

My ref: School Re-opening 3
Date: 10th June 2020
Contact: Please contact your school
for more information



To parents/carers of pupils in Infant,
Junior and Primary Schools in
Cambridgeshire and Peterborough

People & Communities
Education Directorate

Dear Parent / Carer,

I am writing to update you about some of the recent COVID-19 developments affecting schools.

Recent Government Announcement on wider school reopening

Yesterday the government announced that primary schools will not be expected to welcome back all pupils before the summer holidays. However, schools that have the capacity to take in more pupils have been encouraged to do so. As we do not have any more information at this stage, we have asked schools to remain operating as they are now, and to not to make any changes to their current provision until further detailed guidance is issued by the government.

We are mindful that the majority of our schools met the government's expectation to reopen for Nursery, Reception, Year One and Year Six on 1 June, but for many this meant committing all their resources. Unfortunately, many schools simply do not have the space nor the levels of staffing available to open to all year groups under the current government guidance. Admitting further children under current conditions is likely to take considerable additional resources and coordination at a national and local level, and this needs to be worked through before individual schools can begin to make their own plans for a fuller reopening.

Headteachers will review the situation on an ongoing basis, and will offer additional places to pupils wherever possible. The Local Authority, Multi-Academy Trusts and your child's school will keep you up to date as these plans are developed.

Year 6 to 7 Transition

Schools are making arrangements for the transition of Year 6 pupils to secondary school. Under normal circumstances, Year 6 pupils would visit their proposed secondary school during the final weeks of the summer term. These visits help pupils familiarise themselves with the school site, and to meet teachers and other key members of staff. This year, the government has advised that these visits should not take place, at least not physically. This is to help minimise the risks of spread of the COVID-19 virus.

Instead, schools are arranging a variety of online 'virtual visits'. Some secondary schools have produced videos that give pupils a 'virtual tour' of the site and include introductions from heads of year, form tutors and others. Pupils may 'meet' their secondary teachers online. In addition, parents might be invited to attend a 'virtual meeting' at which staff explain how transition arrangements will work. Primary leaders are working closely with their secondary

colleagues to make arrangements that best fit local needs. These arrangements will vary, but we will be in touch to let you know where and when they are being offered. Ensuring that pupils stay safe during this process will, of course, be the number one priority.

Primary schools will transfer information about pupils in the usual way, so that secondary school leaders can plan to meet the needs of individual children. Many primary schools will share their predictions about pupils' expected outcomes in the SATs, had those tests taken place. These predictions will be based upon the progress made by individual pupils before the start of the COVID-19 period.

Schools Capacity and Observing Social Distancing

As you know, those who are attending school have been placed into protective 'bubbles' of up to fifteen pupils. During the school day, pupils do not mix with those in other bubbles. The bubbles are essential to control social distancing and minimise risk, but they mean less people and more space needed. Unfortunately, this means schools may not find it possible to accommodate every pupil who wants to attend.

Each of our schools are different. Some are limited in terms of space, while many have less staff 'on-site', as they themselves may be vulnerable, or shielding others. I appreciate this may mean some parents cannot send their children to school at this point, and until guidance changes schools will be limited in their capacity to provide education for every child in school. Importantly, however, they will continue to support home learning.

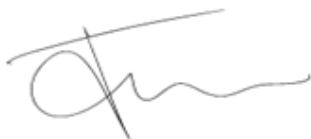
Safety at this time is critical, and remains our number one priority. We have worked hard to ensure children and staff are protected in school, and we ask that families continue to observe social distancing outside of school. I have advised headteachers to use their discretion and not to admit pupils if they believe they have not socially distanced outside of school. It is vital that we keep our schools a safe place to attend for all.

School opening from September

At the time of writing, it is difficult to be certain about what will happen in September. Clearly, the government hopes that it will be possible for all pupils to be in school from the start of the 2020-2021 academic year, but it is likely to proceed with caution.

When I am in a position to offer parents further clarity on these or any other relevant matters, I shall write to you again. Meanwhile, may I take this opportunity to thank you for everything you are doing, and for your continued support during this difficult period.

Yours sincerely,



Jonathan Lewis
Service Director – Education
Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council