

Dear Parent/Carer

Re: Year 6

The focus of this letter is to outline how the school will operate from 1st June 2020 as we tentatively move towards a return to school.

What did the Government advise?

The two documents I am going to refer to can be accessed from the Gov.uk website and are: Actions for school during the Covid-19 on 12th May 2020 and Coronavirus: implementing protective measures in education and childcare settings 12th May 2020. The government is asking schools to consider the following when opening:

Keep cohorts together where possible and:

- ensure that children and young people are in the same small groups at all times each day, and different groups are not mixed during the day, or on subsequent days
- ensure that 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, recognising for secondary and college settings there will be some subject specialist rotation of staff
- ensure that 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. In schools and colleges, you may want to consider seating students at the same desk each day if they attend on consecutive days

As a middle school, the advice given posed an additional problem that we do not fit the national picture of primary and secondary schools. As we explored the various options, we found that if we were to adopt the primary model, we would be putting non-specialist teachers into the school day, for five days teaching one class of 15. Taking into account the keyworker classes that also need to operate within the school, this would have meant 12 classes with 12 teachers. Even with lesson plans, all of the teachers would have had to teach out of their specialism and teach the whole curriculum to the group of students. Edwinstree has strong lesson plans but the preparation for this would have been immense. This would have also not allowed time for the teachers to continue to plan for Year 5, 7 and 8 students, who still remain at home. This model does not work for our school and would have led to very poor quality teaching, especially for students who already had a broken education over the last half term.

What we have put in place is a model that allows the following:

- All classes to be taught in models of a maximum of 15 students.
- All day supervision (including breaks and lunch) with one teacher.
- Students to remain in their class of 15 and in their classroom when they are in school.
- A designated outdoor play space on the field that is only for their class of 15, manned by the same teacher at all points.
- A subject specialist teacher teaching each of the subjects within the school curriculum.
- The curriculum is taught in days, one teacher for maths day, one teacher for English day, one teacher for humanities day.
- The teachers have adequate planning time to ensure that they are able to plan for Year 5, 6 external, Year 7 and 8.

What are the risks with this model?

- Highlighted in red is the area of risk with this model. Although your child will be with their class for the whole of their time in school and with one teacher for the day. Within a week they will have experienced 4 teachers. In the second week they will see the same English and Maths teacher again, but a different subject specialist for the two other days and in the third, fourth and fifth week the pattern repeats.
- The students and teacher are required to be there from the start of the day to the end of the day and remain with the students at all play points to ensure social distancing, leaving the teacher with one maximum break of 15 minutes, while an additional member of staff supervises outside the classroom.
- This is a **four day a week model** for Year 6. On Friday the keyworker and vulnerable students will be in school, but Year 6 students work from home.
- Students will have, smaller foundation subjects lesson (where they only see them for once a week normally) for the half term taught in one day, rather than spread out over the term ie music.

What does the model look like for a child? What will they experience? Please not this is the draft model for week 1. We will publish again with the final week 1 in the Friday newsletter

Week 1						
Class and group number	Suggested rooms?	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
KDE	1	28	Maths CCY	Music MRS	Eng KDE	Science LSS
	2	29	Music MRS	Maths CCY	Science LSS	Eng KDE
AVK	3	31	Maths AEW	Science EDS	Eng CME	PSCHEE AVK
	4	32	Science EDS	Maths AEW	PSCHEE AVK	Eng CME
MKY	5	17	Maths TGS	RE AKY	Eng MKY	French STE
	6	18	RE AKY	Maths TGS	French STE	Eng MKY
CBS	7	4	Maths MMY	Science AET	Eng CBS	Hums GBD
	8	6	Science AET	Maths MMY	Hums GBD	Eng CBS
Key workers	9	2	Maths KWD	RM HBH	Eng GDS	Art LFR
	10	3	RM HBH	Maths KWD	Art LFR	Eng GDS
	11 (Y8)	ICT	SBL	SBL	WHN	WHN
Reserves		JGT	JGT	JGT	JGT	

As an example:

If I am KDE group 1 of 15 students, my week will involve meeting at my designated space on the field with Miss Campany at my agreed time. (see below for details) and then spend the day with her in maths and maths enrichment lessons. My break and lunch will also be supervised by her. On Tuesday I will meet Mr Rowlands at my designated meeting space and spend the day with him, in the same room as the one I used with Miss Campany. On Wednesday this will be Miss Devonshire, on Thursday this will be Science and Ms Saunders.

What about timings of the day?

We have made the decision to reduce the hours of the day, as breaks and lunchtimes will be shorter and supervised by the teachers. In order to meet the criteria of one teacher one class each day and our original hours, the teacher would be required to manage the class in all social and classroom spaces from 8:30am to 3:20pm. We felt this was unreasonable and therefore, having discussed with the bus companies and Freman College we have decided to shorten the school day from 8:45am to 2pm finish. The bus companies are aware and have agreed to support this pick up. Within the day there will be staggered starts, staggered breaks, staggered lunch and staggered exits to comply with Government social distancing guidelines

How will we minimise the interaction with the other students, other than those individuals in their class of 15?

Classes will be bought in separately via two entrances. The reception area via the back gate (the car park will be closed at 8:30am) and students will enter via the pedestrian gate, as the main gate will be closed, or via the bottom gate (normal entrance and exit). Each class will be assigned a start and end time and an entrance point. Students will meet their teacher for the day on the school field at their designated place which will be marked for their attention. This designated space which is 20 metres by 22 metres, will also be their play area at breaks and lunch times. The exit according to the school timings, will also be staggered, with first in, first out.

What do they need to bring with them and what do they wear?

