

6 June 2020

Dear Parent/Carer,

## WIDER RE-OPENING OF WILLIAM MURDOCH PRIMARY SCHOOL

### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS FOR PARENTS

**Please see below some of the questions that we have anticipated you may have about the reopening of William Murdoch Primary School. We thought it would be useful to share these with you. Remember we will only re-open more widely when we think it is safe to do so.**

#### **I don't feel comfortable about sending my child to school. Do they have to attend?**

We are looking forward to welcoming your child back to school and have taken every precaution to ensure the school environment is as safe as possible. However, we understand that some parents, for a variety of reasons, may wish to keep their child at home and continue for them to learn from home. It is not compulsory for children to attend.

The Department for Education (DfE) have produced the following guidance you may want to consider:

*Children and young people who are considered extremely clinically vulnerable and shielding should continue to shield and should not be expected to attend.*

*Clinically vulnerable (but not clinically extremely vulnerable) people are those considered to be at a higher risk of severe illness from coronavirus. A minority of children will fall into this category, and parents should follow medical advice if their child is in this category. Children who live in a household with someone who is extremely clinically vulnerable and shielding should only attend if stringent social distancing can be adhered to and the child is able to understand and follow those instructions. Children and young people who live with someone who is clinically vulnerable (but not extremely clinically vulnerable) as defined in the social distancing guidance and including those who are pregnant, can attend.*

#### **Will I be fined if I keep my children at home?**

If you do not send your child in, you will not be fined at this time as absences will be authorised in accordance with DfE guidance. We envisage school attendance fines will not be issued until September at the earliest, but this is not confirmed.

#### **If one of my children is eligible to return can't their sibling come back too?**

Sadly, the answer to this is 'no'. Siblings cannot attend unless they are a vulnerable child or you are a key worker. This would raise the number of pupils attending the school too quickly.

#### **How will you limit the risk of infection for my child?**

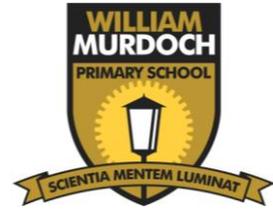
We have carried out a number of risk assessments ahead of re-opening more widely so that we can put in place a comprehensive programme of measures to limit the risk to staff and children as far as possible. We have carefully considered how we can have as many children as possible and due to narrow corridors, structural and organisational issues and in accordance with scientific advice, we are strictly limiting wider re-opening to a single year group at a time. The government's Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE), modelled 9 different scenarios on how schools could be re-

WILLIAM MURDOCH PRIMARY SCHOOL

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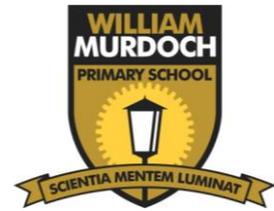


opened, and it reported that the return of children to school on a rota basis was the safest model of all. Using the government and scientific advice that has been suggested we have:

