



# Langdon Primary School

14 July 2020

Dear parents and carers

Re: Arrangements for your child starting school in September

Late yesterday afternoon the governors met to discuss our risk assessment and plans for reopening in September and for the initial two terms of the new academic year.

It has been a challenging ten days since the government released their guidance to school regarding school reopening. Kent County Council and all schools received the guidance at the same time as it went live to the general public so there has been little opportunity for forward planning; we are always working at a pace and thinking on our feet at the moment about how to implement government guidance in a way that is both safe and workable for the pupils, staff and our families. All Kent school leaders have had to work from scratch in terms of assessing the risks and planning for full school opening in their school. KCC have today informed us that they have completed their advice for schools in light of the guidance and in response to this there may need to be some minor adjustments to our risk assessment but there will be no change to our plan for reopening. Our risk assessment has been approved by the governors and has been posted on our school website in case you wish to refer to it.

It is important that at this point, I reassure you that throughout the whole process of school closures, partial reopening and into full reopening in September our first priority has been, as it always is, for the safety and well being of our children at Langdon. All decisions that we have taken have had this at their heart - unless we get this right then children are not in good place for learning successfully and that is what we want them to achieve. It's also important for me to convey to you that your child is at the beginning of their educational journey and that they have many years of learning ahead of them. We will, during their time on that journey with us ensure that they are given the best chance to succeed in all of our decision making.

The government guidance, informed by Public Health England and released on 2 July 2020, states that there is an improving situation

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across the country with regards to Coronavirus/Covid-19 infection rates; that the risk to children of becoming severely ill from the virus is very low and that there are negative health, well being and educational impacts of being out of school. The guidance states,

*'Given the improved position, the balance of risk is now overwhelming in favour of children returning to school . . . This will be an important move back towards normal life for many children and families.'*

Schools have been asked to plan for full reopening from the beginning of the Autumn term 2020. The full guidance for schools can be viewed at the following web page if you feel you need to read it in full:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools>

From Monday 14 September 2020, our new entrants will start school. I appreciate that this is a week later than I initially said we would start but after much consideration we believe that it is important to first welcome back the children who have not been in school for six months in order to settle them and support them in their return before introducing the new children to the class. We believe that this will mean that we can deal with any initial worries, concerns or anxieties for our existing children in the first week or so, allowing us to then focus on the new children with proper attention in the way that we usually would.

Our plan for the school in light of the government guidance is as follows:

In order to reduce the risk of transmission and the need for whole school closure if a case is confirmed in school, schools have been asked to put children into manageable groups or 'bubbles'. The guidance is clear that it is for schools to best decide on how to organise these according to the local context.

Because we have been able to observe and learn from the children who have already returned to school, we know that we are highly likely to have some children who will be worried, anxious or just a bit 'wobbly' about the return to school. This has been the case for children who are already in school. As previously explained, we know that children who are worried or anxious don't learn well so we need to address their concerns before we can educate them fully. To date, the well being of our pupils has been the main concern arising from the last few months rather than the virus itself; we have had no reported or confirmed cases of Coronavirus/Covid-19 in our school community.

For this reason, we have decided that in the first instance, in order to address our children's well being and to reassure them about being in school, pupils will return to their old classes rather than transfer to their new ones. They will stay in their new class bubbles until Monday 5 October 2020. The bubble for your child during this initial period will be as follows:

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|-----------|---|
| Years R-3 | Bubble 1 (Red and Giant Panda Classes)<br>Mrs Seccatore, Mrs Keem, Mrs Harris and Mrs Trenchard |
|-----------|---|

This bubble has been organised according to the physical classroom layout, the access to toilets and to the outdoor environment and play facilities. Bubbles will be thoroughly cleaned each day but will also have cleaning taking place throughout the day for high contact areas such as toilets, taps and desks. Younger children will be encouraged as much as possible to use the outdoor environment for play and learning. The teachers are now very used to working in this way and I am confident in their

approach to keeping children safe. Playtimes and lunch breaks will be organised so that bubbles don't mix. Because this bubble will have children from Years R-3 our new entrants will have lots of opportunity to work with older children who always act as excellent role models and helpers.

The times that your child will be in school during their first three weeks are:

Monday 14 September to Friday 18 September 2020 - **9.10am-12.00pm**

Monday 21 September to Friday 2 October 2020 - **9.10am-1.00pm**

Monday 5 October 2020 onwards - **8.30am-2.45pm**

On Friday 2 October 2020 school will be closed to everyone for a full deep clean.

On return to school on Monday 5 October 2020, we will put in place a one time only change to the bubbles this year in order that pupils are able to transition to their new classes. Your child's bubble will reduce in size as the older children in it children transfer to Year 3. From this point on, your child will be in Europe Class and their first learning topic will be all about the continent of Europe. Our other classes are arranged as follows:

Year 1/2                      Mrs Keem and Mrs Harris (Antarctica Class)

Year 3/4                      Miss Langley and Mrs Capell (Asia Class)

Year 5/6                      Mr Jones and Mrs Britton (South America Class)

From this point on, the bubbles will not change.

