



22 May 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope you are all well and are continuing to manage in these difficult times.

I am writing to update you on our current plans to extend our opening for Reception and Years 1 and 6, and to share some of the actions we are considering to improve the quality of contact and interactions with those year groups who are at home, for the time being.

Before I outline this further, I would like to take this opportunity to talk with you a little more about the staff here at school. As the proud leader of this amazing community and team of staff I would like to share my appreciation of their dedicated work showing flexibility, care and commitment during this particularly difficult time.

Many, like yourselves, have experienced personal challenges. Some staff have experienced loss, many are managing personal health matters, family matters, anxiety, and teaching their own children from home like you are, while trying to reach out to all of our children and meet their needs.

Currently at Muswell Hill Primary we have, on average, anywhere between 25 to 40 critical workers' children/vulnerable pupils on roll who are attending daily or intermittently depending on their parents' shifts. We have had approximately 32 staff available to work on site. They have been working on a rota system to allow time to self-isolate, see their partners and families, or to be able to meet the needs of elderly or vulnerable relatives, which may involve shopping or talking through windows. In addition, we are visiting vulnerable families, providing food or vouchers where necessary, and adapting teaching methods to accommodate as many as we can. Staff that have not been on site are either vulnerable or are shielding vulnerable family members. All staff whether on site or at home have worked tirelessly.

Many of you have expressed your thanks and appreciation of the work undertaken which we are extremely grateful for.

There are a wide range of views concerning the appropriate workload for the children; many families feel the workload is sometimes too much, others that it is just right, while some think it is not enough. We are looking for the elusive 'goldilocks' level of work and of course with 420 children, 375 different family groups and 59 staff, this is almost impossible.

We do, of course, want to do our very best for you and are open to positive criticism and feedback so please by all means make a telephone call to explain the challenges, or email and tell us what you think are our failings in what we are delivering. Please don't suffer or

struggle in silence. Reach out and get in touch, verbalise your needs and worries, don't let them fester and let's work together to get better at what we can do together for the wellbeing of your children and our whole community.

Extended Opening

Following the Government's request to schools to get ready to reopen to some year groups from the 1st June, you will have seen lots of speculation in the news about whether this is actually going to happen.

We at Muswell Hill strongly believe that it is important for children to resume their education in school so they can learn and interact with their peers. However, this needs to be done in such a way that we minimise the risks to pupils, staff and parents as much as possible.

We have developed risk assessments to enable us to evaluate potential solutions on how we can safely and effectively accommodate eligible pupils once we reopen further and we have been talking to staff, governors, our local network of schools and the local authority. Unfortunately following extensive thought and careful consideration we do not believe it will be possible to reopen for all children in Year 6, Year 1 and Reception on the 1st June as the government's guidance suggests.

If the government does give the green light to reopening, the earliest date on which we can reopen to more children will be Monday 8th June.

School provision for eligible Reception to Year 6 critical worker's children and vulnerable pupils will continue from the 1st June. The core offer for those children will remain from 8.55am – 3.30pm for the first week. Timings will alter from the week beginning 8th June.

In developing our plans we have had to review the number of eligible pupils; members of staff who will not be able to attend school in person because they, or a family member, are in a vulnerable category and therefore shielding; the physical space we have in school; as well as the varying abilities to implement social distancing around the school building and grounds.

I am currently unable to share details of the full plans as things may well have changed again by the 1st June, but what I can share is the overall, agreed plans for the specific year groups.

There are additional details in the Appendices A, B and C at the end of this letter. Appendix D gives links to the government guidance which has provided us with information to assist in our planning.

NB: This is all conditional on what the Government and local authority decide about schools reopening and, as previously advised, some of the dates and details might change. **We are**

also conscious that independent advice just released is advising a later opening so it could be that any school opening is delayed for an additional period.

However, in terms of current advice we are anticipating that eligible children will start to be welcomed back from the **8th June**. Year 6 children will be invited in on Monday and Tuesday **or** Thursday and Friday each week. Children in Year 1 will be invited back from Wednesday 10th June and Reception children will be invited back **either** from Monday 8th June **or** Monday 15th June dependent on our risk assessments and setting up processes. We hope to be able to confirm the date by Wednesday 3 June.

The school day will be shorter to allow all our ‘pods/bubbles’ to arrive and depart safely (see **Appendix B**).

Children will be in classes of a maximum of 15, called pods. All children will be asked to socially distance as best they can. The classrooms will be cleared to allow desks to be placed as close to two metres apart as possible.

Cleaning will be increased and, as well as our usual daily cleaning, the school will have additional cleaners/staff to clean high traffic areas such as Reception indoor/outdoor learning spaces and toilets. Additional deep cleaning will occur for different hubs around the school on different days.

