



16th July 2020

Full reopening of The Firs in September 20

Dear Parents/Carers

Throughout this challenging time, we have tried to offer parents as much information and support as possible and as promised in our last two Keeping In Touch letters, I am writing to you today to give you an overview of our provision after the summer holidays.

As you know from our previous letters, the Government has produced lengthy guidance and we have taken some time to go through it carefully and make all our plans for next year in order to open the school fully with the greatest safeguards in place that we can manage.

The Firs and the provision we offer is going to look very different for a significant period going forward and your ongoing support for these adjustments has been greatly appreciated.

In this letter, I am trying to give you an overview of our provision in the autumn term and then towards the end of the holidays, I will write to the parents of children in each class with any updates and reminders about key details that will be useful in ensuring a smooth and happy start for the children when they all return to school.

Group Structure

1. For the full reopening in September, our provision will be based on either class or year group sized 'bubbles' and we will endeavour, as Government guidance suggests, to put other control measures in place to reduce the risk of virus transmission as we operate with larger groups of children.
2. In Years 1 to 4, children will work in class bubbles and will work within that bubble for the majority of their learning. In some instances, there may be the need to run smaller groups on a year group basis. We will let parents know about this in advance in the autumn.
3. In Saplings and Pine, the government guidance sets out that early years providers can return to their usual practice without limiting group sizes. This is due to the fact that the prevalence of the virus has fallen, the NHS Test and Trace system is up and running, and the scientific evidence shows that coronavirus (COVID-19) presents a much lower risk to children than adults. Therefore, all the children in The Saplings and Pine (in most respects) will be operating as one distinct group or 'bubble'. This is the only structure that allows all the children appropriate and fair

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access to the EYFS curriculum, by being able to use every part of the indoor and outdoor provision.

4. In a separate letter, we explained that Kids' Club will also be organised in year group bubbles.
5. Staff are allowed in the guidance, to cross bubbles to enable them to work with different classes / groups of children at different times.

Re-organisation of the school day and key points about the provision.

1. The timings for the return of all pupils is set out in the 'Overview of Timings' table at the end of this section of the letter.
2. School will be open every day as normal and additional cleaning will occur using after school or early morning cleaning sessions. This means we will not need to close at lunchtime on Wednesdays in the autumn term.
3. There will be staggered starting and finishing times. (See the table at the end of this section of the letter). We appreciate that where a parent/carer has children in more than one class, this can be inconvenient and we thank you in advance for your patience and support in sticking to these times, to help keep everyone safe.
4. Break and lunch time play will be staggered / in different locations for different classes and lunches will either be eaten in the hall (YR children), The Saplings (Saplings children) or in the classroom (all other children).
5. The normal hot school dinner menu will resume. Meals will be delivered to classrooms in sealed containers. During the Autumn term there will **not** be an option for a cold meal.
6. There will be no gatherings of larger groups of children e.g. for assembly. There will be virtual assemblies and more details are in the curriculum section of the letter.
7. Kids' Club will be operating again and we have written to you separately about the arrangements.

Starting and finishing times for all groups				
Year Group	Class	Entrance / exit location	Drop off time	Pick up time
Saplings		New Saplings gate from service road	9.10-9.25	3.10
Year R	Acorns	Service road entrance / Pine gate	8:45 - 8:55	3:00 - 3:10
	Conkers	Service road entrance / Pine gate	9:00 - 9:10	3:15 - 3:25
Year 1	Maple	Station Road entrance / main outdoor gate	8:45 - 8:55	3:00 - 3:10
	Holly	Station Road entrance / main outdoor gate	9:00 - 9:10	3:15 - 3:25
Year 2	Cedar	Service road entrance / main sch entrance.	9:00 - 9:10	3:15 - 3:25
	Beech	Service road entrance / main sch entrance.	9:15 - 9:25	3:30 - 3:40

Year 3	Elm	Station Road entrance / main outdoor gate	9:00 - 9:10	3:15 - 3:25
	Hazel	Station Road entrance / main outdoor gate	9:15 - 9:25	3:30 - 3:40
Year 4	Oak	From Service road / Y4 side gate	8:45 - 8:55	3:00 - 3:10
	Willow	From Service road / Y4 side gate	9:00 - 9:10	3:15 - 3:25

Notes:

- i The School office will be closed from 8:45 - 9:30 am and 3:00 - 3:30 pm every day during this period
- ii Pine will be operating as a year group but there are separate pick up and drop off times as an additional Covid 19 control measure.
- iii We have made alterations to lunchtimes and factored in savings in terms of less assembly time in ensuring that all children have as much learning time as they normally would, despite the changed start and finish times.

