



01.09.20

Dear Parents and Carers,

The time is nearly here for us to welcome back all of our pupils at long last! We are very much looking forward to hearing about all of their summer adventures and settling in to our 'new normal'!

However, before I start, I would like to say a tremendous thank you and well done to all of you who overnight last academic year became home-school teachers, in addition to juggling home-working and parental duties, etc. As I am sure you will have heard on the news, the Department for Education published its guidance for schools on Friday evening and having now revised our procedures in the light of this, we are now in a position to update you on our plans for the return to school of your children. As ever, all of our decisions will focus on the safety and wellbeing of our pupils, our staff and our wider school community.

Although we recognize this is a long letter, we feel it is essential that everyone knows our procedures and practices in full.

#### Attendance

In March, when the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic was increasing, it was made clear that no parent would be penalised or sanctioned for their child's non-attendance at school. Now the circumstances have changed and it is vital for all children to return to school to minimise, as far as possible, the longer-term impact of the pandemic on their education, wellbeing and wider development. School attendance **will therefore be mandatory again from the beginning of the autumn term**. From our return on the 3<sup>rd</sup> September, the usual rules on school attendance will apply. Shielding advice for all adults and children was paused on 1 August 2020 which means that even the small number of pupils who will remain on the shielded patient list can also return to school, as can those who have family members who were shielding. Only if rates of the disease rise in local areas, children (or family members) from that area, and that area only, may be advised to shield again during the period where rates remain high and, therefore, they may be temporarily unable to attend. However, this will be on the advice of Public Health England.

**The only legitimate reasons for COVID-19 related non-attendance will be because they are self-isolating and have had symptoms or have a positive test result themselves, or because they are a close contact of someone who has confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19).**

Every child, and every home, has had a different experience with lockdown and home learning. Whilst we know the majority of families will be delighted that schools are reopening, there may be some parents or pupils who feel anxious about returning. If this applies to you, please contact us as soon as you can and we will work with you to ensure you feel reassured that all your concerns have been addressed. Our detailed risk assessments for full re-opening have been revised and will be circulated along with this letter.

#### How classes will operate in September

As I am sure you will be aware from the news, the Government has requested that all children are placed in protective 'bubbles'. At Pioneers Academy, each year group will form a bubble. This means

that in the event of a confirmed case of COVID-19, all pupils from that year group will be sent home for two weeks of self-isolation. The family of any pupil sent home due to being in the same bubble as the confirmed case do not have to self-isolate unless their child or children subsequently develop symptoms.

The symptoms are:

- A new, continuous cough, or
- A high temperature (37.8 degrees centigrade or higher), or
- A loss or change in their normal sense of taste or smell

We recognize that the closure of a 'bubble' would cause huge disruption to our families, yet it is essential in ensuring transmission rates amongst our community are kept as low as possible. Please note that we will only close bubbles on the advice of our Local Health Protection Team.

In order to assist us with keeping transmission rates low, it is essential that as parents and carers, you NOTIFY THE ACADEMY IMMEDIATELY if your child has any of the above symptoms, that they stay at home, self-isolate and follow NHS current advice, including active engagement with the NHS Test and Trace system. Tests are now available to all school-age children and their families who are displaying symptoms and are bookable by calling 119. We also need to be notified if a member of your household or a close contact of the child tests positive for COVID-19, as your child will be unable to attend school.

Should your child display COVID-19 symptoms on site:

- The guardian of the symptomatic learner will be contacted and told to immediately collect their child. The parent is to be advised to follow government guidance regarding self-isolation and testing.
- Your child will be taken to our designated isolation area and made comfortable whilst they await collection by their guardian.
- The staff member supervising the symptomatic learner will wear full PPE.

During the school day, all 'bubbles' will be kept separate. Each bubble will have its own set of toilets, its own entrance and exit points, own allocated play area and every child from Y1 upwards will have their own 'learning pack' containing essential basics such as pencil, crayons, etc.

Within bubbles, children will not be expected to socially distance at all times, as the Government has acknowledged that young children are unable to do this effectively. However, those old enough to do so, will be encouraged to keep their distance and avoid direct physical contact with others.

