

3 March 2021

Dear families,

We are delighted to be welcoming all the children back to school when we re-open on Monday 8th March. We know that you will be keen to find out more about the re-opening and everything we have put in place to support with making this successful and with keeping everyone safe. This letter outlines our plans and procedures. Please note, we have made some changes to previous arrangements.

As mentioned in my letter last week, our first action has been to revisit the risk assessment in line with guidance from the DFE and the Local Authority. It has been essential that we work through all the guidance and consult with staff and governors ahead of being able to share our planning with parents. Thank you for your understanding and patience. A copy of the risk assessment is available on the school website.

The safety and wellbeing of pupils and staff remains our absolute priority. We will be implementing the necessary preventative measures to support with keeping everyone safe. It is, unfortunately, not possible to have a completely risk free environment, therefore, we have mitigated the risks and considered how we can make school as safe as possible for children, staff and everyone on our school site.

From 8th March, Schools will re-open to all children and the Government expect children to attend. School attendance will be mandatory. **All children at The Crossways Schools will return on Monday 8th March.**

In line with the latest government guidance, pupils who are clinically extremely vulnerable should not attend school. If your child is in this group, please contact Miss Mitchell (Inclusion Lead) for further information.

We recognise that each of us may feel differently about the return to school. We know there will be many of you who are excited and looking forward to children being able to return to learning in school. Others may have concerns about schools re-opening. As outlined in the letter about remote learning and live sessions last week, we are offering any parents who do have concerns, the opportunity to speak with a member of staff. If you would like a phone call and have not done so already, please email your child's teacher using the class email address. A member of staff will then get back to you to arrange a mutually convenient time. We want to support all children with a successful return to school so do please get in touch.

Health & Hygiene:

It is vitally important that anyone experiencing any symptoms of Covid-19 does not come to school. They should stay at home, follow the stay at home guidance and get tested.

We ask that parents check that children are fit and well before coming to school and in particular look out for the 3 main Covid-19 symptoms of:

- A high temperature;
- Loss of normal taste or smell;
- A continuous cough.

If your child or anyone in your household is displaying symptoms, please engage with the NHS Test and Trace system and book a test. Anyone who displays symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) can and should get a test.

Please continue to inform the school office if your child or a member of your household is experiencing symptoms or has tested positive for Covid-19.

If your child develops any symptoms during the school day, we will contact parents and the children will need to be collected as soon as possible. Therefore, please ensure that the school has the most up to date contact details for you and remain contactable during the school day.

Preventative measures:

To support with making the school as safe as possible for everyone, we continue to implement a range of preventative measures in line with our risk assessment.

This includes (but is not limited to):

- Staggered drop off and pick up times;
- Grouping children in bubbles;
- Avoiding contact between groups/bubbles;
- Everyone cleaning or sanitising their hands more often than usual;

- Ensuring good respiratory hygiene by promoting the ‘catch it, bin it, kill it’ approach – please do support us with reminding children about the important of robust hand and respiratory hygiene;
- Arranging classrooms so that children sit side by side, facing the front (age appropriate);
- Ensuring staff maintain distance from pupils and other staff as much as possible;
- Provide enhanced cleaning, including cleaning of frequently touched surfaces often.

Bubbles:

We will continue to maintain our use of bubbles to support with reducing contacts and minimising contacts. Children will work in their class bubbles in school. There will be no class mixing or whole school events such as assemblies or lunchtimes together in the hall.

When children are outside, at playtimes and lunchtimes and at the start and end of the day, they will be in year group bubbles. Children will be encouraged to maintain distancing, where possible, keeping an arm’s length distance from others when on the playground to minimise risk. At these times, there is the additional mitigation of being outside.

As many children will have been at home throughout lockdown, please do support them with reminding them about social distancing and how big 2m is.

Curriculum:

We expect that for many children they will be really excited to return to school after being at home during lockdown. For those children who attended the current provision for vulnerable children and those whose parents are key workers, no doubt they will enjoy seeing their friends and the other children in their class again.

We also understand that some children may feel anxious about returning. As the children return to school, we will (as we did in September) ensure that we focus on children’s mental health and wellbeing, providing time and space to share.

We will also be carefully assessing how the children have got on during their period of remote learning, to identify where there are any gaps in their learning and how we can support them with addressing this. This will be an on-going process and will support us with continuing to develop our catch up programme following the period of school closure. We want the very best for all the children and will continue to strive to meet the needs of every child in the school.

We also hope to build on some of the successes from remote learning. Teachers will be looking at how they continue to use google classroom for home learning activities. More to follow.

