

Information

for parents and carers

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Guiding principles

1. The health, safety and wellbeing of all our community members is our utmost priority and it is our responsibility to support the health and wellbeing of all of our community members as we develop the plans to reopen our schools during these uncertain times.
2. We are guided by the recommendations of the Department of Education and best practice disseminated from local schools. Risk assessments for all schools will take place before any reopening and will need to be approved by CST's board of trustees.
3. We will do all we can to respect the reopening dates by the government but our response is driven by our own risk assessment and action plan.
4. We will strive to accommodate the diverse needs of all members of our community - those who wish to return to the school site and those who are concerned about returning to school.
5. Term 6 should be seen as preparation for term 1 and will be used to prepare as many students as possible for successful re-integration in school from September.
6. The confidence of parents/carers and staff must be maintained through our decisions and actions. It is better to start slowly and with caution in June than to promise provision that we are then unable to deliver. Ongoing effective and open communication will be key.
7. Home learning must continue and must be monitored for both consistency and take-up.
8. We will continue to prioritise in-school provision for children of key workers and vulnerable learners.

As we move towards moving back into our schools we want to make sure that we have done all that we can to ensure that staff and children feel safe and supported. The situation is likely to change and we will all need to continue to adapt. In short, we may make mistakes. When we do, we will try to identify them as quickly as possible and do all we can to rectify them where we can. We will continue to engage with you via questionnaires etc to gauge your views and ask that you continue to be sensitive to the very challenging circumstances that we are all in. Staff and leaders are being asked to recreate the school system within a very challenging time frame.

1.

Arrangements for learning

1.1 School attendance from 1st June

The government has announced its intention for schools to open to children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 from 1st June 2020 in smaller class sizes of no more than 15 children. Cathedral Schools Trust's board of trustees have decided that the 1st of June is too early for us to ensure all measures have been put in place. As a result, we are currently aiming to open primary schools more widely from Tuesday 9th June and your school will be in touch with you providing more detail. Secondary schools will open more widely from no earlier than the 15th June.

We appreciate that the decision as to whether you wish your child to attend school rests with parents. The government is strongly encouraging children and young people in the eligible year groups and priority groups (such as children of critical workers and vulnerable children) to attend, unless they are self-isolating or there are other reasons for absence (such as shielding due to health conditions). In addition if a child lives in a household with someone who is extremely clinically vulnerable and in the shielding category, Government advice is that they continue with home learning. Children in Reception and Year 1 in particular are less able to understand and follow instructions and therefore we cannot guarantee stringent social distancing. Attendance in school during term 6 is not compulsory and our proposals need to be viewed as an offer – each family must decide what is right for them.

We know that many families will be anxious or uncertain about returning to school from the start of June and may think it is too soon. We also know that other families need in-school provision as soon as possible in order to be able to return to work routines. We are viewing this as the first stage in preparing for a new “normal” for schools, the next stage of which will be from September 2020. We have taken a cautious approach and have made the decision to open primary schools after some providers have decided to do so because the situation is changing so frequently.

1.2 Timetable for lessons

All of our schools are different and will produce a bespoke timetable achievable within their context. Primary schools will begin by opening for Year 6 and then, nursery, reception and Year 1. Schools are likely to put in place a staggered start and end to the day.

It will not surprise you to hear that we will be operating on reduced staffing capacity as we still have staff who are shielding, self-isolating or unable to attend for other reasons because of the current set of circumstances. In the same way that many of you will be anxious and possibly even fearful about schools re-opening, understandably some of our staff feel the same way. We need to maintain their confidence as well as yours as we start to return to school-based learning. Clearly, we will also need staffing capacity to provide home learning for those who will not be in school during term 6.

1.3 What your child needs to bring

Please ensure that your child brings a clearly named water bottle. Refills will be available throughout the day. Children should not bring toys.

Please do not send any food to school with your child to share with others. Your child may bring their own packed lunch to school but please remind them not to share any food or accept any food or beverages from others.

Children will not be sent home with school resources. They are not required to wear school uniform but children are welcome to do so if they wish. This is to enable you to ensure that children change their clothes frequently and to be able to wash clothes regularly and easily reducing the chance of transmission. Secondary students will have much less contact time in school and therefore, may be expected to wear uniform. Secondary schools will be in touch with you outlining the specific requirements from each school.

