

## **Returning to School Frequently Asked Questions**

### **What have our schools and teachers been doing since schools closed in March?**

Schools have not been closed. They have remained open for children of key workers as well as children who fall into vulnerable groups. Headteachers have been checking on vulnerable pupils and in some cases delivering food parcels to families. Teachers have been in schools caring for those pupils of key workers and other vulnerable pupils. Schools have provided learning to pupils who are at home. This learning has involved setting and marking some work through learning platforms.

### **Why have I not been given more notice about what will happen on 1st June?**

An announcement was made by the Government on 10th May, the guidance for schools was made available on the 11th May 2020.

However, this guidance was supplemented over the following two weeks with further guidance around operational issues in schools. It has taken time for Headteachers to assimilate all of the guidance.

Headteachers have rightly focussed on the practicalities around health and safety and conducted risk assessments to ensure all children will be safe.

Things are on track for the wider opening of Early Years settings and primary schools from 1st June onwards and secondaries from 18th June.

### **Why has the government decided to only re-open schools to some pupils?**

The guidance from the Government and the Department for Education states that as well as those children who have been attending school throughout the pandemic, pupils from Early Years Foundation Stage Year 1 and Year 6 should be allowed to return to school. This was not a decision taken locally. These particular year groups will be returning to ensure that the youngest children, who are at an early stage of their development, and those preparing for the transition to secondary school have maximum time with their teachers.

### **How has it been decided which children are vulnerable?**

Government guidance is clear on which children should be categorised as vulnerable. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-vulnerable-children-and-young-people/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-vulnerable-children-and-young-people>

Please contact your child's school if you feel your child should be considered as part of this group.

### **Why aren't all local schools doing the same thing?**

Each West Berkshire school has to interpret the guidance according to the specific needs of its own pupils and staff. Each of our schools has a different number of pupils, classrooms, buildings and staff and will have to make their own plan in order to safely welcome additional pupils.

### **Can social distancing be enforced in primary schools?**

It cannot be enforced but all of our schools have carried out risk assessments and will encourage children to keep their distance using language appropriate to their age and understanding. Individual schools will be provided with information to parents about how they intend to assist with this. The Government have recognised the challenge that social distancing with young pupils poses. Parents can read what schools are expected to do in such cases in the section 'Class or group sizes' in this guidance

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-protective-measures-in-education-and-childcare-settings/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-protective-measures-in-education-and-childcare-settings>

### **Will my school still be able to ensure health and safety requirements can be met e.g. First Aid?**

First aid kits and cleansing materials will be made available in classrooms as has always been the case. Individual schools will provide information to parents about how they intend to assist with this.

### **Should I send my child to school with hand sanitiser and PPE?**

It is not necessary to send your child to school with hand sanitiser or any kind of PPE or face coverings. Regular cleaning will take place within school, good hygiene will be encouraged throughout the school with regular hand washing and social distancing measures encouraged in order to help stop the spread of the virus. Parents should discuss the importance of hand washing with their children.

### **When will children in other year groups return to school?**

We do not have clear guidance on this yet but will continue to work with schools as the national and local view changes.

I am concerned that my child may have fallen behind as a result of a long period away from school. What reassurance can you offer?

Schools will look carefully at the best curriculum they can provide to children who return to school. This will include a timetable involving work around the very basics that all children may have missed such as reading, writing and Mathematics. Schools will recognise that children will have been impacted by their time away from school in different ways. Therefore there will need to be a considered approach to engagement with learning. Schools will place some emphasis on the wellbeing and confidence of pupils.

## **What happens if a member of staff or a pupil develops symptoms?**

If a child or member of staff develops COVID-19 symptoms they will be sent home and advised that they and their family follow the staying at home guidance.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance>

The rest of the class will continue as normal but If this child or member of staff tests positive for coronavirus then the rest of the class should then be sent home and advised to self-isolate for 14 days, the household members of this wider group of the class do not need to self-isolate unless their child goes on to develop symptoms.

## **Can my child access a test for COVID-19 should they become symptomatic?**

Children over the age of 5 years will be able to access a test if they have coronavirus symptoms (a high temperature, a new, continuous cough, or a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste)

The tests are not suitable for children under 5 years old.

For more information on testing and how it can be accessed, please visit NHS website: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing-for-coronavirus/ask-for-a-test-to-check-if-you-have-coronavirus/>

## **Will children be expected to wear school uniform?**

Please check with your child's school.

## **Will my child still be entitled to a free school meal?**

Yes if they meet the Government criteria.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-free-school-meals-guidance/covid-19-free-school-meals-guidance-for-schools>

## **Will the return to school be full time?**

This will be decided as part of the specific arrangements made by individual schools. Please contact your child's school to discuss this.

## **Will my child be taught by their class teacher?**

Teaching rotas will be part of the specific arrangements made by individual schools. Please contact your child's school to discuss this.

## **Will wrap around care be made available?**

This will be decided as part of the specific arrangements made by individual schools although many schools will be unable to accommodate this whilst maintaining safe social distancing arrangements for staff and children.