Resources:

To support with reducing the risk of transmission between home and school, we ask that parents only send children to school with the resources the absolutely need. This includes:

- Children wearing their PE kit to school and for the full day on PE days. They will need a spare set of clothes in their bag with them in case they get wet/muddy. This avoids children changing and accidentally putting on the clothes of others. This applies to all children.
- Children can bring bags and coats into school along with lunchboxes and water bottles.
- Junior children can bring a single, small pencil case into school.
- Children will again have reading books and these will be given out on a Monday. Each week, children will be given an appropriate number of books. These need to be returned on a Friday morning and they will then be stored over the weekend before new books are allocated on a Monday. Changes in books will not happen outside of these times. If a book is not finished, children do not need to return these books but they will then not be able to return them until the following Friday.
- Unfortunately, we are still unable to sell toast at break times at the Juniors. We therefore encourage all children to bring a piece of fruit with them that they can have during break time.

Lunches:

We will be continuing to offer a hot school meal option. School dinners can be ordered in the usual way. Children may alternatively bring a packed lunch. Children will continue to eat their lunch in the classrooms, with the exception of the EYFS classes who will eat in the infant hall.

Timings:

You will be familiar with the staggered drop off and pick up arrangements we set up at the very start of the school year. We have revisited these and the arrangements from Monday 8th March are as follows:

Year group	Start	Finish
EYFS	08.50	15.10
Year 1	08.45	15.20
Year 2	08.40	15:15
Year 3	08.45	15:25
Year 4	08:45	15:25
Year 5	08:40	15:20
Year 6	08:40	15:20

Parents should aim to arrive at their allotted time slot – please try not to arrive early to avoid gathering outside of school. We have allocated a 5 minute window for pick up and drop offs. We really appreciate your support with the staggered timings and it has previously worked very successfully.

We are asked to remind parents that after dropping off and picking up children from school, you should leave promptly and not congregate outside of the school, to support with reducing contacts. Parents are encouraged to wear a mask and ensure they maintain a 2m distance from other children and parents. Families are encouraged to avoid car sharing and public transport, and to walk to school where possible. Children are able to continue to bring scooters and bikes.

We have refreshed our signage and the painted one-way system, to support with ensuring everyone is familiar with the safe routes and to support with social distancing. We do ask that only one parent/carer bring children to school to reduce the number of people both on site and outside the school gates.

Parents with more than one child at school are able to drop off siblings at the same time. Siblings will remain on the playground with a member of staff until it is time for their year group to arrive.

We will be trialling a new drop off plan for the morning. This will therefore mean that:

In the infant school, children will continue to be dropped off by a parent by entering the pedestrian gate nearest the zebra crossing, where they will be welcomed by a member of staff and then will walk around to their classroom. The class teacher / teacher assistant will be waiting for them in class. Parents will then follow the one-way system and exit via the pedestrian gate nearest the car park.

In the afternoon, we will follow the same system as before, whereby children will line up on the playground and parents will collect from the same gate as they drop off in the morning.

In the junior school, both of the playground gates will be open and we will be **using both gates for children to enter the playground**. Parents do not need to come on to the playground with the children.

Years 3 & 6	Children will enter via the pedestrian gate nearest the car park
Years 4 & 5	Children will enter via the pedestrian gate nearest the field.

We now have two year groups arriving at the same time. To support with ensuring we maintain our bubble system, it will be important that children enter via the correct gate so there is no crossing over. Members of staff will be on the playground to support with this.

In the afternoon, we will be continuing with the same system as before, whereby parents enter the playground via the pedestrian gate nearest the car park, follow the one-way system to collect their child and exiting via the pedestrian gate at the other end of the playground. All children will need to be collected from the playground. Separate information will be sent to Year Six regarding arrangements for children walking home.

Breakfast Club and After school Club:

We are pleased to be able to continue to run both the Breakfast Club and After School Club from Monday 8th March. The Government has advised that they must only be used to support parents with being able to work, attend education or access healthcare. We are therefore unable to offer any of our other extra-curricular clubs at this time. Parents who meet the criteria are able to book in the usual way.

Please contact the school office if you have any questions regarding clubs.

Further information

We appreciate this is a considerable amount of information to share with parents and apologise for the length of the letter. We do hope we have provided the information you need together with a good understanding of the processes and safety measures we have put in place. Please do get in touch with either your child's class teacher or the school office if you have any questions.

Further information about the re-opening of schools from the DFE is also available on the school website: <https://www.crosswaysschools.co.uk/sample-page/school-updates/>

Yours faithfully,

Mrs N McMahon
Executive Head Teacher

Mr P Medicott
Deputy Head Teacher

Miss E Mitchell
Assistant Head Teacher