

2nd June 2020

RE: Arrangements for school reopening

Dear Parents and Carers

I would like to begin by offering a huge 'thank you' for supporting the school over recent weeks and for supporting your child with their home learning.

This is a lengthy letter but the preparation for opening our school warrants thorough coverage of all our considerations including risk assessments, policies, procedures, classroom organisation and staff training.

As you will be aware, the government announced that so long as they are satisfied that it will be safe enough to do so schools will begin to reopen from 1st June 2020 for:

- **Nursery**
- **Reception**
- **Year 1**
- **Year 6**

Schools will also continue to operate a childcare facility for:

- **Children of critical workers**
- **Vulnerable pupils: those with an EHCP, with a Social Worker, or those with vulnerability to whom the school have decided to offer a childcare place.**

As previously advised, no school within the REACH2 Academy Trust will be opening before 8th June at the earliest in order to ensure that there has been sufficient time to take every safety precaution reasonably possible.

The REACH2 Academy Trust has supported the school in implementing a robust risk assessment process to allow us to carefully consider the potential risks of welcoming pupils back to school, and how best these can be managed. Our school will only reopen if the risk assessment gives us assurance that it is safe to do so. I hope to be able to confirm that this is the case in the next day or two.

We are very much looking forward to seeing many of our children once again, but I would like to reassure you that the safety of our school community is our priority.

I am therefore writing to share with you the arrangements we have implemented to ensure the safety of all staff, pupils and parents. These arrangements have been put into place following a full risk assessment process and are in line with guidance from the Department for Education.

We will continue to review the arrangements we have implemented and update you with any changes as and when we make them.

We recognise that some of you may have some concerns about your child returning to school and that for some children another change will be unsettling for them. We also understand that the past weeks will have been

challenging for many families. If you would like to talk to us about your child and any concerns you have about their return to school, please – in the first instance – contact **Mrs Murphy, office@newhallacademy.org**.

If your child has an EHC plan please contact the school SENCO, **Mrs Smart using the office@newhallacademy.org email**, who will support you and your child with their return to school.

Staggered Start: opening dates for different year groups

In order to ensure arrangements are as safe and secure as possible we will be operating a staggered start for different year groups.

The school will be open to the different year groups on the following dates:

- **Year 1: 8th June 2020**
- **Reception: 15th June 2020**
- **Nursery: Bluebell from 22nd June**

As with all other arrangements we will keep this under constant review and we will not open the school to any year group unless we are satisfied that it is safe to do so. We will inform Snowdrop and Blossom parents when we will be able to (if safe to do so) accommodate our youngest children.

School staff

In order to follow the government guidance for the children to return to a safe environment, they will be put into small groups of a maximum of 15, for Year 1 and Reception (also known as bubbles) to improve social distancing measures. It is therefore possible that your child may be with a different teacher or member of staff that would usually support class and may not be solely with children from their class. Staff will remain with the same bubble group and children will not be able to move between bubble groups.

Maintaining a safe school environment

I would like to take this opportunity to inform you of the preventative measures the school has put in place in order to minimise the spread of infection.

As per the advice from the government, the following actions for infection control remain in place:

- Displaying coronavirus infection control measures information posters around the school
- Encouraging good hygiene by promoting the importance of handwashing for at least 20 seconds with warm water and soap in the following circumstances:
 - Before leaving home
 - On arrival at school
 - After using the toilet
 - After breaks and sporting activities
 - Before food preparation
 - Before eating any food, including snacks
 - Before leaving school
 - At regular intervals throughout the day
- Providing alcohol-based hand sanitiser that contains at least 60 percent alcohol throughout the school where access to soap and water is limited
- Ensuring pupils and staff understand that they must cover their cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue away and wash their hands
- Ensuring frequently touched objects and surfaces are cleaned and disinfected more regularly than usual

- Calling NHS 111 if someone becomes unwell, isolating any unwell people in a separate room, and providing a separate bathroom, where possible
- Telling staff to stay at home for seven days if they develop symptoms of coronavirus
- Providing staff training on PPE, rubbish disposal, mental health and well-being

As an important part of our school community, I would ask that you continue to encourage good infection control practices, such as thorough handwashing, at home and keep your child informed about the things they can do to discourage the spread of infection.

In line with the current NHS and government advice, you should keep your child at home if they develop coronavirus symptoms for a period of seven days. Symptoms include a high temperature or a new, continuous cough. Where symptoms continue after seven days, or begin to worsen, you should call 111. If someone in your child’s household has symptoms, your child must self-isolate for 14 days from the day the other person’s symptoms started. This is because it can take 14 days for symptoms to appear. More information regarding symptoms and actions can be found on the NHS website (<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>).

If you think your child may have been exposed to or has coronavirus, or if your child receives a positive test result for coronavirus, please contact the school on 01279 215480 at the earliest opportunity.