Covid 19 System of Controls at The Firs

Background

In the Guidance it states '*Having assessed their risk, schools must work through the system of controls*', (in the guidance) '*adopting measures in a way that addresses the risk identified in their assessment, works for their school, and allows them to deliver a broad and balanced curriculum for their pupils*'.

Control measures in place at The Firs

I Managing possible incidences of Covid 19

1. If anyone in school becomes unwell (children or staff) with Coronavirus symptoms, they will go home (parents contacted immediately) and advised to follow '[stay at home: guidance](#)', which sets out that they must self-isolate for at least 7 days and should [arrange to have a test](#) to see if they have coronavirus (COVID-19). (Other members of their household (including any siblings) should self-isolate for 14 days from when the symptomatic person first had symptoms.)
2. We will email all the parents in that bubble to inform them that a contact in that bubble is awaiting a test and we will make contact again with the result.
3. Any child with suspected [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) symptoms](#) will be looked after in a room separate from others, while they are waiting to be collected.
4. As a school, we will of course work closely with the local public health authorities and the Test and Trace process and follow all the guidance and advice we receive.

II Hand washing

1. We will be providing additional hand washing facilities for all year groups
2. Additional hand sanitising gel will also be made available in all the classrooms to compliment the facilities in the 'hand washing areas'
3. Staff will plan to **regularly** remind children to wash their hands well e.g.
 - Wash hands with soap and water (or gel if water not available)
 - Wash hands for 20 seconds - (sing Happy Birthday twice!)
 - [How to wash your hands](#) or [Washing Hands NHS](#)
4. Staff will plan to ensure children regularly wash their hands, ensuring enough time is given to it for children to **all** wash their hands properly. e.g.
 - On arrival at the beginning of the day
 - After playtime
 - Before eating at lunchtime
 - After lunch play

- After afternoon play
 - Before children go home
 - After PE/ physical exercise
 - When they have been to the toilet or blown their nose
5. Appropriate signage will be provided for each class and in each toilet / washing area, to communicate these messages.

III Ensuring good respiratory hygiene

1. We will ensure that there are 'tissue bins' and 'ordinary bins' available.
2. The '**Catch it, bin it, kill it**' message will be reinforced with children **regularly**.
3. Government guidance states that '*Public Health England does not (based on current evidence) recommend the use of face coverings in schools.*' If this guidance changes however, we will review our guidance in accordance.
4. Appropriate signage will be provided for each class to communicate this message.
5. Children will be shown this video (it is flu not Covid 19 but the principles are the same) [Video link](#) and this poster used... [catch-bin-kill.pdf](#)

IV Enhanced Cleaning

1. We will ensure that, at the end of the day, the rooms children use are cleaned well (we will be using diluted bleach as advised in the guidance we are following). This will include:
 - All table tops
 - All classroom surfaces such as benches, trolleys, cupboard fronts
 - All Chairs
 - Light switches
 - Door Handles
 - Classroom sinks and draining boards
2. Toilet areas and communal areas will also be cleaned carefully at the end of each day using diluted bleach for surfaces.
3. In addition there will be additional cleaning at the middle of the day, focused on toilet areas and frequently touched surfaces e.g. door handles, light switches etc.
4. Staff will wipe resources before they are used by different 'bubbles,' using virucidal spray, e.g. Chromebooks.

V Maintaining social distancing wherever possible

1. One way systems in the hall and the Y4 corridor and the 'give way' hazard reminders in the corridor near the office will remain.
2. In the classroom, children will sit at distanced tables (2 children per table) all facing one way. (This is in line with the guidance).
3. Children will have staggered play and lunch times in different play areas so that classes remain separate from each other.
4. There will be no 'physical' assemblies in the hall. (See Curriculum section below).
5. Social distancing will be maintained for parents at pick up and drop off with the same use of staggered starts/finishes, different entry points and fencing / 'one way' systems.
6. We will continue to minimise face to face meetings and will ask that parents continue to contact us by telephone or email in the autumn term. As usual, there will be 'welcome' letters in September, for each class, that will include the email contacts for the relevant staff.
7. We will continue to run all meetings using Google Meet or Zoom and this will include ad hoc meetings with parents / the formal parent consultations in the autumn term.