We will be relying on each other’s trust to ensure the school can operate as safely as possible. Children will have clear routes to enter and leave the school (**Appendix C**).

We will be asking parents to take their child’s temperature daily and not send their child to school if they are at all unwell. If a child becomes unwell showing any of the COVID-19 symptoms we will isolate the whole pod from school and will only reopen it once a negative test result is returned (usually after 24 hours) or after 14 days of school isolation.

If a positive result is returned the whole pod will be asked to isolate for 14 days. If multiple cases are confirmed the whole school may close.

Distance learning for children in Years 2, 3, 4 and 5 will change. Only one teacher will be available to plan and upload work for each year group and there will be some learning support staff and nursery nurses who will be able to comment and provide some feedback. All other teachers and learning support staff will be needed to support the opening of the school. However, class teachers will also give feedback to the children and we are exploring options to try to create a more meaningful connection with the children at home. We are still ambitious about trying to have some contact/visit to school for these year groups before the end of the school year. Once we find a solution, we will share it with you.

At this current time, attendance of pupils in Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 is not compulsory. It is your right, as a parent/carer, to choose whether to send your child to school. We will manage the risks as best we can and will take action as far as is reasonably practical. The

choice remains yours. If you choose to send your child to school, I will be sending out a further survey to try to give you some options on attendance, for example, whether you prefer to send your Year 6 child in on Monday and Tuesday as opposed to Thursday and Friday. Clearly, we won't be able to meet everyone's needs, but we will consider your requests and try as best we can to meet your employment or childcare needs.

I will share greater detail with you in the weeks ahead. We aim to make videos with visual information for the children during the week commencing 1st June. I will walk through and explain the overall picture and teachers from each hub will make videos for the children to try to show them as much as possible what their learning spaces will look like, which staff will be teaching and looking after them as well as showing them how they come to school, where they line up etc.

The staff will continue to work tirelessly to ensure we can provide the very best for your child. Formal distance learning will not be provided during half-term next week; there will be some challenges and holiday activities on SeeSaw and I shared some art challenges and some Local Authority ideas for online activities with you on Wednesday. We will start formal distance learning again for all children on 1st June.

FYI: our new mantra is slow, steady, safe.

For now, stay safe and I hope to see you all soon.

Mandi

Appendix A

Provision for eligible Reception to Year 6 key worker children and vulnerable pupils will continue from the 1st June. If these children are in Reception, Year 1 or Year 6 they will need to decide whether they wish to retain their critical worker/vulnerable pupil place or take a place in their year group pod. Children and staff will not be permitted to move between pods. (Clearly this will mean that if children move to their year group pod, they will no longer be offered all-week provision.) The core offer for this group will change to 8.30am - 4.00pm. They are referred to as **A Pod**.

Children will be organised into pods with a maximum of 15 children. Each pod will have one allocated member of staff (or two for children in Reception). Pods will be organised by the school; we will try to create small friendship groups and a mix of gender. Weather dependent, Reception pods will be subdivided into bubbles of 7 or 8 and will rotate between the classroom and outdoor play space or stay as three pods of 10. This is to be finalised during the week of the 1st June.

All children will be asked to socially distance. They will have individual learning stations, designated spaces to play outside and will be provided with their own equipment. The children will be spread across the school and we will be using all available spaces to house each pod. Children will be expected to bathe and wear clean clothes each day, have long hair tied back and follow social distancing as best they can. After working for nine weeks with children in school, we fully appreciate that social distancing for children of any age is difficult. We will have systems in place to remind pupils as well as a clear one-way movement around the school **but I cannot guarantee** that your child will always stay two metres away from others.

School lunch will be provided as 'Snack Bags' and will be delivered to the classrooms for the children to eat. Reception, Year 1 and FSM children will be provided with a free school lunch, all other pupils wishing to have a lunch will need to pay for it. Nearer the time Year 6 parents/carers will be consulted re. packed lunch provision.

No parents/carers will be allowed into the school grounds. Year 6 children will enter the school via the Dukes Avenue gate. Parents of Year 1 and Reception will drop off children at school via their designated routes. Their teachers/SLT will collect them from, and call them back to you, at the designated gates. Allowing parents of Reception children on site will be reviewed once we have tried out the system during their first week. Parents will be asked to only use the designated routes for each year group. There will be one-way systems for drop off and collection, which will involve social distancing.

