

Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> May 2020

Dear Parents,

After the announcement on Sunday night, there have been a lot of questions generated from schools, parents and the Local Authority. The last few days have been spent by many, trying to decipher the information and what that looks like across schools countywide, and what it looks like for us in the context of Uley School.

With each day there are more questions and further clarification to be sought, so I thought I would write initially to signpost a useful document (which you are probably aware of already) and to let you know we are in the initial stages of planning for the potential start of the phased opening from the 1<sup>st</sup> June:

The Government's Approach: First phase of wider opening of educational and childcare settings (from 1 June 2020 depending on the most up-to-date assessment of the risk posed by the virus).

So, from the week commencing 1 June 2020 at the earliest, the government is asking nurseries and other early years settings to open to all children; primary schools to welcome back pupils to Nursery, Reception, year 1 and year 6, plus vulnerable children and children of critical workers they have been supporting since the end of March.

This link will take you to the parents and carers guide, some of which I have hopefully clarified below as to what the initial thoughts are and implications for Uley School opening on 1<sup>st</sup> June:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers/reopening-schools-and-other-educational-settings-from-1-june>

There are some questions that we are unable to answer precisely at this time. This is an extremely challenging time and I am unable to give you any concrete plans at this point, but can give you some considerations from the guidance received. There are updates daily and information is constantly coming through as to what this phased return could look like.

What steps the government are asking us to consider and how Uley School are considering this:

- **carrying out a risk assessment before opening to more children and young people - the assessment should directly address risks associated with coronavirus so that sensible measures can be put in place to minimise those risks for children, young people and staff**

*Uley School – amongst other things, a risk assessment will consider:*

- *the capacity at which the school is able to function bearing in mind safety and reduction of the transmission of the virus.*
- *the space around the school to be able to follow the recommended social distancing guidelines.*
- *the numbers of children who are expecting to be in attendance.*

- *how many staff are available to be safely in school (with consideration to clinically vulnerable or extremely clinically vulnerable adults).*
- *how and where the children can enter the school safely.*
- *parents social distancing on the school premises.*
- *the use of the school playground and field.*

*If from the risk assessment, the demand for places supersedes the amount of space required for social distancing and the staff to care for these children, then the school will have to prioritise, which could be the consideration of key workers being able to work from home if possible, in the first instance, prioritising the youngest children and looking carefully at a rota system.*

- **making sure that children and young people do not attend if they or a member of their household has symptoms of coronavirus**

*Uley School – we would need to know this information to avoid transmission of the infection through the school and to put any deep cleaning processes in place.*

- **promoting regular hand washing for 20 seconds with running water and soap or use of sanitiser and ensuring good respiratory hygiene by promoting the catch it, bin it, kill it approach**

*Uley School – this will continue as we did in March but more regularly. Resources have been purchased.*

- **cleaning more frequently to get rid of the virus on frequently touched surfaces, such as door handles, handrails, tabletops, play equipment and toys**

*Uley School – this is something we are working on with the school cleaning services and school staff.*

- **minimising contact through smaller classes or group sizes and altering the environment as much as possible, such as changing the layout of classrooms**
- **reducing mixing between groups through timetable changes, such as staggered break times or by introducing staggered drop-off and collection times**

*Uley School – what we are considering:*

- *the year groups and groups of children in attendance will be subdivided into smaller groups.*
- *the children will stay in these groups for the time being.*
- *the groups of children will have their dedicated space (appropriate to staying 2 metres apart).*
- *the children will have staggered playtimes/lunchtimes/start finish times to the day.*
- *mixing these groups of children with each other groups will be avoided.*
- *depending on staff availability, these groups of children may have an adult that they know but have not worked with in the past.*
- *support staff or teachers can support these groups.*
- *the movement of the adults between the groups should be infrequent; to limit transmission.*

### **Will education be provided as normal to children and young people who are attending?**

Education settings still have the flexibility to provide support and education to children and young people attending school in the way they see fit during this time.

*Uley School - This is part of our planning process of which we do not have a definite answer at this point. There will be learning but not a typical educational day as we know it. At the top of our list will be the children's mental health and wellbeing in the first instance. We will use our best endeavours to support the children attending as well as those remaining at home.*

**What the guidance says: - Will childcare, schools and colleges keep their usual opening hours?**

It is possible that some settings will make changes to their start and finish times or introduce processes for drop-off and collection times to keep children and families safe. Start and finish times will be clearly communicated to parents and carers alongside any other new arrangements.

*Uley School - This is part of our planning process of which we do not have a definite answer as yet but please do expect some changes to the timings of the school day.*

**If my child is eligible, is it compulsory for them to attend school?**

You should notify your child's school as normal so that staff are aware and can discuss with you. Parents will not be fined for non-attendance at this time.

**What the Guidance says - How will risks to children, teachers and families be managed?**

We have provided guidance and support to schools, colleges and childcare settings on [implementing protective measures in education and childcare settings](#) to help them to reduce the risk of transmission as more children and young people return.

To prevent the spread of coronavirus, schools and other settings will use a range of protective measures to create safer environments in which the risk of spreading the virus is substantially reduced. Whilst such changes are likely to look different in each setting, as they will depend upon individual circumstances, they are all designed to minimise risks to children, staff and their families.

*Uley School - We will follow the guidance and do all we can to reduce the risk of transmission by carrying out a risk assessment. We will do all we can to ensure social distancing between the children but please be mindful that these are children and this might not always be possible.*

**Can children be tested for the virus?**

Once settings open to more children and young people, staff and pupils in all settings will be eligible for testing if they become ill with coronavirus symptoms, as will members of their household. This will enable children and young people to get back to childcare or education, and their parents or carers to get back to work, if the test proves to be negative. A positive test will ensure rapid action to protect their classmates and staff in their setting.

**What happens if there is a confirmed case of coronavirus in my child's school?**

When a child, young person or staff member develops symptoms compatible with coronavirus, they should be sent home and advised to self-isolate for 7 days. Their fellow household members should self-isolate for 14 days. All staff and students who are attending an education or childcare setting will have access to a test if they display symptoms of coronavirus. 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.

## **Will school meals be available for children and young people who are in school?**

*Uley School – they should be. We are expecting some updates from Caterlink (our school meal provider) in due course .*

Apologies for a rather long letter, but I hope this gives us all a bit of direction for the couple of weeks ahead. I acknowledge the concerns you have already shared regarding how this will evolve and the worry of keeping safe; we share the same concerns too. More updates will follow as more information comes through and decisions are finalised.

Just one thing to note, emails tomorrow morning (Friday) will be manned by our fabulous support staff at Uley School. Activity webs will be circulated tomorrow afternoon.

Half term is approaching, week commencing 25<sup>th</sup> May and we would suggest the children have a well-earned rest. As with the routine over the Easter break, communication with classes will be reduced with school staff checking periodically for any welfare concerns as we will all be preparing for the potential opening on 1<sup>st</sup> June.

Just one last thought – this week for the Year 6s, would have been the statutory testing week and they would have had their last test today; it is not forgotten! Although most of the Year 6s (I'd imagine) are hugely relieved, it is though, such an important part of the year because it gives the children a chance to shine and there are always so many fantastic achievements. We have even missed SATS breakfast which I do believe is the highlight of the week– or maybe we could still do this Year 6s?!

The past few weeks have been like no others but it is seeing and hearing the fantastic things you have all been doing that have kept our spirits high. You have all done an amazing job supporting your children and most importantly keeping safe and well. We very much look forward to seeing you all in person at some point over time.

Best wishes,

Zoe Mandeville

P.S. I do prefer to write letters more so about school events, the children's achievements and more straight forward news!