



RUSKIN INFANT SCHOOL AND NURSERY

Ruskin Avenue, Wellingborough, Northants, NN8 3EG

Telephone: 01933 675430

email: head@ruskin-inf.northants-ecl.gov.uk

www.ruskininfantschool.org

Headteacher
Ms C Starnes, BA (Hons)

Deputy Headteacher
Mr B Morris, BA (Hons)

Dear Parents/Carers,

Firstly, as always, I hope that you and your families are safe and well.

As I am sure you are aware, the Government is proposing that there is a phased return to schools with the **earliest** that schools could open to children other than those of key workers being **1st June**. This date would be conditional on:

- The rate of Covid-19 infections coming down;
- The rate of testing being increased;
- The reproduction rate of the disease (R) being below 1;
- The number of deaths being much reduced.

Given the statistics coming in daily about death and infection rates, it is reasonable to assume that there needs to be a significant change to these numbers for the 1st June date to be adhered to.

Further Government guidance has now come into school about how the return could be managed and we are currently going through the details, talking to other local schools and making plans accordingly to ensure that whatever we do it is done in the safest possible way for children and equally importantly, staff.

The Government has told schools to prepare for the return of Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6. As an Infant School and Nursery, this provides us with the unique challenge of opening to three quarters of our school population whilst retaining our key worker provision.

A return to school after such a long time is a welcome and exciting proposition to us all - particularly to families that we are acutely aware are struggling financially or have increased pressure from employers to return to work. However, it is crucial that families are aware what a return to school would, by necessity, look like in order to make an informed choice as parents and prepare their children accordingly if need be.

The Government accepts that social distancing is not possible in schools, particularly with the youngest children like ours, and says that a maximum of 15 children could be in each classroom to create a 'social bubble' although with every effort we would like to keep numbers of children in each group to a minimum. A Teacher and / or Teaching Assistant would supervise each separate 'bubble' with no crossovers or meeting of any of those groups. The key worker

children who have already been on site throughout are already a 'bubble' and may remain together or may be distributed into the new groups moving forward.

For Ruskin Infant School and Nursery, due to the potentially large proportion of the school community eligible to return, combined with the limited number and size of classrooms, in order to achieve the safest practice we anticipate this would mean having procedures in place like the following:

- Year groups split into groups ('bubbles') of no more than 15 and based in separate classrooms with a Teacher / Teaching Assistant (not necessarily their own but we will endeavour to ensure that there is a known adult in the group). Due to space, this could be on a part-time basis if large numbers of children return but we would like to avoid this to best work for parents.
- Once set by staff, those 'bubbles' are fixed for the duration of this way of working – new children should not be introduced and children cannot move to a different 'bubble'.
- 'Bubbles' cannot meet at playtime, lunch or beginnings and ends of days – children will not be seeing or mixing with children or adults not in their 'bubble'. Children within the bubble will be allowed to play together although we will encourage social distancing at all times.
- Classrooms will need to be cleared of any unnecessary furniture/equipment and in Year 1 particularly there would be an expectation children would sit mostly at tables in order to create a distance.
- Staggered starts/ends of the school day to keep numbers of people on site to a minimum, with one way systems where appropriate.
- Regular hand washing, cleaning, spraying and wiping down of surfaces throughout the day.
- Children would come to school in their own comfortable clothes each day and those must be washed after school each day. They would bring nothing to school other than a water bottle and a packed lunch, if they would prefer that to the one provided by school. They will not be able to select or bring home reading books as they would also require cleaning.
- Parents would need to arrive and leave promptly, maintaining social distances, at the time allocated to their child's bubble and would need to phone to talk to any member of staff so that staff come into contact with the minimal number of people. Only one adult can bring their child in to school.
- Staff wearing PPE as required – for example when administering first aid, nappy changing or vulnerable themselves.
- An expectation that the children will maintain high standards of behaviour, only come to school if no member of their family is showing symptoms and that if a child/family does test positive, the classroom for their 'bubble' potentially could close for deep clean.
- An expectation that children with a raised temperature (which we will check on entry) or showing other symptoms would be isolated from their 'bubble' and collected promptly.

These are clearly the earliest stages of plans for opening and whilst we endeavour to maintain the safety of the whole school community, I am sure you would agree that this, whilst absolutely essential, is a world away from the Ruskin Infant School and Nursery that we are used to and the way we would like it to be. I know that the care and attention of the wonderful Ruskin staff will make what is a completely unfamiliar situation as comfortable for the children as possible. At present, we continue to advise that those children not attending school complete their learning through the Oak National Academy.

There are still many concerns and questions for yourselves and, indeed, for us but the safety of our school community is always our most important priority. As discussions continue, we may find answers to questions such as whether siblings should be in the same 'social bubble' and whether children would be able to go to childminders if they have been at school. We hope that clarification of these points and many others that are arising will come from the Department for Education shortly.

Please complete the following survey and submit by Monday 18th May at 9.00am.

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfjsPqtUXuHrqR2W17Rb-rhdGHAB3boyC1LCHE7r-TdmVe7Kg/viewform>

This will then enable us to finalise plans, as much as is currently possible, for the proposed 1st June return.

Hoping that you and your families continue to stay safe and well

With kind regards

Ms C Starnes