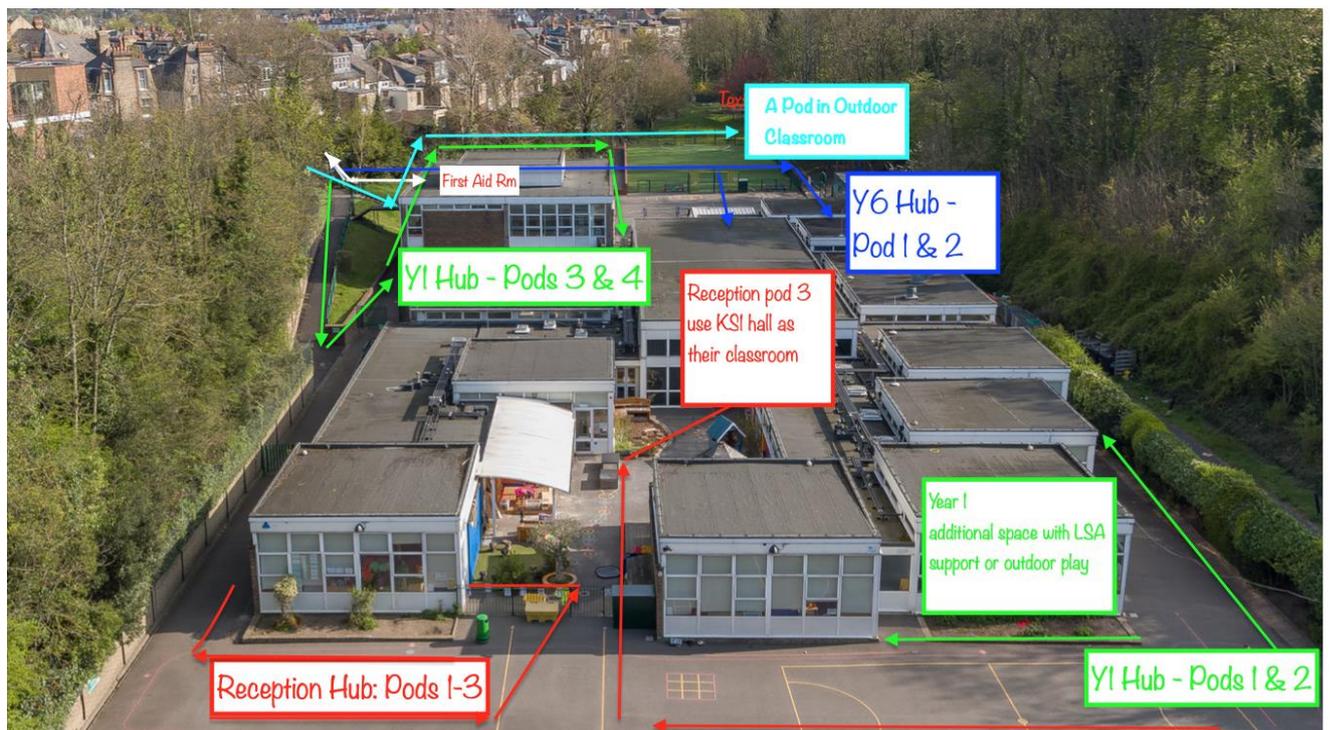
Appendix B

Start and end times

For: Key Worker/Vulnerable Group – A Pod, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6

Year Group	Route Colour	Start Time	End Time	Pod Letter/Number
Key Workers/Vulnerable Group – A Pod	Turquoise	8.30 – 8.45 arrival	3.45 - 4.00pm collection	A
Year 6 (all pods)	Blue	9.00/9.15am	2.50pm/3.00pm	1 and 2
Year 1 (all pods)	Green	10.00/10.15 am	3.15/3.30pm different gates	1, 2, 3, 4
Reception (pod 1, 2 and 3) or (pod 1, pod 2 tbc)	Red	9.00/9.20/9.40am	1.45/2.00/2.15pm	1,2,3 (1,2)

Appendix C



Routes into school are colour coded.

Green – Year 1 Hub – 4 pods

Red - Reception Hub – 3 pods

Blue - Year 6 Hub – 2 pods

Turquoise – A Pod

We are also suggesting a direction of movement on Duke's Avenue and are currently working with the LA.

Appendix D

Guidance for parents and carers on supporting their children's education during the coronavirus outbreak

We have published information, guidance and support for parents and carers of children who are learning at home during the coronavirus outbreak.

Guidance on helping secondary school children continue their education during the coronavirus outbreak can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/help-secondary-school-children-continue-their-education-during-coronavirus-covid-19>

We have updated our guidance on helping primary school aged children learn at home to include information on the wider opening of educational settings.

The guidance can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/help-primary-school-children-continue-their-education-during-coronavirus-covid-19>

Guidance on the wider opening of education and childcare settings

Guidance on the actions for education and childcare settings to prepare for wider opening from 1 June, at the earliest, can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-educational-and-childcare-settings-to-prepare-for-wider-opening-from-1-june-2020>

Guidance on implementing protective measures in education and childcare settings can be found here:

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

Guidance for parents and carers as schools and other education settings in England open to more children and young people can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers>