



# MEADGATE PRIMARY SCHOOL

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Executive Headteacher: Mr. J. J. Figg

Friday 26<sup>th</sup> February 2021

Dear Parents/Carers

I am writing to let you know about our arrangements for opening the school on March 8<sup>th</sup> 2021. Following the government's guidance that was published this 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.

The following bullet points are the headline information from the guidance document that has driven our decision making. Most of the following information is extremely similar to the autumn term but please ensure that you familiarise yourselves with the info below.

- School will be **mandatory** 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
- School staff will continue to be **tested** twice a week via lateral flow devices
- 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 **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**
- Statutory assessments **will not** take place in the summer of 2021

## Mandatory Schooling

From the 8<sup>th</sup> March 2021 the government have announced that schools are open for all pupils in all year groups. 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. A small number of children may still be unable to attend if they are clinically extremely vulnerable. 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 one 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 the first time in June 2020.

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

As you may or may not be aware, 1 in 3 infected individuals have no symptoms of COVID-19. Therefore, from January 2021, school staff have been using lateral flow devices to test for COVID-19 twice a week. This will continue as the term progresses and has greatly increased the chances of an asymptomatic COVID-19 carrier being identified.

#### Pods of Children

From 8<sup>th</sup> March the children will continue to be taught in their normal classes. 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.

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

**Year 1 will 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 use the Mascalls Way entrance. Drop off at 8.50am and collect at 3.25pm 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 9.00am and collect at 3.35pm.**

**Reception will continue to use the Mascalls Way entrance only and walk around to use their side gate. Drop off will be at 8.40am and collection will be at 3.00pm.**

By sticking to these times **and entrances** 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 will be keeping with the 2 metre rule and our one way system will be 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. Please do not cut through the school grounds and make your way home quickly after dropping off and collecting your children.

In order to minimise the mixing of households, and reducing waiting time for parents/carers, parents/carers will only need to attend the school site once and collect their own children from one collection point. You will be able to collect your own children at the latest time for your family group. For example, if you have children in Reception and year 3, then you must collect both children at 3.35pm from the year 3 collection point. This is to avoid children being withdrawn from classes early to go home and avoids groups of children waiting in the school corridor.

Parents/Carers should only be onsite at the drop off and collection times and to attend meetings. Meetings must be arranged in advance and parents/carers should not attend the school without an appointment.

If you need to discuss something with us, please either email your child's teacher using the year group email or contact the school office. This will allow the morning and after school drop off and collection times to run smoothly without delays and overlap.

Face coverings are to be worn by all visitors on the school site at all times. This includes any secondary school aged pupils collecting younger siblings. Please refer to government guidance about the safe wearing, and storage, of face coverings. Primary school aged pupils do not need to wear a face covering on the school site.

#### Positive Test Result

If a child is displaying symptoms of COVID-19 please do not bring them into school. If your child develops symptoms during the day they will be sent home and parents/carers will be instructed to collect their child and contact the NHS to have their child tested for COVID-19. If the test is positive then all of the children and adults who work within the class will need to self-isolate for ten days in line with the government's guidance. If we have requested that your child needs to self-isolate other members of the household do not need to do so unless someone in your household subsequently displays 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.

### Friday Afternoons

On Friday afternoons we will be continuing with the arrangements that were in place in the autumn. Therefore pupils will need to be collected at the following times.

Reception - 1.00pm from their normal collection point

Year 1 - 1.00pm from the front entrance

Year 2 - 1.10pm from the front entrance

Year 3 - 1.20pm from the **front entrance**

Year 4 - 1.00pm from the playground entrance

Year 5 - 1.10pm from the playground entrance

Year 6 - 1.20pm from the playground entrance

In order to minimise the mixing of households, and reducing waiting time for parents/carers, parents/carers will only need to attend the school site once and collect their own children from one collection point. You will be able to collect your own children at the latest time for your family group.

To support those families that **do not** have childcare between 1.00pm and 3.05pm we will be providing emergency childcare. 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](mailto:admin@meadgate.essex.sch.uk) by Friday 5<sup>th</sup> March to inform us that they have no childcare on a Friday afternoon and require spaces within the emergency childcare on a Friday. Please note the collection time will be 3.00pm from the above collection point. The LINK Afterschool Club is still available for children who will require childcare after 3pm and can be booked via the school office.

### School Kitchen

Our kitchen will be open from 8<sup>th</sup> March and we will be serving hot 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. Menus are on the school website and meals can be ordered in the same way as in the autumn term.

### School Uniform

From the 8<sup>th</sup> March 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. Please continue to attend school in the school PE kit on your child's PE days. This is not a non-uniform day!

### Breakfast and After School Club

From the 8<sup>th</sup> March our breakfast and after school club will open once again. Places can be booked via the school office and paid for using our online payment system. If you are a regular user of the LINK club then you will be contacted over the next week by the school office.

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 ten days in line with the 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 ten days.

We hope to be able to be running extra curriculum clubs after Easter.

### 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 should not go ahead at this time and it is therefore unlikely that the year 6 residential trip will go ahead.

For the first week of reopening, starting on the 8<sup>th</sup> March, 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 remainder of the spring term. From the second week of term we will assess the children's knowledge and understanding of the key objectives that were taught at home during the early part of the spring term.

### Statutory Assessments

The government has previously announced that all statutory assessments planned for 2021 will not take place this 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 not be taking place this year.

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 on the 8<sup>th</sup> March.

Many thanks for your support

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Figg', written over a horizontal line.

Mr Joseph Figg  
Executive Headteacher