1.4 Expectations for children

Children in all year groups will be given age appropriate advice and guidance from teachers and support staff with the expectation that they will :

- Wash or disinfect their hands at the start of the day, before and after morning, lunch and afternoon breaks and before eating.
- Stay within their designated outdoor play zone.
- Play with their class group in these designated areas.
- Return to their classrooms following the instructions of the supervising teachers.
- Not participate in contact sports or games.

- Avoid all unnecessary physical contact such as hugging, play wrestling etc.

Clearly on return to school it will be vital that children respond appropriately and behave in a considerate manner. All children, particularly the very young will find social distancing challenging and staff understand this. All schools will have an appendix to their behaviour policy that covers requirements and expectations during this period and which is designed to ensure that the health of other staff and children is not compromised by poor behaviour and conscious decisions not to follow hygiene and health and safety advice. Headteachers will make sure that these new rules and changes are communicated with you. Pastoral leaders may be in touch with individual families in preparation for return to school to discuss specific behavioural action plans for some students.

1.5 Extra-curricular activities

On-site extra-curricular, breakfast and after school activities will not be taking place whilst the restrictions and infection control arrangements are in place.

1.6 Transition points

As Year 6 students return, schools will try hard to prepare them for transition to secondary school. This is unlikely to include a visit during this challenging period, but we will liaise with all secondary schools and share information about our children. Additionally teachers and support staff will work with children to support them through this process.

1.7 Remote Learning

Many schools will have been able to offer high-quality remote education opportunities or programmes over recent weeks. Now that primary schools will be opening more widely, larger numbers of staff will be needed to provide face-to-face teaching at school. This means that it may be more difficult to maintain the same level of remote education provision for those pupils in year groups who are eligible to attend but who themselves cannot. Further information will be provided by your child's school.

1.8 SEND

Our SEND coordinators will continue to be in touch to try and support you with home learning and managing the needs of children with SEND. They will also be in touch when a child with an EHCP arrives back in school, as this plan may require modification.

2.

Health & Hygiene

2.1 Access to school

As of 9th June until the end of the school year, parents will not be permitted to enter any of the school buildings unless there is an exceptional circumstance (such as picking up a sick child). If a parent must be on the school site, they must follow the social distancing measures that are in effect.

We do not permit visitors on school sites unless it is for emergency maintenance issues.

2.2 School drop-off and pick-up

The school will inform parents and carers about the procedures to follow for morning drop-off and afternoon pick-up including designated drop-off or pick-up areas where appropriate. Please note only parents or carers should accompany a child/children to school. As a general guideline, we kindly ask parents to maintain social distancing from students, staff and other parents and carers on the way to school and outside the school site and kindly request parents and carers not to chat with other waiting parents or carers. Please also ensure prompt pick-up and drop-offs at the designated time and Year 6 students who cycle or walk to school on their own are asked not to arrive too early and not to stay on the school site when school is finished. They should be cautious on their journey to school, taking the most direct route and avoiding any contact with others.

Given the concerns around the use of public transport, we would encourage children and their families to walk or cycle to school as far as possible. Further information on safer travel is available here: www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-travel-guidance-for-passengers

Children who are not in timetabled activities must not be on the school site at any time.

2.3 Handwashing and hand sanitiser

We will be following the DfE and Public Health England guidelines which have stressed the importance of handwashing including cleaning hands more often than usual - washing hands thoroughly for 20 seconds with running water and soap and drying them thoroughly or using alcohol hand rub or sanitiser ensuring that all parts of the hands are covered.

Children will be asked to wash their hands frequently throughout the school day following these guidelines. There will be hand disinfection stations at the entry points to the buildings. Children are encouraged to use these stations if handwashing facilities are not easily available.

2.4 Symptoms of COVID-19

According to NHS guidance the most common symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) are:

- a high temperature – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back
- a new, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual)
- a loss, or change to, your sense of smell or taste this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or smell or taste different to normal
- for more information on the symptoms of COVID-19, please refer to the gov.uk website at: www.gov.uk/coronavirus

We will not be conducting temperature checks at the start of the school day but ask that parents do so before coming to school each day. Students with a temperature will be directed to the school reception and the parents and carers will be contacted.

2.5 Self-isolation and testing

Please do not send your child to school if they or anyone in their household are displaying any of the symptoms above and call 111 for further information. Please follow the latest government guidance on self-isolation: if a child develops symptoms compatible with coronavirus, they should self-isolate for 7 days and their fellow household members should self-isolate for 14 days.