Arrangements for the start and end of the school day

The beginning and end of the school day are the busiest times for children and adults congregating together in one place and maintaining safe distances within normal arrangements can be a challenge. We have implemented the following measures for when pupils return to school:

| Times | Entrance | Bubble Group |
|-------------------------|------------|--------------|
| 8.30-8.40 and 2.30-2.40 | Front Gate | 1A |
| | Side Gate | RA |
| 8.40-8.50 and 2.40-2.50 | Front Gate | 1B |
| | Side Gate | RB |
| 8.50-9 and 2.50-3.00 | Front Gate | 1C |
| | Side Gate | RC |
| 9-9.10 and 3.00-3.10 | Front Gate | BB |
| | Side Gate | RD |

For those utilising the key worker childcare facility until such time as their respective year group re-opens, this will continue to operate in the main school hall each day, 9am – 3pm. Parents are asked to drop and collect their child from the main school entrance as they have been doing.

To clarify, the front gate is the gate between the School and Nursery Buildings. The side gate is the gate adjacent to the staff car park at the back of the School. If you have confirmed your child is returning to school, you will be notified of their bubble group at the end of the week preceding their start date.

We kindly ask that only ONE parent or carer accompanies a child and you will not be able to come onto the school playground or gather in groups at the school entrances therefore, please ensure you maintain 2 metre social distancing whilst waiting to drop and collect your child promptly at the gate at the time allocated using the markings displayed on the floor. The member of staff designated to your bubble group will meet you at the gate to greet your child. Children will be unable to bring bikes and scooters in to school at this time.

In the event that you are late and your bubble group has already gone in, we kindly ask that you wait away from the school grounds until all other groups have cleared the site and then bring your child to the front school office where they will be met by a member of staff and taken to their group.

Unless late or dropping off or collecting your child from the keyworker childcare facility, parents and carers are asked not to visit the school office in person to avoid gathering in the reception foyer and minimise risk to yourself and staff. If you need to speak to a member of staff please telephone or e-mail the school office in the first instance.

Arrangements for break times and lunchtimes

We recognise the importance for all pupils to have a break from learning and to enjoy time outside during the school day. Reconnecting with friends will be an important aspect of pupils settling back into school life, but we have made some adjustments to break and lunch times.

- Break times and lunchtimes will be staggered to ensure children remain in their bubble groups and access the outside space separately
- School meals will be provided in the form of a healthy packed lunch, prepared by the Kitchen and the children will eat within their bubble groups. Dietary needs will be catered for and a vegetarian option will be available.

We would like to encourage all children to access the school's packed lunch to minimise items such as lunchboxes moving between home and school. If your child brings in their own packed lunch they will be expected to manage the opening and closing of foodstuff on their own.

The school day

To minimise the number of pupils and staff assembling for periods of time, we have made the following changes to the school day:

- Your child will attend full time, Monday to Friday, in line with their bubble drop off and collection times. Further correspondence will confirm which bubble your child is in;
- There will be no group assemblies in school;
- Children will remain in the bubble groups at all times;
- Additional children will only be permitted to join a bubble group on a Monday, parents' need to notify by the preceding Wednesday of their attendance prior to returning for the first time;
- Classroom layouts have been rearranged so that children can maintain social distancing as far as possible. Soft furnishings, soft toys, books and intricate toys that cannot be easily cleaned between use and at the end of the day have been removed.
- With that in mind, children will not be required to bring a bag to school, just a named water bottle and a sun hat/rain coat depending on the weather.
- PPE training and arrangements have been implemented for those administering First Aid, cleaning and for our Site Manager.
- There is a designated isolation room for any child or adult who displays symptoms of COVID-19. If there is a child presenting symptoms a member of the Senior Leadership Team has been designated to remain with the child until a parent/carer arrives to collect them. In this event, we would ask that you collect as promptly as possible.

School events

Please note the all events that would usually take place in the Summer Term i.e. end of year assembly, sports afternoon has been cancelled.

School Trips

- There will be no school trips taking place in the foreseeable future. This will be reviewed as the situation changes and any monies paid for cancelled trips will be carried forward to the next academic year.

Support for pupils and families

We do not underestimate how difficult the recent weeks have been for us all and we all will have been touched in some way by the coronavirus pandemic. We recognise the need to focus on pupils' emotional wellbeing as well as their return to learning. The following support is in place for pupils once they return to school.

In the first instance your child's wellbeing will be supported by the staff member in their bubble group and as necessary by the SENCO and welfare support within the School office.

Parents may wish to seek support for themselves from the following support agencies:

- NHS and NSPCC websites
- Samaritans – call free 24 hours a day on 116 123
- National Domestic Abuse Helpline – call for free and confidential advice, 24 hours a day on 0808 2000 247
- Shelter provide free confidential information, support and legal advice on all housing and homelessness issues if you call 0330 0536 083 (please note, this is not a free phone number and your call will be charged). A free webchat is available at https://england.shelter.org.uk/get_help/webchat

I hope that these arrangements provide you with the information you need to support your child to return to school.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Ward

Mrs Charmaine Ward
Headteacher