



Date 18/1/21

Re-opening of The Saplings

Dear parents/carers,

On the 5th January, we had to close the Saplings Pre-school due to Covid 19 related staffing issues.

Closing or partially closing the school is a step that we always want to avoid if at all possible, due to the lost learning time that it represents and the negative impact on children's social development and mental health and well being that long closures can cause.

We are very aware that the Government is committed to all providers of early years education remaining open and schools are being directed to open all early years settings, where this is at all possible.

With this in mind, we have been working with colleagues, to ensure that a sufficient number of the Saplings staff are available to enable rotas to be organised, to provide appropriate pupil to practitioner ratios.

I would like to thank the Saplings staff for their help and cooperation in this team effort and I am very pleased to say that we are making the final arrangements now, that will see us able to **re-open The Saplings on Wednesday 20th January**.

We understand that at this difficult time, there might be some of you who wish to continue to keep their child at home for the time being and may have made some other arrangements for care this term. We will be sending out a Google Form therefore, to all our existing Saplings parents/carers and we would like you to respond by **midday on Tuesday 19th** if you would like to take up the same days / half days that you signed up to at the beginning of term. **Unfortunately we cannot accommodate requests for more time initially, due to the lack of additional staffing available.**

We will be contacting any new starters for this term separately, to facilitate the induction process that we had previously arranged for the beginning of term.

Adam J.G Campbell (Headteacher)

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We will be doing everything we can in The Saplings, like in the rest of the school, to ensure that we make our pre-school as Covid19 secure as possible. These measures include:

- Even more hand sanitiser stations have been set up round the school and in The Saplings
- Strict limits on face to face informal contact between staff - very much limited to staff in the same 'bubble' and not within 2m.
- All staff meetings of any kind to be virtual.
- All meetings with you, to be by telephone or virtually via Zoom or Google Meet.
- Face masks must be worn by staff in all communal / public areas indoors e.g. walking through corridors between rooms, when greeting children at pick up and drop off.

In addition we are asking support from **parents / carers**:

- You will not be allowed in The Saplings building, except in very exceptional circumstances / as part of the induction of new children (See below)
- During induction visits to The Saplings, you will be asked to:
 - Wear a mask at all times
 - Stay 2m away from Saplings staff
 - Only interact with their own child, who is attending the induction session
- We are asking that you refrain from any face to face communication on pick up/drop off - all communications must be by phoning The Saplings on 01525 402735 option 5, the school office on 01525 402735 or via email either to The Saplings on thesaplings@firslower.org or the office on office@firslower.org.
- All parents/carers **must** wear a mask when picking up or dropping off children.
- We are asking you to go straight home after pick up / drop off, to maximise social distancing as much as possible on and around The Saplings site.

We very much look forward to welcoming all our children back to The Saplings as the staff have greatly missed them and can't wait to see them playing happily in pre-school again!

Yours sincerely,



Adam J.G. Campbell
Headteacher