- Limited the number of children and staff on the school site at any given time
- Used only those classrooms close to building entrance/exit points to limit transmission and ensure cleaning can be done effectively
- Limited class sizes to a maximum of 8 per class so that social distancing can be maintained within the classroom
- Limited mixing - children will stay in their 'bubble' (a group of a maximum of 8 children) and if at all possible will be with their current class teacher (please note some staff will be shielding so another member of staff may need to teach your child)
- Made sure all classrooms will be ventilated at all times with as much teaching taking place outside as is possible
- Rearranged classrooms - ensuring desks are spaced out as far as possible and all resources are put away. Resources will not be shared. Each child will have an individual pack of resources which they will keep in a plastic zipped wallet that will be cleaned each day. Children are not allowed to bring any resources from home, this includes any toys e.g. playing cards or tennis/footballs. **Bubbles will have their own PE equipment in a box. Where it is not possible to have class resources, equipment will be cleaned between each class use.**
- Limited lunch provision – All children eligible for a Free School Meal (FSM) will receive a sandwich lunch pack. All children not entitled to a FSM children will need to bring in a packed lunch. These will be dropped off to the classroom and where possible children will have their lunch outside.
- Introduced a one-way system – The Albert Road entrance is the only entrance that will be open for drop off and pick up. There is a separate gate to come IN and a separate gate to go OUT with a division created in the middle. Please ensure you follow this one-way system. There will be markers placed at 2m intervals and you will be asked to wait on one of these markers with your child. All children will be temperature checked using a non-contact thermometer. If your child has a high temperature you will be asked to take them home.
- Minimised contact with individuals who are unwell by ensuring that those who have coronavirus symptoms, or who have someone in their household who does, do not attend school
- Introduced procedures for cleaning hands more often than usual - wash hands thoroughly for 20 seconds with running water and soap and dry them thoroughly or use hand sanitiser ensuring that all parts of the hands are covered
- Ensured good respiratory hygiene – Your child's teacher will promote the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach and will reinforce this through songs and activities
- Regular and thorough cleaning of frequently touched surfaces using appropriate anti-bacterial disinfectant

### **Will the school day start and end at the same time?**

There will be some changes to the timings of the school day to ensure that we can safely manage the



drop off and collection of children, sufficient time is allowed for a deep clean at the end of the day and to limit the number of people on the school site at any one time. This will also be dependent on the uptake from parents. Where the uptake is high, we may need to introduce part-time provision. We will also be asking parents if they prefer part-time provision as a way of building confidence where parents are reluctant for their child to attend full-time. Once we have this information, we will clearly communicate the school day arrangements with you before the return to school starts.

### **Should my child wear a face covering, mask or other PPE?**

Although government guidance does not necessarily recommend the wearing of a face mask in school, we will keep this option open for both children and staff. If a child becomes unwell with symptoms of coronavirus while in school and needs direct personal care until they can return home, the supervising adult will isolate the child and will need to wear a face mask, gloves, an apron and a face shield to protect the eyes.

### **Will there be COVID-19 testing and contact tracing in school?**

Testing is already available for anyone who exhibits coronavirus symptoms, including for children, whatever their age. To access testing you should use NHS119 or the NHS online coronavirus service using the link below:

<https://www.nhs.uk/ask-for-a-coronavirus-test>

In accordance with government guidance, in the event of a child or member of staff testing positive for coronavirus (COVID-19), they will be sent home and asked to self-isolate for seven days and arrange to have a test to see if they have COVID-19. Their fellow household members should self-isolate for 14 days. Where the child or staff member tests negative, they can return to school and the fellow household members can end their self-isolation. Where the child or staff member tests positive, the rest of their bubble will be sent home and advised to self-isolate for 14 days. The other household members of that bubble do not need to self-isolate unless they subsequently develop symptoms.

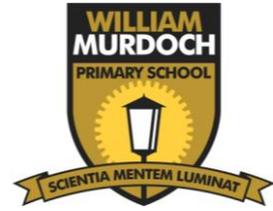
As part of the national test and trace programme, if other cases are detected within the cohort or in the school, Public Health England's local health protection teams will conduct a rapid investigation and will advise the school on the most appropriate action to take.

### **Usually someone else collects my child from school as I have to go into work, can someone from another household collect my child?**

All children must be brought to school and picked up by a parent or member of your household who is aged 16 or over. Government guidance would only allow someone to pick up a child from another household if a 2m distance is kept between them. This would be very difficult with young children and therefore only members from your household will be able to drop off or collect your child. To reduce the number of people on the school site at any one time your child can only be accompanied by one parent/household member.

### **Will my child need to wear school uniform?**

No, we do not need you to send your child back in uniform as we do not think it is necessary for the time being. Please send your child into school in sportswear; joggers, t-shirt and trainers if you can. If



you are unable to do this, trainers (or other suitable footwear) are the most important item to wear. This means that they will not need to bring in a PE kit and can carry out all activities without having to change. Where possible, we would advise that children come to school in fresh clothing every day.

