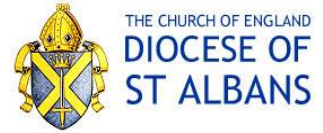




Stapleford Primary School

(Church of England, Voluntary Aided)



Church Lane, Stapleford, Hertfordshire, SG14 3NB
Telephone: 01992583341 Fax: 01992 901811 Email: admin@stapleford.herts.sch.uk @staplefordps www.stapleford.herts.sch.uk

Friday 22nd May 2020

Dear Parents & Carers

RE: Reopening of Stapleford Primary School

No doubt you will be aware of the government's announcement relating to the 'reopening' of schools as part of a phased COVID-19 recovery strategy. This strategy involves taking decisive steps towards recovery, with strict conditions to safely move from each step to the next. The government has therefore asked schools to start planning to open for children in Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6, no earlier than the 1st June, as they anticipate that these children may be able to return to school in smaller class sizes from this point. This aims to ensure that the youngest children and those preparing for the transition to secondary school have maximum time with their teachers. A national announcement will be made giving at least 48 hours' notice if a decision is made for this to happen.

I met with the Hertford and Ware heads last week, via Zoom, and they are in agreement that there is a need to be cautious with any plan to re-introduce pupils and staff to school. The Hertford, Ware & Villages Primary Schools have a close working relationship and support each other in many ways. We have already worked together, extensively, on the issue of reopening. All local heads are mindful of the anxieties that many in our community will have, as well as recognising the need for our pupils to be back in school. Whilst each school's plan will differ depending upon that school's staffing and site circumstances, our aim is to bring children back into school as safely as possible, and therefore, all schools will be organising this on a part time/rota basis.

The government's ambition is to bring all primary year groups back to school before the summer holidays, for a month if feasible. Government advice states that the numbers of children going back to school needs to be limited initially then increased gradually as the science permits. They have said that we will only be asked to open schools provided that the five key tests set by the government justify the changes at the time, including that the rate of infection is decreasing. They are asking schools to plan on this basis, ahead of confirmation that these tests are met.

We are initially planning to welcome back children in Year R, Year 1 and Year 6, alongside key worker and vulnerable children. We plan to return pupils gradually, as per the government advise, to initially reduce the number of children and young people in classrooms compared to usual and to put protective measures in place to reduce risks. Children will need to stay within their new class/group wherever possible until the end of the summer term.

If the government decides it is safe for school to reopen on the 1st June 2020 the following steps will be taken:

Arriving at school

- Monday 1st June 2020 will be a staff INSET day to prepare for reopening. The school will be open for key worker children and vulnerable children on the INSET day as it has been every day since the school was asked to close in March.
- We have an annual intake of 12 pupils per year group and therefore it will be possible for us to split Reception, Year 1, Year 6 and our key worker & vulnerable children into groups of no more than 15 children and allocate them each a classroom.
- We are planning that Reception would be based in Class 4, Year 1 in Class 3 and Year 6 in Class 1 with our key worker children, vulnerable children and those Year R, 1 and 6 children with siblings in other classes being based in Class 2.
- We will stagger start times to reduce congestion at drop-off/collection times. **Pupils are to be dropped off at school by one adult only.**
 - 8:40am – Reception children dropped by the Class 4 garden gate

- 8:45am – Key worker children, vulnerable children and children from Year R, 1 or 6 who have siblings in other classes are to be dropped at the library corridor entrance
 - 8:55am – Year 1 dropped at the entrance to the KS1 playground (next to the outdoor gym equipment)
 - 9:00am - Year 6 dropped at the library corridor entrance
- Children will not be permitted anywhere within the school building apart from the classroom they have been allocated and the toilets.
 - Whilst we adjust to these new safeguarding measures the Pre-school and Nursery classes will remain closed.
 - Antibacterial hand gel will be available on the front desk, by the staff entrance and in every classroom.
 - All staff and pupils are to use antibacterial hand gel as they enter the building.

Staffing

- We are fortunate that only a few of our staff are likely to have to continue ‘shielding’ long term due to health conditions for themselves or their immediate family members. As a result, we will be able to allocate a small team of staff, some who will be part-time, to each of these groups of children. They will become their new teachers for the remainder of this phase and that group will not be taught by any other members of staff. If the teacher is unavailable, a teaching assistant will step up to supervise the group. If the staff team are unavailable, that group will not attend school until their allocated teachers/teaching assistants are available again. In this way, we will be able to create ‘safety bubbles’ consisting of less than 15 pupils and the staff team (3-4 people over the week) which each child will be exposed to. This reduces the risk of transmission of the virus between groups in the school.

Distancing

- Everyone on the school site will be reminded to maintain the 2m social-distancing gap.
- Children will be allocated a desk (not Reception age children) that they stick to sitting 2m away from others.
- The physical layout of our school, with lots of outside space, will help us keep these groups separate for the whole day.
- We will ask that families, delivery drivers etc. observe social distancing (keeping 2m apart) when arriving at and leaving school.
- The children will only access outside areas for play and curriculum activities in their allocated groups.
- No parents/carers will be permitted to enter the school building. This includes the school office.
- Children will have no access to the cloakroom. All coats, bags etc. will remain with them in their classrooms.

