Dear Parents / Carers

Further to our recent Google Drive questionnaire that many of you have completed, we have received and continue to receive additional guidance from the government this week. The guidance has done nothing to allay our fears with regard to the practicalities of reopening schools in a safe manner, nor whether 1st June is an appropriate timescale.

After reading the government’s guidance re reopening schools, it is clear schools are not required to follow the same safety rules being applied elsewhere in society because logistically we are unable to:

\*2m social distancing and PPE if 2m can not be maintained. Why are there different rules for different settings? Are children and school staff less valuable?

\* All employers have a duty to keep employees safe, this applies to schools too but all outside safety rules are disapplied in schools: Why, when we have a duty of care?

**Schools have remained open and are willing to extend provision further when it is safe to do so.** Is it safe at this time? Given the long list of recommendations and the fact we do not have the ability to deliver social distancing to the current recommended levels, the conclusion has to be: **No at this time it is not safe to open schools.** The Chief Medical Officer, Chris Whitty, acknowledged during a press conference on Monday there was a need to review safety in schools. This is now **URGENT** I’d suggest, given the announcement that we are aiming to open more widely in June. The long list of recommendations clearly demonstrates returning to school is not safe: we cannot adhere to the rules the rest of society are being asked to follow, nor those other workplaces are required to follow. If the rules are the rules that scientists and the medical profession say are needed to reduce risk and keep us safe at this point in the pandemic, we cannot choose where they apply.

**I would strongly suggest that when the safety measures applied in society can be met in schools, this is the time to open more widely.**

Whilst the senior leadership team formulate a plan to facilitate a safe return to school, we ask you to bear with us. The long list of recommendations **(I have highlighted just a few of them below**) will take some time to consider. We can only say that whatever our plan does look like, the safety of our children and staff will be our overriding consideration. Morally we have to get this right for the Hill Top community and that may involve some tough decisions including not realising the government’s ambition for all children to be in school or the currently identified year groups to be treated as a priority. To support our thinking we will continue to survey parents in order to gain an idea of the number of parents who will send their children in to school: bearing in mind the restrictions that will be in place. Please continue to look out for these surveys via out text messaging service, and please, please respond to enable us to get a full picture of your thoughts. I am happy to have your thoughts via email too office@hilltop.bradford.sch.uk

Just this morning, I saw the BBC clip of schools in Denmark <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/world-europe-52649919/coronavirus-inside-a-reopened-primary-school-in-the-time-of-covid-19> , and quite frankly it was heartbreaking seeing the images of the routines that schools were forcing into place - the voice of the little girl who says, when questioned about how they play and she responded “We hula-hoop” will stay with me for a very long time! We want to get this this right and we do not want to harm our children’s mental health and well-being any further.

We know that this time is extremely worrying and as such, I will aim to write again as soon as we have more details. We are missing your children, take care of them and yourselves. We hope that you and your loved ones are safe and well.

Des Martin

Head Teacher

**Schools Re-Entry Guidance (DfE) ~ CoVid-19**

**as of 12th May**

1. All vulnerable/EHCP/Key workers’ children SHOULD be urged to attend school immediately – *“it is no longer necessary for parents of eligible children to keep them at home if they can.”*
2. Ambition is to bring back ALL primary-age children by the end of June(est.), so all children have a month in school before summer holidays.
3. No need for PPE – No need for face masks or face covering EXCEPT for those staff that work closely with the children (i.e. intimate care needs) – ARP. Face masks should also be used by staff that are supervising children that are ill/showing symptoms in school while we wait for parents to collect if a distance of 2m cannot be maintained. Face coverings may be beneficial for short periods indoors where there is a risk of close social contact with people you do not usually meet and where social distancing and other measures cannot be maintained (school kitchen)
4. Shielding children should NOT attend school. (not sure we have any – asthmatics?)
5. Shielding (clinically extremely vulnerable – those with a GOV. letter) adults should NOT attend school.
6. Clinically Vulnerable staff (risk-assessed staff, with underlying health conditions) are advised to NOT attend site and should be encouraged to work from home. If they are vulnerable and their role means they cannot work from home where possible, then they should be given tasks to do in a safe part of the school and minimise contact. It is down to the employee if they wish to work closely with others, but conversations must be had with them and they must understand/accept the risks to them first.
7. If a child or member of staff lives with someone who is shielding (clinically extremely vulnerable – those with a GOV. letter) then they should NOT be in school – unless stringent social distancing can be maintained
8. Class sizes – no more than 15 children in any room at any time. They should be with 1 teacher (and 1 TA, if needed).
9. Groups of children must NOT mix together or come into contact, and children within a group should remain 2metres apart, if they can. This is harder to enforce for EYFS.
10. If there is a shortage of teachers, a teaching assistant can lead a group.
11. If there are not enough classrooms/staffing available, then children might be offered other local schools. If necessary, settings have the flexibility to focus first on continuing to provide places for priority groups and then, to support children’s early learning, settings should prioritise groups of children as follows:

*primary schools - nursery (where applicable), reception and year 1*

1. Updated risk assessments need to be done.
2. Vulnerable children and children of critical workers in other year groups should also be split into small groups of no more than 15
3. Desks and seats need to be separated (2m distance) between them, if possible.
4. Timetable – Choose which lessons/activities will be delivered. Plan outdoor lessons, where possible. Not the normal curriculum.
5. Reduce movement around the school - groups are to stick to 1 room during the day.
6. Stagger break & lunchtimes so they groups are not mixing together/moving around the school at the same time.
7. Stagger drop-off and collection times – children to arrive/collected at different times.
8. Drop-off and collection times – protocols for adult to adult contact needs to be minimal. A plan needs to be in place for meeting/collection points and timings for each group.
9. Toys and equipment should not be used by other groups and should be cleaned between groups.
10. Unnecessary items in classrooms should be removed and stored elsewhere in the school.
11. Remove all soft furnishings, toys and soft toys that cannot easily be cleaned every day.
12. No visitors/staff/children/families/contractors can enter the building if they have symptoms.
13. Only 1 parent/carer can escort a child to school, if they cannot walk to school on their own.
14. Parents/carers cannot enter site and/or gather at school gates and doors.
15. Contact all contractors (food, cleaning, maintenance etc) to ensure they are aware of protocols.
16. Discuss additional cleaning requirements and agree additional time/money for this.
17. Same staff to work with their groups as much as possible. They are, in effect, being reassigned new teachers for the remainder of the year, if possible.
18. Where possible, let the groups remain in the same classroom for the duration of the term that they are in school.
19. Hand sanitiser in all classrooms, if no sink available
20. Bins emptied throughout the day.
21. Doors propped-open, and rooms need to be well ventilated. Windows open.
22. Divider down the middle of the corridor to ensure people only walk on one side of it – a barrier for groups as they walk down the corridor, if possible.
23. Limited toilet breaks so that children don’t gather at the toilets.
24. Exercise and breaks – go outside. Each group not to mix and to stagger the times.
25. Outdoor equipment/apparatus/play equipment/climbing frames should not be used unless school can guarantee it will be cleaned between each group and each evening too.
26. Dining hall can be used as long as groups are kept apart and do not mix. Otherwise, food to be brought to the children in their classrooms.
27. Stagger the use of the staff room and the office for staff/children.
28. Limit children/staff taking things home and then back to school.
29. Don’t share stationery or resources. Shared areas and surfaces need cleaning daily, and disinfected/bleached frequently.
30. Encourage children to cycle or walk to school.
31. If anyone has a cough/temperature/feels unwell at school, they must be sent home. They will need to self-isolate for 14 days, or until tested negative.
32. If a child is waiting to be collected, they should be kept in a room on their own (or supervised depending on their age) with the door closed and a window open. If this child/adult needs to go to toilet before being collected, they should use a separate toilet and it must be thoroughly cleaned/disinfected afterwards before anyone else can use it.
33. PPE should be worn by staff working with children displaying symptoms.
34. If a child or adult shows symptoms and tests positive for CoVid-19, then the whole group that the children was in must be sent home and they must self-isolate for 14 days.
35. If other cases are then also confirmed at the school, then PHE will advise the HT/school on next steps/possible closure