



MEADGATE PRIMARY SCHOOL

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Executive Headteacher: Mr. J. J. Figg

Wednesday 8th July 2020

Dear Parents/Carers

I am writing regarding our arrangements for opening the school in September. Following the government's guidance that was published last week we have spent time reading the information, putting plans into place and are now communicating the systems that will be in place when the children return to school on **7th September 2020**.

You would have seen the information last week, and over the weekend, that was communicated by the Department for Education, but it is important to remember that there is not a one size fits all model that every school will follow. Each school is guided by its own risk assessment which is based on a number of factors including: staffing, the school building and the school site.

The following bullet points are the headline information from the guidance document that has driven our decision making for September.

- School will be **compulsory** for all pupils in all year groups
- **Extensive** cleaning systems must remain in place. This includes regular hand washing and cleaning of the classrooms and other areas of high contact
- Children will be **grouped** in classes with **minimal contact** with other classes with movement around the school being kept to a minimum
- To **avoid large numbers** of children and parents/carers gathering on the playground, schools should consider a **staggered starts and collections**
- Classes of children will **self-isolate** if a test for COVID-19 is positive
- Schools kitchens should be **open**
- School uniforms **do not** need to be cleaned any more often than usual
- Schools should consider **resuming** any breakfast and after-school provision
- Schools should continue to teach an **ambitious and broad curriculum**
- Ofsted inspections **will continue to be suspended** for the autumn term
- Statutory assessments **will** take place in the summer of 2021

Compulsory Schooling

From September 2020 the government have announced that schools are open for all pupils in all year groups. It is our expectation, following the government's guidance, that all pupils will return to school in September. The only exception to this will be children that are self-isolating because they, or someone in their households, have symptoms of COVID-19 and have tested positive. The guidance states that 'it is vital for all children to return to school to minimise as far as possible the longer-term impact of the pandemic on children's education, wellbeing and wider development.'

The following information will, we hope, reassure families who are anxious about their children returning to school.

Hygiene and Cleaning

Since the COVID-19 pandemic we have introduced an extensive cleaning routine that we operate every day. This takes place in every classroom, and around the school site, on a regular basis. We also clean the areas outside of classrooms, such as toilets, that are shared by more than class. Children's hands are sanitised on entry into the school and they wash their hands regularly throughout the school day. The school is cleaned thoroughly at the end of the day and we have added a considerable amount of extra hours for cleaning since we returned to school on June 1st.

Children will continue to use their own stationery and where possible will not be directly facing another child.

Pods of Children

Presently our children that are attending school are grouped in pods of 15 children. From September these pods will increase in size to cover each class. Therefore each class will be a separate pod with minimal contact from other classes. In a primary school this will not look too different at all to 'normal' procedures. We will not be having assemblies in the school hall and break times and lunch times will be staggered to ensure that each class has their own designated area of the outside spaces.

Staggered Start and Finish Times

To ensure that we do not have over 300 people on the school playground in the morning and after school, we will be operating a staggered start and finish. Please read the following information very carefully to ensure that you arrive at the **correct** time and the **correct** entrance for your children. If you have siblings then you will need to let us know which year group's time you will be dropping and collecting both children.

Year 6 will continue to use the Longmore Avenue entrance only. Drop off at 8.30am and collect at 3.05pm from the playground door entrance.

Year 1 will continue to use the Mascalls Way entrance. Drop off at 8.30am and collect at 3.05pm from the front entrance.

Year 5 will use the Longmore Avenue entrance only. Drop off at 8.40am and collect at 3.15pm from the playground door entrance.

Year 2 will continue to use the Mascalls Way entrance. Drop off at 8.40am and collect at 3.15pm from the front entrance of the school.

Year 4 will use the Longmore Avenue entrance only. Drop off at 8.50am and collect at 3.25pm from the playground door entrance.

Year 3 will use Mascalls Way entrance only and walk around the school to the playground entrance. Drop off at 8.55am and collect at 3.30pm.

Reception will continue to use the Mascalls Way entrance only and walk around to use their side gate. From 21st September the drop off will be 8.45am and collection will be 3.05pm.

By sticking to these times you will ensure that we do not mix the year groups and that we are not having large groups of parents/carers congregating on the school grounds. Please note that we intend to keep to the 2 metre rule and our one way system in place, when parents/carers are on the school grounds for everyone's safety. This means that if you are using the Longmore Avenue entrance then you will have to walk around the school, up Mascalls Way and back to Longmore Avenue.