#### **What should my child bring to school each day?**

Your child is to bring a packed lunch into school each day unless they are entitled to a Free School Meal in which case one will be provided for them. Water bottles can also be brought into school daily. It would help greatly if it is pre-filled and they must be taken home each day and washed. Coats and/or hats may be needed, especially as we will be using our outdoor spaces more. On hot days we would advise that you apply long lasting sun-cream before coming to school rather than having to bring sun-cream in. We will not be able to apply sun-cream to any children. P.E. kits, book bags, ruck sacks, CGP books etc will not be required and will help to ensure that classrooms and cloakrooms are as clutter-free as possible.

#### **Will the breakfast club and after school club be open?**

No. These bring too many children into contact from each of the school bubbles which is a transmission risk. A toast snack will be provided to all children free of charge.

#### **Will there be any trips once the school opens?**

No. There are no plans to take the children out of the school grounds until further notice.

#### **If I don't send my child in, will I still get my FSM voucher?**

The provision of Edenred FSM vouchers for those eligible under the benefits criteria will continue to be available for those not attending school. For those who attend school a packed lunch will be provided and there will be no entitlement to a FSM voucher. We will let you know if government guidance is updated.

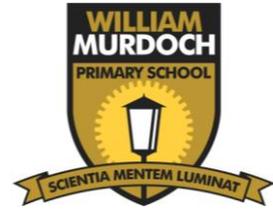
#### **Will children go straight back into normal lessons following the National Curriculum?**

The initial focus will be on daily English and Maths skills and, for as long as we feel necessary, will be on supporting personal, social, health and emotional aspects of learning to support children's wellbeing. They have all gone through an incredible period of change and may have experienced loss on a number of different levels. This should not be ignored. However, we also know that children like routine; therefore, new routines will be quickly established, and we plan to make use of our outdoor learning environment as much as possible.

#### **How much am I expected to educate my child at home?**

With the vast majority of children expected to not be in school over the next few weeks, home learning will continue to be the primary source of teaching and learning. We have provided educational activities for your child through the home learning packs that are uploaded weekly to the COVID-19 section of the school website and CGP books both before the lockdown and after the May half term.

We have also sent out a suggested timetable to help you manage home learning. It is helpful to create a routine for children so that their minds are kept active with interesting tasks and challenges, however, you do not need to try to replicate the school timetable. Focus on what you can do as a



closely confined family and how to get on. It is important that you and your family balance home learning with other activities that will keep your children happy and occupied in a healthy and balanced way. You are the best judge of what they need whilst they are in your care at home. It is important to provide enjoyable and relaxing things to do – reading and researching, creative activities, physical exercise, simply chatting and watching films.

If you feel that your child is under pressure to complete a lot of online learning tasks, please let the teacher or teaching assistant know when they do their weekly well-being telephone call. It is not clear how long the isolation requirement will be in place, and so we will be doing all we can to help keep your child actively engaged during this time, in readiness for their return to school. We also want to ensure that we are supporting you as a family and offering your children every opportunity to stay connected to their learning, whatever age they are.

**Will the school office be open?**

Parents and children will not be allowed into the office. We will also not be accepting late arrivals to school via the office. If you are late you must ring the main office on 0121 554 0999 and someone will come and open the Albert Road gate. Where possible I would ask that parents email the school on [enquiry@williammurdoch.bham.sch.uk](mailto:enquiry@williammurdoch.bham.sch.uk). We are not accepting any cash payments so all children must bring in a packed lunch unless they are entitled to a FSM. The school is working on safely issuing refunds for outstanding monies from paid for school trips. If you need the money urgently, please email the school to arrange for a refund.

If you have any further queries around the return to school of your child please email the school and we will be happy to answer it for you.

Stay safe. Stay well.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Singh', written in a cursive style.

Mr M Singh  
Headteacher