons for **English and Maths** will review and recap key learning objectives from the year to try to help the children be secure on these key learning aims. However children will also have many opportunities to enjoy spending time together through conversations, in particular through daily **Circle Time** discussions, during which they will reflect on their feelings and experiences, their worries and their hopes.

For the children in **Years 2-5** the **Home Learning will continue in the same way** that it has for the past weeks of school closure, it will be similar for Years R-1 as the children won't be in school every day, but for Year 6 Home Learning will return to a similar amount as prior to the school closure. We will also maintain the class Gmail accounts during this phased re-opening period, however please be aware that as **teaching staff will have increased time working with children in school** they will not be able to reply as promptly as they have been doing.

Clothing and equipment

All the children at school will need to wear the usual **school uniform**, which we hope will add an element of normality and routine for them. We appreciate that some children may have grown out of their school shoes, and families may not been able to buy new ones, so if this is the case please feel free to send your child in the most **suitable and comfortable shoes** they have. Please be aware that the guidance recommends that the clothes children have worn to school, being washed before they next wear them to school. There will be **PE lessons** happening during the week. For Years R-1 the children will simply do PE in the clothes they are wearing. For Year 6 Mr Penfold will inform parents which days PE will take place on, and these children can wear their PE kit to school for the day.

Your child can still bring a **bag / book bag** if you wish, but we don't want them to bring their own **pencil cases** in Years R-1: we will provide them with the equipment they need. Year 6 can choose whether to bring in their own pencil case, but must make sure the equipment is only used by them. Children can bring back **reading books** to swap with new ones. The returns will be placed in a box in each room, and will be cleaned at the end of each day before being returned to the shelves.

I hope you have found this letter useful and reassuring on the key points in our plan to **maximise safety and minimise risk**, to children and adults when we start this phased re-opening of Cornerstone. I appreciate that families may have more questions that they would appreciate answers to. If you do please email them to adminoffice@cornerstoneprimary.hants.sch.uk and **we will aim to produce a FAQ (frequently asked questions) document** prior to school re-opening.

You can read some of the DfE guidance using the following links:

[Implementing protective measures in education settings](#)

[Opening schools and educational settings to more pupils from 1 June: guidance for parents](#)

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I would like to finish by **thanking you for your support and patience over this challenging and unprecedented time**. I would also like to **thank the staff**, who have been working extremely hard and in new ways to: ensure we have been able to run a Childcare Provision since the 23rd of March, creating and uploading a range of home learning to support your child and communicating with colleagues and families on a regular basis to try and manage this situation in a positive and organised way.

I sincerely hope that the phased reopening of our school is successful and that in time we will have returned to a normal situation where all children and staff are in school together, families can be fully involved as partners, and we all work together for the benefit of the children's development and learning.

I wish you and your families all the best at this time.

Yours sincerely,



Tim Clarke
Headteacher

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