In order to avoid crowding on entry, classes will be asked to come in at different times and they will be collected at different times at the end of the day. From 5 October 2020 if your child has a brother or sister in another class, the younger child will come at the same time as their oldest sibling and be collected at the same time too (staff will provide care for those who this applies to). Parents are asked **not** to come early but to arrive on time so that there is no confusion around social distancing in the limited space at the gate. New school day times are 8.30am - 2.45pm.

At the beginning of each school day a member of staff will come to the gate to collect the children and take them into school to wash their hands. We anticipate that this might mean that drop off will take more time than usual, please bear with us. Parents and carers must then follow the one way system to exit the school grounds which takes them through the car park. We will tape off a walkway in the car park but please be careful and look out for moving vehicles when walking on the roadway. Sadly, because of the current situation I cannot offer parents the chance to join their child in school during the first week or so if they, or their child, appears to need a bit of reassurance. Please however, rest assured that we are quite used to children who find initial separation from parents a bit challenging and will provide a bit of TLC and a hug if it is needed. We will telephone mid morning in the first week if you ask us to in order to reassure you that your child is all right - they almost always are.

From 2 September 2020, Breakfast Club will resume. Children will be divided into two groups according to Key Stage which will be supervised by named member of staff. Please book Breakfast Club through the school office, and pay in advance if you would like your child to attend. Mrs Howson can help you with this process, just give her a ring and she'll talk it through with you if you would like to use this facility.

School packed lunches, rather than hot meals, will be provided in the first instance. Children should have these school provided lunches if they are in Year R, 1 and 2. These packed lunches will continue to be free of charge under the Universal Infant Free School Meals scheme (UIFSM). If your circumstances have changed recently and you think that you might be considered for free school meals because you are entitled to benefits (even if your child will get UIFSMs) then please contact the office and Mrs Howson will talk you through how to apply for these. For each child who gets free school meals, the school gets £1320, and this helps us to pay for our TAs and teachers who support our learners in class.

Children are asked to bring as little as possible into school. They should NOT bring pencil cases, toys, hand sanitizer or anything to share with their teacher as they would usually have done prior to the coronavirus outbreak. You can of course, send us photographs of things that we can talk about with your child in class on SeeSaw. They should have a hat to wear in case of hot weather, a water bottle filled with water, a coat in case it gets cold and a book bag but other than that, nothing else. Please do not forget your child's water bottle, we will ask you to get from home it if your child forgets to bring it in. Please ensure that all belongings are clearly named.

Full school uniform must be worn in September, including school PE kit. Children should bring in their PE kits on the first day of term and leave them here until the end of Term 1 when they can come home for washing. Please ensure that all items of uniform (including shoes and trainers) are named. School uniform orders can be collected from the school office the week beginning Monday 7 September 2020.

As is the case now, the school office will remain closed to all visitors and parents will be asked to telephone or email with any queries. All communication and payments to the office should be made online but if this is impossible, then letters, notes, money or any other communications with the office should be sent in with your child. If you have any worries or queries do contact us we are more than happy to help or talk things through with you in order that you feel happy and comfortable with your child's schooling.

If your child becomes ill when in school and needs to go home we will care for them in our usual way, reassuring them until you can be contacted to collect them. If your child becomes ill with Covid-19 symptoms we will follow guidance on how to proceed whilst reassuring your child in the usual way that we do for any illness or upset. In September, I will give you more information about illness in school and how we will manage it.

I understand that this will probably be a tense time for many of you as your child enters primary school for the first time. I also understand that the current strange circumstances that we find ourselves in because of coronavirus probably won't be helping. However, please be assured that we are doing everything we can to help make your child's primary school experience a good one. We have carefully looked at what we can do in school to make this work safely and within the guidelines provided by the various government organisations. I also understand that this is a lot of information to take in and to make sense of and that some of you may feel a little worried about what I keep hearing of as the 'new normal' for schools. To reassure you, throughout the months since 20 March, the staff have been in school looking after and teaching children in school. We have continued the care children and parents knew before school closed and I have had many messages to thank the staff for their hard work and for their approachability and reassurance. The staff are happy to talk through any concerns you might have with you, just contact them via SeeSaw or email, or you can contact me directly and I will happily discuss any aspect of our plan. For those of you who already

have links with other families in the school, it might be worth contacting a parent of a child who is in school this term - they have all been through this period of being in school and returning after lockdown and will have managed similar thoughts and feelings about the process; I am confident that they will also be able to reassure you in light of their experience.

As always, stay safe and well.

Kind regards

Lynn Paylor Sutton  
Head Teacher