Classrooms have been re-designed to prevent face-to-face sitting at tables, there are sanitation points all around site, and we have secured additional cleaning hours to ensure high levels of sanitation throughout. Again, our full measures can be found in our Risk Assessment circulated with this letter.

As per the latest government guidance, children of primary school age are not required to wear facemasks as they are unable to handle them effectively and safely and therefore the wearing of them can actually increase the potential of transmission. Face masks will therefore not be worn by children in school. Should children travel to school on school transport and are old enough to put on and dispose of / store their facemask safely during the day, they may wear one during transportation if they so wish. However, they will not be provided with facemasks by the Academy.

#### 'Remote Learning'

In the case of us being instructed to close, home learning will be provided for all pupils. The Government have given schools the deadline of the end of September to have an online remote curriculum offer in place and as an Academy we are already well on the way to achieving this. A TEAMS

based learning platform is being developed by the Academy and staff are being trained on its use. (Microsoft Office 365 education). Following this training (Late September 2020), parents will be informed as to how to access this in order that pupils are given the support they need to master the curriculum should it be necessary for a group of pupils to be educated at home, i.e. in the case of the closure of a bubble. The remote curriculum will provide access for pupils to high-quality online and off-line resources. The online tools selected for use will include teaching videos and will allow for interaction, assessment and feedback to be given. Printed resources will only be provided for pupils who do not have suitable online access.

The DfE are currently working with a range of internet providers to offer wifi hotspot connection and additional data to families in need. We recognize that younger pupils and those with SEND may not be able to access remote education without adult support and the Academy will work with adults to deliver a broad and ambitious curriculum to the best of our abilities.

#### Drop off and pick up times and gate access for children

We will continue to operate the staggered dropping off and collection procedures we had in place last term, with different classes having their own colour of footprint on the playground to follow to their allocated drop off / pick up zones.

Please respect the one-way systems operating around site and DO NOT congregate along the pathway at the entrance / exit points to school. If you arrive early for your slot, please wait away from the entrances, (on the other side of the road) until your timeslot is called forward for drop off.

The drop off arrangements are as follows:

<b>Class</b>	<b>Start Time</b>	<b>Footprint</b>	<b>Finish Time</b>
Alligator	8:45 – 8:50	Yellow	3:10 – 3:15
Lions	8:45 – 8:50	Red	3:10 – 3:15
Cook	8:45 – 8:50	Green	3:10 – 3:15
Columbus	8:45 – 8:50	Blue	3:10 – 3:15
Apollo	8:35 – 8:40	Blue	3:20 – 3:25
Discovery	8:35 – 8:40	Green	3:20 – 3:25
Swift	8:35 – 8:40	Red	3:20 – 3:25
Nightingale	8:35 – 8:40	Yellow	3:20 – 3:25
Earhart	8:25 – 8:30	Red	3:30 – 3:35
Wright	8:25 – 8:30	Yellow	3:30 – 3:35
Mandela	8:25 – 8:30	Green	3:30 – 3:35
Rosa-Parks	8:25 – 8:30	Blue	3:30 – 3:35
Cotton	8:35 – 8:40	Orange	3:30 – 3:35
Taverner	8:25 – 8:30	Orange	3:20 – 3:25

### How to contact school

With strict restrictions in place in relation to visitors to school site and capacity within the front office area, we are also kindly asking for your assistance in communicating with us via means other than a physical visit to the office wherever possible. Please telephone the office or contact us via WEDUC if at all possible. Should you need to make a physical visit to the office, face masks will be necessary.

### Our 'Recovery Curriculum'

In addition to the safety measures set out above, we are well prepared in terms of securing the wellbeing and academic progress of pupils – particularly those who have not been able to return to school until now. We recognize that there will be learning gaps to be filled when the children return and have planned a 'recovery' curriculum for the Autumn term so that everyone has the chance to catch up.

All children will be assessed fully at the earliest opportunity upon their return to school (not using formal tests, rather regular, formative assessments) in order to identify gaps in knowledge and skills created during the 'lockdown' period. Once completed, our curriculum planning will be revised further to address these needs; including if necessary covering missed content from the previous year group and giving priority to core subject learning.