Students will need to bring their own equipment with the basics for a classroom, pen, pencil, ruler, colouring pens or pencils. Their equipment will be labelled and will remain in the classroom in their designated seat. Students are able to bring a water bottle in and out of school.

Students will be permitted to bring their phones into school. They will be collected by the teacher and stored in the classroom with the students. Doors will be locked when the class takes a break or lunch. Students will be permitted to use their mobiles in social times, as this can reduce the types of play that result in touching. You may find that teachers also ask students to use their phones in the classroom as a learning tool. We encourage you to make sure their clothing is washed regularly and if possible after each visit to school. To support this, we request that students attend in non-school uniform. Please be aware there will be outdoor activities, which is encouraged and therefore, they need clothes you don't mind getting a little bit muddy.

What about pack lunch and or school dinners?

If students are in receipt of free school meals a packed lunch will be delivered to their classroom each day. The teacher will ask for their choice at the start of the day. If your child normally has school dinners, we are asking that you provide a packed lunch for the rest of this term.

What happens on the day they are not in school?

During the week, the teachers will provide your child with additional work to follow on from lessons taught in the classroom. Students will be asked to complete and return the additional work the following week. On the Friday Students will have work from the lessons they have completed that week, this will always be English, maths and the other subjects they have followed that week.

How will you maintain the quality of learning?

Whether students are in or out of school they will follow the same curriculum path and topics of learning. In combining all lessons into one day, we are aware that this is likely to lead to poor retention in the future and we are aware of this. We are keen to ensure that students in school are able to recover and adapt to the changes, with sensitive and compassionate staff who will engage students in lessons that have elements of fun, and the outdoors wherever possible.

What about if I decide not to send my child to school – will they get work?

Yes, please bear with us, once teachers are back in school more often, with potentially only half a year group in with us, we will also be required to maintain the level of planning for Year 5,7,8, plan in-school lessons and support those Year 6 students who remain at home. We are, therefore, likely to reduce the quantity of work we can produce, but not the quantity. We will make sure a good quality pack is provided but we would really appreciate the half term to think this through. Please give us this time, whilst we are also operating a holiday school!

Will I be fined if my child does not attend?

Not at the moment, the Government has rightly said no to fines. We are clear this is an individual and family choice and there are no right answers. As a parent or Carer, you need to consider what is best for your child and weigh up the pros and cons of balancing physical health and mental health.

How are we ensuring that the school is secure and protected?

Both documents outline the expectations for cleaning and social distancing, we have completed a county wide Risk Assessment and are currently completing a second Health and Safety Risk Assessment. On Friday we will publish the Local Authority document for you to dissect and consider. In summary the following are occurring:

- All classrooms are being cleared of anything but essential equipment in order to thoroughly clean and space desks and chairs.
- Soft toys, furnishings etc have been removed from all spaces.
- Chairs and tables will be positioned to maximise the space – 15 tables and chairs reduces the distance to below 2 metres but not below 1 metre spacing.
- Cleaning equipment and supplies have been ordered well in advance and we are well stocked.
- Toilets will be cleaned before and after break and lunch and at the end of the day.
- More antiviral wipes and gels are being placed in positions outside of classrooms, on the walls and in the classrooms.
- We are exploring the possibility of outdoor sinks, so that all students have access to handwashing facilities.
- We have trebled the number of litter bins with closed lids in the school which are spaced in social areas and classrooms.
- PPE equipment is here for any member of staff who is managing a first aid concern.
- Cleaners will take part in a training programme run by the School Business Manager and our Site Manager on Friday.
- Caretaking hours have been significantly increased to ensure that all cleaning is quality assured.
- No visitors will be permitted on site while students are in the school.

When do I have to make my decision by and if it is a yes, how do I find out which class my child is in, their start time and where they enter the school?

While we accept that for some Parents, the decision is too great to make this side of half term. Please, if you can let us know we would really appreciate it, as the planning going into this return is great. Please email: admin@edwinstree.herts.sch.uk

However, if you change your mind and notify us we will understand, but if we have clarity of numbers it would really help in our planning.

Whether you have said YES or NO, we will still send you a letter outlining the class that your child will be in (in the event you do change your mind) and the starting point for the day. Please be aware that classes have been divided into two, so there are now two KDE, AVK etc. The letters will be with you alongside the confirmed timetable for the first week by Friday.

What if my child already attends the keyworker / vulnerable class? Do they also come in on Fridays, although other Year 6 don't?

You have a decision to make. If you would like your child to return to their tutor group class albeit 15 of the students, we will not be able to house your child on a Friday. To be as safe as we possibly can, we will not mix classes. If this is not possible for you, then your child can continue in their original keyworker /vulnerable group as they have been doing since the lockdown and will be able to attend on Fridays. However, please note: for all students the school will now close at 2pm and students will need to be picked up, or go home on the bus. This is a key change to our current provision.

What else is there to answer?

We will be publishing another newsletter for Year 6 parents on Friday. The following questions I think I am yet to answer:

- What if my child is ill?
- What if a child is suspected of Coronavirus symptoms?
- Will this timetable stay till the end of term? What about if Year 5 return?
- How will you manage their mental health and wellbeing? This will be a very stark and strange new school where they are restricted from lots of their friends. How will we support them through this?
- What is our Behaviour Policy?

I am sure there are lots of other questions you would like answered after you have read this letter. Please email admin with your questions and I will do my best to reply in the Friday newsletter.

Thank you for your patience in waiting for the model we are planning to use and the practicalities of what this means for your child. Please be reassured we will do everything we can to ensure student and staff safety.

Thank you for your continued support during these challenging times.

Yours sincerely



Jo Gant
Headteacher