

Thinking Schools Academy Trust Important Update – Wednesday 20th May

Dear Parents and Carers,

We are writing to you to provide further detail regarding Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 returning to school based learning after half term.

We would like to re-emphasise our belief that Child First = Child Safe = Adult Safe. This has been the key principle that has guided our planning since we began working on how to safely transition children back in to school based learning.

We appreciate that this is a longer communication than usual but, given the circumstances, we believe you will appreciate having as much information as possible at this time.

Reminder of guidance published by the Government

As you know, whilst there has been a partial relaxing of the lockdown there are still significant restrictions that we must all abide by. This is important for us as the 'Bubble' approach we have taken is aimed at minimising the interaction of people when they are in school. To compliment this approach, it is important that we all minimise contact with other people when outside of school. We have summarised the key restrictions that are currently in place below:

- During the emergency period, no person may leave or be outside of the place where they are living without reasonable excuse.
- People are allowed to meet one member of another household in a public space.
- The law bans public gatherings of more than two people, except in specific circumstances.
- Exercise "with one member of another household" in outdoor public spaces, such as parks or the countryside.
- There is no limit on where the exercise can take place, and the government made clear in its new guidance that people can drive into the countryside for walks or recreation.

Family Bubbles

To support social distancing and reduce the risk of unnecessary contact we are introducing Family Bubbles. Each pupil will be part of a small, consistent Family Bubble with assigned staff who will only work with children in that Family Bubble. Children will therefore be protected from contact with any other child outside their Family Bubble whilst at school.

How will the bubbles work?

- We have limited the Family Bubbles to 15 pupils.
- Every morning, your child will be issued with a coloured wristband. This wristband will need to be kept on throughout the whole day and will be replaced each morning.
- Bubbles will learn together, take breaks and lunches together and they will only use facilities such as the playground and IT suite within this Bubble.
- When we know you are intending for your child to return to school, we will email you a Bubble welcome letter with information on the Bubble base, Bubble teacher and what your child's Bubble day will look like.

Timings

In order to welcome children back to school safely and to ensure social distancing we have staggered each year group's start day and we have given flexible start and end times to allow for safe entry to the school. **We will be opening as follows from 2nd June.**

Please note: To provide time for the staff to be fully informed of the risk assessment and to prepare their Bubble bases for the children's return, the school will be **closed for staff training on Monday 1st June.**

Year group	First date students should attend school
Year 1	Tuesday 2nd June Flexible start time from 9.10 - 9.30am and flexible finish time from 3 - 3.20pm
Year 6	Wednesday 3rd June Flexible start from 9.40 – 9.55am Flexible finish from 12.30 - 12.40pm on a Wednesday Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday flexible finish from 3.30 – 3.50pm
Reception Year/ Early Years	Thursday 4th June Flexible start time from 8.40 - 9am and flexible finish time from 2.30 – 2.50pm

Early Finish every Wednesday

In order to give teachers' planning time and to deep clean the school we will be closing at lunchtime every Wednesday for the afternoon.

School Lunches

Children will be eating in their Bubble bases and therefore we will only be offering a cold packed lunch option. Children are welcome to bring in their own packed lunches as normal. These meals will be free of charge to Reception, Year 1 and any Year 6 pupil who is entitled to free school meals. If you would normally pay for your school lunches, this remains unchanged.

Families entitled to receive free school meals will continue to receive the voucher scheme until further notice. If your child is entitled we will provide them with a free school meal in addition to this voucher.

Uniform

During this time, we are **NOT** asking pupils to wear uniform as the children's clothes have to be washed every day to minimise contamination. Please ensure the clothing and shoes are sensible for school and the playground. A PE kit will not be required.

Facemasks

The latest Government guidance is that wearing a face covering or facemask in schools or other education settings **is not recommended**. Furthermore, the government states that schools and other education or childcare settings should therefore not require staff and pupils to wear face coverings. The majority of staff in education settings will not require PPE beyond what they would normally need for their work, even if they are not always able to maintain a distance of 2 metres from others. **Therefore, pupils and staff will not wear masks whilst in school.**

School Rules

This has been an unusual time for us all and we have had to make many adjustments during lockdown. Children would have missed their friends and the structure their school environment brings through routine. As we move into the next stage and begin to reclaim some normality, we will be asking all our pupils to remember our school promises and behave in a suitable manner within their Bubbles.

We must make it clear that our first priority is to keep our community safe as we transition back to school based learning. Therefore, if a child is unable to engage appropriately at school, respecting social distancing and the need for Family Bubbles to remain apart from each other then we will have no choice but to ask that child to engage with distance learning at home. This is to ensure the safety of our whole school community.

Keeping our community safe over time

Whilst we are studying within the Family Bubbles, we will be following the Government self-isolation strategy. If a member of your child's Bubble, pupil or staff, shows symptoms or tests positive for Covid-19 we will be asking everyone in that Bubble to stay at home and self-isolate for 14 days.

If your child shows symptoms or tests positive for Covid-19, do not send your child to school and inform us as soon as possible by telephone. Both school offices will be open from 1st June.

If your child is at school and begins to show symptoms, they must tell their teacher immediately. We will contact you to alert you of this and ask you to collect your child immediately.

These rules also apply if anyone in your household is affected. We are not medical professionals and we will be following the national advice. You can find information about symptoms [here](#).

Please note that if someone displays potentially Covid-19 symptoms but following a test is found not to have the virus then the members of the Family Bubble will be able to return to school.

Where to look for further information

Thinking School's Academy Trust have launched today a dedicated website for information on our plans to return students safely to school.

The Thinking Schools Academy Trust is actively responding to ongoing developments with the Coronavirus outbreak so please use the links on this page for updated information on our response and what it will mean for you.

FAQs and information: www.tsatrust.org.uk/coronavirus

We look forward to safely welcoming some children back to school next term. We will keep under review our ability to safely accommodate children from other year groups going forward. However, this will only be done when we are confident that this can be done safely.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Carroll and Thinking Schools Academy Trust