All children, and members of their households, are able to access testing if they display symptoms of coronavirus. To access testing parents and carers will be able to use the 111 online coronavirus service for any child or adult. Please do get tested if your child or any member of your household displays symptoms of coronavirus. If your child then tests negative, they can return to their setting and the fellow household members can end their self-isolation.

2.6 Onset of symptoms at school

If anyone becomes unwell with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature whilst at school they will be sent home and must follow the **COVID-19: guidance for households with possible coronavirus infection guidance**. Please collect your child as soon as possible if the school contacts you.

2.7 Confirmation of a diagnosis in the community

If a member of staff or a student is confirmed as having tested positive for COVID-19, the rest of their reduced class /group within the school will be sent home and advised to self-isolate for 14 days. The other household members of that wider class or group do not need to self-isolate unless the child, young person or staff member they live with in that group subsequently develops symptoms.

If, as part of the national test and trace programme, other cases are detected within the cohort or in the wider setting, Public Health England's local health protection teams will conduct a rapid investigation. At this stage the school will follow their advice on the most appropriate action to take. In some cases it could mean that a larger number of other children, young people may be asked to self-isolate at home as a precautionary measure – perhaps the whole class, site or year group. If at any time the Headteacher, in consultation with the Trust, believes that the health and safety of pupils and staff is adversely affected by levels of infection in the community or staffing levels at school, the Headteacher may close the school with immediate effect and you will be contacted to make arrangements for collecting your child.

2.8 Use of masks and gloves

The Government has concluded that wearing a face covering or face masks in schools or other education settings is not recommended. Staff will only be required to wear masks and gloves in a small number of situations such as administering first aid, providing intimate care or supporting a child if they become unwell with symptoms of the coronavirus whilst at school. However we are conscious that some staff may feel safer wearing a mask in school and the Trust will not prevent them from doing so.

We understand that some parents and carers may feel they would like their child to wear a mask. We have considered this in detail, and been advised by a Health and Safety expert, working on behalf of our schools, that this may increase transmission as younger pupils may not use the masks correctly or dispose of them appropriately. This is also what the DfE guidance says. We also believe that children wearing masks will be upsetting for other children increasing the anxieties that they may already be feeling. Parents and carers who feel strongly that their child should wear a mask should continue to educate their child at home.

2.9 Social distancing

The government has not issued strict guidelines for students to follow for social distancing while they are in school. However they have advised that:

- children and young people should be in groups of no more than 15
- in primary schools, children and young people are likely to be in the same small groups at all times each day, and different groups are not mixed during the day where possible.
- in secondary schools, mixing between different groups of pupils should be kept to a minimum. We recognise that the range of subjects taught in secondary schools means that some mixing may be unavoidable to provide pupils with face-to-face support from subject teachers. We would expect that these groups would still be smaller than normal.
- the same teacher(s) and other staff are assigned to each group and, as far as possible, these stay the same during the day and on subsequent days except for the children of key workers
- wherever possible children and young people use the same classroom or area of a setting throughout the day, with a thorough cleaning of the rooms at the end of the day

Each school's timetable has been designed to follow these principles - where possible, children will stay in a designated classroom throughout the day and will be supervised by the same staff members. All activities and play time will be held in smaller groups rather than with the whole year group. In addition, in order to implement social distancing, as far as possible, the 2 meter distance rule will apply and where possible there will be floor markings or directional signs to direct the flow of foot traffic in the school buildings. Children will be asked to follow these. Classrooms will contain minimum furniture, equipment and resources to permit as much space as possible between students and teachers. The schedule for outdoor breaks and lunch breaks will be adjusted to permit a minimum number of students and teachers in an area.

2.10 Cleaning

All areas of the school, including desks and chairs as well as all shared areas are regularly cleaned. Additional and frequent disinfection will be done daily following the best practice guidelines. Throughout the school day there will be more frequent cleaning of shared areas and surface items such as handrails, doorknobs, switches, sinks, toilets, etc. Items such as soft furniture, pillows, removable carpets etc. that cannot be deep cleaned daily will be removed from the classrooms. Each classroom will be equipped with disinfectants and cleaning materials. At the end of the school day, a thorough cleaning of the school buildings, classrooms and all shared areas will be completed.