



Hipsburn Primary School, Lesbury, ALNWICK, Northumberland. NE66 3PX

Tel: 01665 830210

Email: [admin@hipsburn.northumberland.sch.uk](mailto:admin@hipsburn.northumberland.sch.uk)

Web: [www.hipsburn.northumberland.sch.uk](http://www.hipsburn.northumberland.sch.uk)

Headteacher Mr Kevin Moloney

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21.5.20

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope you are well and continuing to keep safe. Many thanks for your patience and support at this challenging time. We have been working on and developing an action plan and undertaking the numerous risk assessments which should enable us to begin seeing the phased return of children in Preschool, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 as soon as is safely possible from June 1st. As you will be aware, the highest priority throughout this process is the safety of children, staff and families, which has driven all decisions made.

The top three key factors which have impacted the plan to return are:

1. Space within the school to accommodate everyone safely
2. Availability of staffing
3. Availability of PPE

We appreciate you will have numerous questions about the potential return and arrangements for those children not returning, which we hope to address below. It should be noted that this information is correct at the time of issue and is subject to change as the guidance changes.

#### **Key Worker and Vulnerable Children**

These children will continue to be cared for from 1st June as guidance remains unchanged. Should numbers within the school vary, these children will remain the first priority for places. We will be setting designated drop off times/locations to enable us to plan for the other children arriving. Key Worker children will not necessarily be in their own age group. If the age group has not returned to school, they will continue to follow the online learning provided by their class teacher but within the school environment.

## Children in Preschool, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6.

For all children returning to school, government guidance states that any child who is classified as 'clinically extremely vulnerable' (in receipt of a 12 week shielding letter) or is living within a household with someone who is classified as 'clinically extremely vulnerable' should **NOT** attend school.

### Medical needs

Where staff are aware that a child has a known medical condition we may request that families seek confirmation from a medical professional that it is safe for them to return. We will not need evidence from the medical professional but will require written confirmation from the parent/carer that advice has been taken and it is safe for the child to return.

### Is there a priority order of attendance for children?

Children will be given a place within school in the priority order as set out by the government. The order of priority is Key Worker/Vulnerable children, Pre-school, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6. Should there be an increased uptake for places in other groups or a reduction in staffing capacity we aim to give families as much notice as possible that we are no longer able to offer your child a place to enable you to make alternative arrangements. (See 'What if I change my mind about attending?' below).

### Do I have to send my child to school?

Many thanks for the prompt replies to the message we sent earlier in the week stating whether you intend to send your child to school or not. This information has enabled us to forward plan. At present, the government has stated no fines or warnings will be issued to those families who choose not to send their child to school if they are in this first phase of returning classes.

### What if I change my mind about my child attending?

If you have opted to send your child to school and later wish to withdraw them you will need to send an email to the admin address. Also, if your child is unable to attend on any given day the school requires notification of this in the same manner as you would have reported absence prior to the partial closure of the school.

### Will my child need to wear school uniform?

Yes. We expect children to wear a school uniform however we are allowing for the fact that children grow and you may not have had the opportunity to buy new shoes or new trousers over the last few weeks. In this case we understand, but we would like to maintain some normality by seeing children wear as much of their uniform as possible. We will be spending the majority of our learning outside therefore children should bring clearly labelled coats, hats and sunscreen.

### Which group will my child be in?

At the moment, children will remain in their own year group. This may change over time but we will keep you informed.

### How will classrooms be organised?

During half term, whilst caring for our key worker children, we will also be organising rooms to enable children to be spaced within government guidelines to ensure both children and staff are kept at a safe distance. This will include preparing equipment that is for your child's sole use and not to be shared and the removal of all unnecessary equipment.

### Drop off and collection

Only one adult per child should drop off and collect and we expect adults to maintain social distancing rules at these times. See the attached timetables for the first 3 weeks - we will be asking that these instructions (particularly timings) are strictly adhered to as gates will be locked promptly. Gates will be open for parents to pass through and these will be closed and locked by school staff.

### School lunches

Each group will be given an allocated lunchtime; lunches will be eaten in classrooms / school hall. The menu provided may vary as this is dependent on availability and supplies. In the first instance lunches will be in the form of a packed lunch until more stocks are received. If you wish to bring your own packed lunch it must be in a bag which can be disposed of as we wish to avoid having packed lunch boxes in school.

### Water bottles

Each child **MUST** bring their own water bottle; they may wish to bring two to save the need for refilling.

### Toilet breaks

Children will have regular but designated toilet breaks.

### What if my child begins to show symptoms?

The Public Health England guidance remains unchanged. The child should self-isolate for a minimum of 7 days and family members for a minimum of 14 days.

### What happens if there is a confirmed case within my child's group?

Should a child or adult within the group test positive for Covid-19 you will be alerted immediately. The rest of their class will be sent home and advised to self-isolate for 14 days from the date the group member became symptomatic. The other household members of that wider class or group do not need to self-isolate unless the child subsequently develops symptoms.

### First Aid and Intimate Care

To date we have placed several orders of PPE, but we are awaiting delivery which we expect to receive prior to 1st June but this cannot be guaranteed. This will impact the level of personal and intimate care we are able to offer in the first instance. Where it is safe for both the child and adult, care will be given immediately. However, should a child require more intimate care it may be necessary for school to contact parents to collect children and care for them at home.

### Curriculum delivery

For the children in the returning year groups the first week will be used to familiarise children with the new routines and procedures as school will appear to be very different than it was prior to the partial closure. The main focus will be reassuring children and supporting their needs to enable them to cope with the changes they have experienced. Following this, staff have been working on identifying 'key performance indicators' which are key skills to help the children progress and achieve, with an emphasis on reading, writing and mathematical skills.

### Children in Years 2, 3, 4 and 5

Whilst the government has announced it hopes to have all children return to school prior to the end of the academic year, this will be highly dependent on events in the coming weeks and subsequent guidelines issued to school.

In the meantime, staff will continue to prepare online work for children (we do highly recommend children have a break for the May week). When activities are completed they will support children in their next steps and ensure they are as prepared as much as possible for their eventual return. We are aware several families are still working whilst trying to support their child's education which places additional strain at these already challenging times. Therefore, it is not necessary for all pieces of work sent home to be completed but we would stress the importance of children at least reading every day and developing their multiplication skills. Obviously, the more children can complete, the greater their progress and achievement will be but, more importantly, the more they have completed the easier it will be for them (and you!) to adjust when they do return.



## Finally

As I am sure you can appreciate, the organisation and preparation for the return is very time consuming as safety will not be compromised in any way. Next week the time will be taken to clean and prepare all areas of the school and ensure staff are fully updated with new guidelines and rules.

I hope I have been able to address several questions you may have asked, however, if there are any other questions you would like addressed please send these via email to the school email address. We will then aim to collate these and report back to you as soon as possible.

I would like to reassure you that the whole Hipsburn team has your child's safety as its number one priority and whilst some of the decisions we must take can be challenging for both us and you, they aim to ensure we all come through this together, safe and well. No setting can give a 100% guarantee that there is no risk at all but we are taking all the steps within our power to ensure any risks posed are minimised and prepared for.

Please find attached the timetables for the first three weeks for key worker and vulnerable children, Pre-school, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6.

Kind regards

Kevin Moloney

Headteacher

(On behalf of the Governing Body)