Lunches

- Packed lunches (either from home or provided by school) will be the only meals on offer and they will be eaten in the classrooms. This avoids the risk of transmission created by children moving around the school corridors and using a shared dining room. Other shared areas, like the library, cloakroom, ICT suite, rainbow room, staff room etc. will be out of action.
- Playtimes/lunchtimes and access to playgrounds/field will be staggered.

Classrooms

- No other staff other than those assigned to that year group will enter the room.
- Antibacterial hand gel will be available in every classroom.
- All resources children may need will be on their desks and not shared.
- Cleaning materials/resources will be available in every classroom to be used throughout the day.
- The curriculum will follow a similar format to the home learning activities that are currently being sent home.
- We will continue to provide home learning activities for all children who are not being educated on site, in liaison with their current teachers.
- There will be no changing for PE.
- Staff will stay in the bubble/classroom with the group of children they are working with and not mix with staff working in other bubbles/classrooms.
- Staff will remind children to maintain the 2 metre social distancing gap.
- Unnecessary items will be put in storage.
- Soft toys and cushions will be put in storage because they cannot be wiped clean easily.
- Each class will have toilets assigned to them. We have enough that the classes will not need to share toilets.
- PPE equipment will be used by staff if dealing with intimate care.
- PPE equipment used will be used by staff if someone has symptoms of COVID-19 and they cannot maintain 2m gap.
- Doors to classrooms will be open all day for ventilation
- Windows will be open for ventilation

- No snacks will be left out
- Water bottles will be left in bags
- Children will be reminded not to take items home and bring them back to school each day e.g. reading books, pencil cases.
- Class 1, 2 and 3 are to have a selection of balls, playground toys etc. that they take out with them for each playtime. They bring these back inside after each play/break. They are not to be shared with other classes and not put back in the shed. No access to the toy shed. Class 4 and their play equipment are contained in their garden/classroom.
- Registers will be left outside classrooms and collected by office staff once completed.
- The climbing frames, table tennis, outdoor gym equipment and slide are out of action.
- Children are encouraged to wear a clean uniform every day.

Cleaning

- Additional cleaning hours have been arranged. This cleaning will take place once the children have left for the day.
- Surfaces/toys/taps etc. will be wiped clean throughout the day.
- Bins will be emptied during the day as well as at the end of the day.
- Regular handwashing and use of antibacterial hand gels will be enforced.
- We will promote good respiratory hygiene by promoting the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach.
- If there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 in a classroom it will be deep cleaned whilst everyone is in isolation.

Symptoms

- Anyone with symptoms of coronavirus will be sent home to enter self-isolation.
- If anyone tests positive for coronavirus the whole cohort, including the staff, will be sent home to go into self-isolation.
- PPE equipment used will be used by staff if someone has symptoms of COVID-19 and they cannot maintain 2m gap.
- Children that do not observe the safeguarding measures we have put in place will be sent home.

Going home time

- We will stagger pick up times to reduce congestion at drop-off/collection times. **Pupils are to be collected from school by one adult only.**
 - 2:40pm – Reception children collected by the Class 4 garden gate
 - 2:45pm – Key worker children, vulnerable children and children from Year R, 1 or 6 who have siblings in other classes are to be collected at the library corridor entrance
 - 2:55pm – Year 1 collected at the entrance to the KS1 playground (next to the outdoor gym equipment)
 - 3:00pm - Year 6 collected at the library corridor entrance

We will endeavour to make the experience as positive as possible and recognise that the children may feel anxious. We have made detailed plans to ensure that we can minimise the risk, whilst providing a welcoming and engaging learning environment which can operate smoothly within the required controls. I know that the thought of returning your child to school will cause a degree of anxiety for many parents and carers. We have all been working so hard to follow strict government guidelines over the past several weeks in a world where it has felt dangerous to step outside your front door. Should you decide that you wish for your child to stay at home, that is absolutely fine and I assure you that I understand and respect that. However, I think it is important to remember that the government is not asking us to send our children back to school tomorrow. They have said that this will only happen when the government deems there is an acceptable risk to do so, and not before 1st June. It may well be that we are not asked to implement this plan until well after 1st June, depending on how the pandemic plays out.

We need to start to rebuild a healthy confidence in our children and reassure them that there will be a time soon where the risks are so small that it is OK to feel safe outside their homes. We need to support them in taking these small steps to getting back to their lovely school, having fun with their friends and enjoying their learning. We owe them this right to start experiencing the fullness of their childhoods again. In the coming months we will continue to support and nurture all of our pupils, staff and extended community as we attempt to rebuild some form of normality.

Thank you for all your support over the past few months. I want to pay tribute to all the hard work you have put in as parents and carers – I know that you have been rising to the considerable challenge of supporting your children with home learning and you have been doing such a great job! During half term, which starts on Friday, we will not be providing home learning activities. We feel that parents and children have been working hard and need a break from

the pressures that home learning brings. I would now ask that you start to prepare your child gently for coming back to school and start talking to them about any worries they might have.

I also want to thank all the staff at Stapleford for their unending positivity and commitment. We are missing the children very much and cannot wait to see them all back at school again. It has been so heartening to see the whole Stapleford community pull together to face this unprecedented challenge head on. We now need to draw on that same spirit of positive collaboration to start the process of recovery and building the best future for our children.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Shillito', written in a cursive style.

James Shillito
Headteacher