



**Morningside  
Primary School**  
and Children's Centre  
Achieving and Aspiring Together

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Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2020

### **IMPORTANT - Phased return to school**

Dear Parents/carers of pupils in Rainbow Nursery, Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6,

Thank you to everyone who responded to our initial questionnaire and for your messages of kindness and support. Our staff have been working extremely hard to plan for the phased return to school.

#### **What is the current situation & guidance?**

We have been following Government and Local Authority Guidance. This guidance is changing regularly.

The current government position is that they believe it is safe for children to be in schools in groups of up to 15 and that schools should begin to plan to offer places for Nursery, Reception, Y1, Y6 and critical workers, starting on June 1st. However, at the moment, it is still up to the head teacher and governing body to determine how this should be done safely in their own school. We do this by risk assessing the building and staffing numbers. Every school in the country is in the same position. Our risk assessments demonstrate that we cannot safely re-open for Rainbow Nursery, Nursery, Reception, Y1 & Y6 plus key worker children on a full-time basis by 1<sup>st</sup> June. We need more time to prepare the building and arrange suitable staffing and staff training. We are having a staff training day on Monday 1<sup>st</sup> June. After that we will ensure that the building is as safe as it possibly can be and that we have enough staff to cover groups. Next, we will begin to invite children in to school, starting with the youngest in our school community.

#### **What is the school doing to prepare?**

In this letter, I will share our plans, which have been drawn up so that you can make an informed choice about sending your child back to school; however, I have to make it very clear that these plans are subject to change, depending on whether the government change their guidance again.

The senior leadership team, in consultation with the staff and members of the Primary Advantage team have undertaken a robust risk assessment to ensure that the school will be as safe as it can be. However, as the head teacher, I have to inform you that I honestly cannot and will not guarantee that your children will be safe from COVID-19 in the school environment which they will return to. We can only do our best to mitigate the risks and to continually monitor our provision.

#### **How will a phased return be managed?**

- In order for staff to prepare the school for the return of children, we will begin our phased return on Tuesday, 2<sup>nd</sup> June
- We have not yet fully finalised the plan below; however, after risk assessing, as a school we are confident that this is the safest option for our school

- Each of the Rainbow Nursery, Nursery, Reception, Y1 & Y6 classes will be split into groups (some schools are calling these bubbles or pods.) Groups have no more than 15 children – to be decided by the school
- Key worker children who are not in Nursery, Reception or year 6 will attend every day, as they have been doing since lockdown began. These will be separate ‘groups’
- Due to the large amount of organisation and the importance of learning new safety routines which takes time, the school will decide which date your children will be welcomed back. You will be notified of this on an individual basis as soon as we are in a position to do so.

### **What measures to reduce risk will be in place across the school?**

Please read the following findings from our risk assessment (which takes into account the government, local authority and union guidance):

- Children will be working in ‘groups’ of no more than 15 children. These ‘groups’ will be decided by the school staff, and the children will stay in these groups until the end of the school year – **they will not be able to mix with any other groups at any time or change groups due to the risk of infection.**
- If an individual in a group shows symptoms, they will be sent home and you will have to organise a test. If the test comes back COVID positive, then the rest of the group will have to isolate for 14 days.
- Some children will not be looked after by their class teacher, but by a suitably qualified teaching assistant or a teacher from another part of the school who may not be familiar to them. Some staff may want to wear PPE.
- Children in Rainbow Nursery, school nursery, Reception, Y1 and Y6 will be in their own classroom if possible but with an unfamiliar set up and unlikely to be with preferred friendship groups, or following the usual school timetable and structure. We know that this will cause anxiety for some pupils and parents. **Despite our very best endeavours, we are not going to be able to offer the known environment that your child left, although we will try our very best because we know your children.**
- The classrooms will be re-organised so that the children have their own desk/zone
- Some of the equipment within the Nursery and Reception classrooms will be removed as the equipment left in the classroom will need to be regularly cleaned
- At lunchtime, the children eat in their classroom. All children will be given lunch. No packed lunches will be brought from home
- Playtimes will be staggered in segregated areas for each group – there will be no mixing between groups
- The government does not recommend that staff or children wear PPE (unless dealing with first aid or intimate hygiene.) However, should you wish, your child will be able to wear their own PPE (with written permission, due to health and safety risks)
- Handwashing, alcohol-based gel rubs and increased hygiene routines will take place regularly throughout the day and all surfaces and touch points will be wiped down regularly with disinfectant
- Children will be given their own pencil cases containing all of the stationery that they need. They will not be sharing these resources. In Nursery and Reception, shared toys will be sanitised at the end of each day.

It is important for us all to acknowledge that what we think of as normal teaching and learning will not be happening. The truth is that this will be an impossible task. Nursery, Reception and Y1 children will not have access to all of the usual practical resources they would be used to because of issues with cleaning. Very young children learn by touching, doing, being with others and sharing – all of which will have to be limited as far as possible.

## What will happen next?

Based on the facts above, and our initial phased return plan, you will have to decide whether you feel it is safe for your child to return to school – emotionally and physically. I believe that we have the safest plan we can offer for our phased return, but as parents, you will have to make the final decision. The staff and I want you to know that we miss you and your children, and do want to welcome them back to Morningside as soon as it is safe to do so. We remain fully committed to helping our school community feel safe and secure as we move forwards; **if you as parents decide that the situation in school is too concerning, we would absolutely support you in the decision to keep your child/ren out of school.**

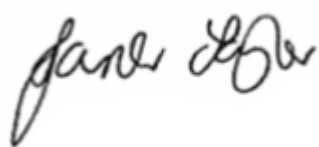
We will be contacting you this week and asking you to tell us whether your child will be returning to school or not – this will enable us to finalise our plans based on numbers of children. If you decide not to send your child, and then change your mind at a later date, you will simply need to phone the school and inform us. Due to the preparation required, if you turn up on the day unannounced, we will not be able to let your child stay due to groups already being created. **Further details regarding individual groups will be sent to families next week, once we have our final numbers.**

The speculation in the press and on social media will continue and will likely intensify over the next week. As always, at Morningside, we take the view that we need to consider all of our actions and communications to parents and children carefully, before making decisions. These decisions will always first and foremost take into account the welfare and well-being of the children, staff and parents in our school. **Once the school have made any FINAL decisions (following all government guidelines), we will let you know.**

Until then, **please do not worry or compare us to other schools** – we are unique and will make decisions which suit Morningside. We will continue to keep in contact with you and continue to send work home for your child(ren) and to support you in these very difficult and uncertain times.

If you need any more information to help you make your decision, please do not hesitate to phone school and speak to a member of the senior leadership team.

Yours Sincerely,



Head teacher



Chair of the Governing Body