

## Year 6 return to school: Frequently Asked Questions

Thank you for your supportive comments and sensible questions. We have tried to condense them into the following FAQ. As we are basing our provision on the Department for Education guidance, we have referenced it wherever possible in our responses. The answers given here are based on our best understanding of what will happen in June: clearly this is a changing situation and adaptations might be required if guidance changes.

If you have additional questions after reading this document, please do not hesitate to email [consult@whitehill.herts.sch.uk](mailto:consult@whitehill.herts.sch.uk).

### Is returning to school compulsory?

*Parents and carers of eligible year groups, and critical workers/parents and carers of vulnerable children, are strongly encouraged to bring in their children, but they will not face fines or other sanctions if they don't.*

DfE Planning guide for primary schools (14 May 2020)

### Will it be full five days a week? Can we have one day off?

Attendance expectations will be the same as usual – for five days per week – but there have been some adjustments to start and end times (8.35-9.15 am and 3.00-3.10pm). We recognise that it will take a while for pupils to become accustomed to the return. We will work hard to ensure that our provision helps them with this.

### What should I do if a member of my child's household is shielding?

DfE Actions of education and childcare settings to prepare for the wider opening from 1 June 2020, (updated 12 May 2020) says:

*Eligible children – including priority groups - are strongly encouraged to attend their education setting, unless they are self-isolating or they are clinically vulnerable (in which case they should follow medical advice). If someone in their household is extremely clinically vulnerable, they should only attend if stringent social distancing can be adhered to, and the child is able to understand and follow those instructions. Families should notify their nursery/school/college as normal if their child is unable to attend so that staff can explore the reason with them and address barriers together.*

Please raise any specific concerns of this nature directly with Mr Mills or Mrs Beresford.

### What happens if anyone in the class shows symptoms?

**No one with symptoms should attend a setting for any reason.** If symptoms emerge when a pupil or staff member is in school, they will be isolated away from the pod immediately. Parents/carers will be notified and will need to collect their child as soon as possible. The pupil presenting with symptoms will need to self-isolate for 7 days and their fellow household members should self-isolate for 14 days. All staff and pupils who are attending school will have access to a test if they display symptoms of coronavirus.

### What if someone tests positive?

*Where the child, young person or staff member tests positive, the rest of their class/group within their childcare or education setting should be sent home and advised to self-isolate for 14 days. The other household members of that wider class/group do not need to self-isolate unless the child, young person or staff member they live with in that group subsequently develops symptoms.*

DfE Coronavirus (Covid-19): Implementing protective measures in education and childcare settings (11 May 2020)

### Who will be my child's teacher?

Prior to reopening, you will receive a letter informing you of the adults who will be leading your child's pod. We are fortunate in that each pod will have an adult that is part of your child's usual Y6 classroom, whether that's their class teacher or their class teaching assistant. Supporting these will be at least one other adult, who your child will be familiar with from around school. The adults associated with each pod will remain the same, to minimise

transmission of the virus between pods. We will be endeavouring to use video links between classrooms so that class teachers can have some, albeit remote, communication with their associated pod.

### **How are groups split?**

We are aware that this will be one of the most emotive aspects of the strange situation we find ourselves in. In the interest of fairness and to ensure transparency, we have applied a consistent approach to allocation of groups. We have adopted a system that takes into consideration whether a pupil has:

- any social care need, such as being in local authority care,
- an EHCP (Education Health and Care Plan),
- or a registered Special Education Need (this includes social and emotional needs).

After taking the above into consideration, additional pupils were included in the pod on a strictly alphabetical basis and to reflect the same gender profile of the full class. We hope you understand that a lot of time and energy has been devoted to discussing various models of approaching this incredibly difficult task and that we have chosen to adopt a position that is objective and has educational integrity.

### **Will my child be with their friends?**

Please see the answer above.

### **How will you manage social distancing at break and lunch time?**

The Government acknowledges the challenge of maintaining social distancing.

*We know that, unlike older children and adults, early years and primary age children cannot be expected to remain 2 metres apart from each other and staff. In deciding to bring more children back to early years and schools, we are taking this into account.*

[DfE Coronavirus implementing protective measures in education and childcare settings \(12 May 2020\)](#)

Measures we have taken to minimise contact between individuals include:

- staggered break and lunch times
- pupils eating lunch in separate areas, within their pod
- each pod being allocated a separate outdoor playing area
- no use of playground equipment

### **How will you manage wellbeing and anxiety?**

We understand that school will feel very different for the pupils returning, especially after such a long and strange time away. The active promotion of wellbeing will be the golden thread running through our curriculum when pupils return. It will be addressed explicitly in our teaching and pupils will be given a range of ways to express how they are feeling. Perhaps most importantly of all, we aim to establish an atmosphere in school that is calm and nurturing.

### **What will pupils be doing?**

Teachers are already working hard on a programme of activities that are designed to have a broad appeal - so that pupils are purposefully engaged in tasks that they enjoy. As outlined above, wellbeing will be at the heart of our provision. There will be work towards transition and lots of creativity. Pupils can expect to be outdoors (in their separate pods) whenever the weather allows it.

### **What are the meal arrangements?**

The school kitchen will be open as usual, providing hot dinners. For pupils with allergies, suitable meals will be provided. All meals will be charged at the usual rate unless your child is entitled to a free school meal.

### **Will children need their PE kit?**

Yes please. We recognise that your child is in Year 6 and some will have outgrown bits of kit. We will be taking a reasonable attitude towards this situation.

Although the weekly timetabling is still in draft format, it might be that pupils are asked to come to school on certain days already in a PE kit.

**With cancellation of SATs, how will pupils be assessed?**

There will be no testing or formal assessments when pupils return. Teachers will use their knowledge of pupils' attainment to make judgements and these will be shared with secondary schools.

**What will be the transition arrangements for secondary schools?**

There has already been a lot of discussion between schools to ensure as smooth a transition as possible for your child. Teachers and senior staff have virtual meetings scheduled with the respective secondary schools to ensure relevant information is passed up for each pupil prior to them starting in September. As the 'move up day' in July is unlikely to take place, we are trying to find different ways for pupils to feel like they have the information they need before starting their new school. For obvious reasons, much of the transition will be done virtually.

**Are you planning to keep each pod for 5 days a week? If so what happens with space if the rest of the years return?**

If/when other Year groups return in July, we will need to adjust our practice. We have enough space to accommodate one additional year group and maintain separate pods. Should more Year groups return, we would need to reduce the number of days pupils attended school and offer a combination of in-school and remote provision. More details will be made available when we know what is happening.