- In reception, priority will be given to assessing and addressing gaps in language, early reading and maths, particularly ensuring children's acquisition of phonic knowledge and extending their vocabulary.
- For pupils in Key Stages one and two, priority will be given to identifying gaps and re-establishing good progress in the essentials (phonics and reading, increasing vocabulary, writing and mathematics, identifying opportunities across the curriculum so they read widely, and developing their knowledge and vocabulary).
- Depending upon the outcomes of our assessments of children, It may be appropriate to suspend some subjects for some pupils where it is in the best interests of the pupils, i.e. in order for them to receive small group intervention support. However, this will be a short-term, time-limited approach and we will return to a full curriculum for all by Summer 2021.

We will also ensure there is time devoted to the emotional wellbeing of all the children as we realize some will need time to 're-engage' with school. New weekly mindfulness sessions will be delivered to all classes. The latter is a combination of art and relaxation with a Forest School approach and is centered around poignant picture books appropriate to the age of the children it is delivered to.

### 'High-risk' activities

The government have issued specific guidance on 'high-risk' activities, such as PE and music. Please be assured that we will be implementing all of the guidelines provided in relation to these subjects.

Unfortunately, 'high-risk' activities include performances to a live audience, such as Harvest Festival and our annual Nativity. Although we will keep this under review as guidance is issued, at present we are looking at alternative methods for the delivery of our usual 'celebrations'.

### Breakfast and after school clubs

Although the government has said schools can continue to offer breakfast clubs and after-school activities and we are keen to be able to do this, are not in a position to do this at the start of the Autumn Term as children need to remain in their individual year group bubbles. After-school clubs will also not return during the COVID-response period. However, this will be kept under regular review.

## Lunchtimes & Food

Due to social distancing regulations in our Trust kitchens and the capacity of our dining hall, we are not in a position to be able to offer hot school lunches initially. We will therefore be offering a cold lunch option only for the first half term which will be eaten by the children in classrooms. Cold lunches will be provided for all pupils up to the end of Y2 as part of the Universal Infant Free School Meals programme and to KS2 pupils who are entitled to free school meals. Special dietary needs will be catered for. However, all lunches must be booked in advance. The Government is no longer issuing free school meals vouchers as all children will be returning to school.

Free School Fruit will resume next week for pupils in KS1, whilst pupils in KS2 are able to bring in a healthy snack for playtime should they so wish: fruit, vegetable sticks, cheese or non-chocolate cereal bars. Crisps are not an acceptable breaktime snack. No sweets or pure chocolate bars should be sent in for playtime or in lunchboxes. Please remember that we are also a 'nut free' site.

Children will require an individual water bottle which they can refill if required. Water bottles should contain only water as these will be stored with the child and will be accessible throughout the day. However, squash or juice may be sent in for lunchtimes if preferred.

Historically, several children have bought in cakes or sweets for sharing on their birthday. Although we realize this is a lovely thing to do, food is no longer able to be shared and so please do not bring these in as we will be unable to distribute them for you.

## Uniform & Equipment

All children are expected to return in full uniform as of Thursday, including formal black shoes. The government guidance issued last week made it clear that uniforms do not need to be washed any more regularly than normal, nor washed in any special way. Summer uniform may be worn until the October half term.

Should you be experiencing hardship in relation to purchasing uniform, please do speak in confidence to the office as you may be eligible for support with this.

PE will take place on different days for each year group and this will be notified to you by your child's individual teacher. On this day of the week, we ask that pupils attend in their PE kit for the full day. With outdoor PE advised, please ensure your child has a plain black tracksuit to wear with their PE T-shirt as the autumnal weather has begun to set in! PE will commence on Monday 7<sup>th</sup> September. Please ensure your child has a kit ready for this date.

In line with guidance, equipment bought into school should be kept to a minimum, ie coat, hat, gloves, lunch box and homework / reading folder. All of the above may be bought in in a bag, yet this should be small enough to be stored under their chair.

## And Finally...

We appreciate it may have been, and may still be, a difficult time for our families and children. I would like to thank you for your continued cooperation and we look forward to welcoming friends both old and new to our Academy on Thursday, 3<sup>rd</sup> September\*.

With Kind Regards,

Miss J Bland

\*Please remember that new EYFS pupils have a staggered start to the Academy and should have received a separate letter about their specified start dates. If you are unsure of your child's start date please contact the school office.