VI Other considerations

1. Face coverings -The guidance states that these are **not recommended** in school. If a child arrives at school wearing one, they must remove it carefully, not touching the front of their face covering during use or when removing it. They must wash their hands on arrival, dispose of the

face covering in a covered bin or (if reusable) in a plastic bag brought in for this purpose. They must then wash their hands again. See [safe working in education, childcare and children's social care](#).

2. PPE - The guidance states '*The majority of staff in education settings will not require PPE beyond what they would normally need for their work.*' In The Saplings (and occasionally elsewhere in school) however, some limited PPE should be worn e.g. when changing nappies. In addition, if a child develops Coronavirus like symptoms in school, the school has a supply of PPE that may then be used.

How Parents / carers can work together with us to keep everyone safe

- By helping us reinforce the messages about frequent and thorough hand washing and catching coughs and sneezes ('Catch it, Bin it, Kill it).
- By passing on messages by email and leaving the school site promptly after drop off or pick up.
- By observing the one way systems on pick up and drop off.
- By ensuring that anyone who has coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms, or has someone in their household who does, does not attend school - this means if your child, or someone in your household, has symptoms you should not send them to school or The Saplings
- By engaging with the NHS Test and Trace process so that cases can be identified and action taken - this means if your child develops symptoms, you should arrange for them to [get a test](#) and you should inform The school / The Saplings of the results of that test.
- By providing a pencil, rubber, sharpener and some coloured pencils in a named transparent pencil case that Y1-Y4 children can keep on their desk for their own use. (See the presentation for your child's class mentioned below.)

Transition

With this letter, you will also receive the transition presentation (with videos to watch) and a booklet for you to go through with your child over the summer. We hope that combined, these resources help to support them in making a great start in their new class.

Curriculum including pastoral support

1. The curriculum we follow in the autumn term needs to be informed by an assessment of where children are and needs to address the gaps in their knowledge and skills caused by the missed learning in the current academic year.
2. We will be spending a lot of time, in the 1st few weeks, assessing children in many different ways e.g. observation and questioning in lessons, discussion with children, 'quizzes', looking at work, discussions with colleagues to compare past achievement with the current position, as well as RWI assessments and some use of other diagnostic testing.
3. We will then work on our response e.g. alterations to planned activities to accommodate children's needs as well as some targeted interventions for certain groups or individuals.
4. We will be focusing more on the reading, writing, maths and science in the first term particularly but we will continue to deliver a broad, balanced and stimulating curriculum, looking for opportunities to reinforce the core curriculum through other areas, such as developing writing skills in a history or RE lesson.
5. The Values assembly each week will be recorded and made available to each class. The teacher will manage any interactive elements on 'playback'! The weekly Merit assemblies will resume on a Friday and will be live on 'Google Meet' for all children and staff to participate in. There will be more information on this in September.
6. One of our priorities will be to support any children with emotional difficulties following the Coronavirus experience and/or who find the transition back into school routines challenging. We

will be giving children regular 'Community Time' to talk about their experiences and feelings and we will be offering small group and/or 1to1 support, for children who may need more help.

Preparing for any future disruption to learning

1. We will, in line with the guidance, be preparing so that where a class, group or small number of pupils need to self-isolate, or there is a local lockdown requiring pupils to remain at home, we are able to offer immediate remote education'.
2. We are working on revising and improving our 'Home Learning' arrangements so that we can make more use of what the guidance refers to as a blend of '*online and offline*' resources and *teaching videos*'.
3. We have taken up the offer of £1500 training and support and will be launching Google Classroom as a basis for this provision once the training and set up is complete in the autumn term.

I am aware that this is quite a long letter (!) but I know that parents/carers have many questions about next year, which I have tried to cover.

I will write to you again just before the children come back, with any updates and with a few key reminders for the beginning of term. In the meantime, I know I speak for everyone at The Firs when I say that I hope that you all have a really good summer and we all very much look forward to all the children coming back in September.

Kind Regards



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