Positive Test Result

If a child is displaying symptoms of COVID-19 then they will be sent home and parents will be instructed to collect their child and contact the NHS to have their child tested for COVID-19. We have been sent several self-test kits but expect these to be used quickly. If the test is positive then all of the children and adults who work within the class will need to self-isolate for fourteen days in line with the government's guidance. Other members of the household do not need to self-isolate unless someone in the household is displaying symptoms.

Staffing

Where possible we intend to keep the same consistent members of staff working with the class pods. However, due to the nature of staffing a school this is not always possible. Staff are therefore working in the minimal number of classes as possible. The reason for this is that if this person was tested positive for COVID-19 then every class they had worked in would be self-isolating for a week.

Teachers receive 10% of their working week out of class in order to plan, prepare and assess which is a legal obligation that schools must provide. This is known as PPA time. Currently we have one member of staff who delivers the PPA time across the school. Our risk assessment dictates that they should not do this for a multitude of reasons. Therefore we intend to close the school earlier on a Friday to allow the teachers to receive their allocated PPA time. We therefore request that **Year R, Year 1 and 4 collect at 1.00pm** from their allocated collection points followed by **Year 5 and 2 at 1.10pm** and **Year 6 and Year 3 at 1.20pm**. This procedure will be reviewed each month and will be communicated with families. Please note that the school day has been lengthened by 15 minutes a day and lunch time will be shorted by 10 minutes a day for key stage 2 children, to ensure that children are receiving the same amount of teaching hours.

To support those families that **do not** have child care between 1.00pm and 3.05pm we will be running the after school club at no charge. Please only make use of this facility if you **do not have any other alternative**. To help us with this, and to plan accordingly, we are asking that families email admin@meadgate.essex.sch.uk by Friday 17th July to inform us that they have no child care on a Friday afternoon and require spaces within the after school club on a Friday. Please note that if you do not have childcare for the Friday afternoon the collection time is 3.05pm.

School Kitchen

Our kitchen will be open in September and we will be serving cold lunches to our children in reception, year 1 and year 2, children who are eligible for means tested free school meals and any other children in key stage 2 who wish to purchase a meal. This will mean that we do not have more than one class in the hall as children will be eating their lunches in their classrooms. This will be reviewed each month and communicated with parents.

School Uniform

From September children **must** wear school uniform once again. Please note that the uniform does not need to be washed every day. However, we would always recommend that children wear a clean shirt every day and that their jumper and trousers and/or skirt are washed at the weekend.

Breakfast and After School Club

From September our breakfast and after school club will open once again. The children will be working in key stage groups so that we do not have all of the children working in one group. We therefore intend to operate in two groups that will remain consistent throughout the week. Places can be booked via the school office and using our online payment system.

Please note that if your child attends the before and after school club, and one of the children in the club tests positive for COVID-19, then your child will need to self-isolate for seven days in line with government's guidelines, even if the child is not in your child's class. The child's class would also need to self-isolate for seven days.

We will be running extra curriculum clubs but these will be for specific year groups only and our offer will be limited, especially for younger pupils.

Curriculum

We will continue to teach our ambitious and broad curriculum as well as implement our individual pupil plans, which we have previously communicated. We will continue to support all pupils to access the curriculum. We have been advised that school trips may go ahead in the autumn term but we will review this as the term progresses.

For the first week of term, starting on 7th September, we will be focussing on the children's mental health. This will provide an opportunity for us to assess their wellbeing, their social skills and their interaction with their peers. We will then be able to use a variety of strategies to support them as we progress into the autumn term. From the second week of term we will assess the children's knowledge and understanding of the key objectives that would have been taught in the summer term.

Ofsted

Routine inspections will continue to be suspended during the autumn term.

Statutory Assessments

The government has announced that all statutory assessments planned for 2021 will take place next year. This means that the phonic screening check for year 1, the year 2 standard attainment tests (SATs), year 4 times table test and year 6 SATs will be taking place next year. This may be subject to changes. If so we will advise if this is the case.

I apologise for the length of this letter but you will understand why as the content is important. If you have any questions about the information above please contact a member of the senior leadership team via the school office. We look forward to seeing you all in September.

Many thanks for your support

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'J Figg', written in a cursive style.

Mr Joseph Figg
Executive Headteacher