

Frequently Asked Questions

In June I published a list of frequently asked questions, which many parents found useful. Here are some more answers you may find helpful as you prepare for your child's return to school:

Do I have to send my child to school?

The return to school is **mandatory**. You must send your child in to school unless they are ill or showing symptoms of covid-19. If they are showing symptoms you must engage with Test and Trace and let the school know the result. If someone in your household is shielding due to an on-going condition you must get advice from your GP.

Is the school safe?

The risk assessments outline the measures in place to keep your child, you and the staff safe. The risk of infection within primary schools is **very low** and we have done all we can to keep the risk to a minimum. The measures we have taken have been checked by the Governing Body, using the government guidelines, and by the local authority. You will not be surprised that the document I prepared for the LA runs to almost 50 pages.

Should my child wear a mask?

There is **no evidence** that there is a need for primary age pupils to wear a mask. The staff will not be wearing masks as this will stop effective communication with the children.

What will happen if a child has symptoms of covid-19?

If a child, or staff member, exhibits symptoms we have a strict protocol to follow. First we will **isolate** the child from their class bubble. This will usually be in my office. The staff who will look after the child will have full PPE available. We will check their **temperature** and contact you immediately. You must arrange for your child to be collected **as soon as possible**. Then you must get a covid-19 test. We can provide the test for you. You, your child and your household must isolate for **10 days** and engage with the **Test and Trace** service. If the test is positive the school will contact the other households in your child's bubble.

So how will the school run?

The school will run exactly the same as it did in June. We are lucky in that a high percentage of children attended school before the holidays. This showed that the measures in place were effective.

We will still have staggered **starts and finishes**, and I urge you to be prompt in dropping off and picking up your child as this will help to keep the bubbles separate. If you have more than one child please drop off/pick up at the time of the eldest child. There will be no whole school assemblies, although there will be class assemblies. Breaktimes will be staggered and at lunchtimes the outside area will be segregated to keep the bubbles apart – as far as it is possible. **Children will not leave their bubbles.**

What about lunchtimes?

Chartwells have systems in place for the safe serving of lunches. School lunches will be taken in the hall with children sitting in their class bubbles. Packed lunches will be eaten in the classroom.

My child likes sitting with their older buddies. Will this not happen?

Sadly, this would mean mixing bubbles, which could lead to a higher risk of spreading any infection. As the term progresses and we have further guidance this is one of the first things I will address, as it is a very positive feature of the school.

What can the children bring into school?

This is slightly different from June. Your child should bring their **coat**, their **book bag** and their **PE kit**. They should also bring their **Forest School kit** when required. They do not need to bring a water bottle as their named cups will be sterilised every day, but they should be a snack for breaktime.

They do not need to bring a pencil case as the school will provide everything they need. The equipment is personal to them and is disinfected every day.

We will be sending reading books home. Once your child has read their book, they should return it to the box in the library where it will sit for two days to allow any infection source to go.

Please do not send cuddly toys, toys, footballs or large backpacks.

Will the children be bringing homework home – isn't this a source of infection?

There will be homework set and this is where there is the biggest change.

The school has invested a huge amount of money and time to provide an **on-line learning system**. Further details will be sent to you during the first week of term, but each child will have their own email address, which you can also access, and homework will be sent to this address. Staff will teach the children how to access their email and also how to use it safely. Should we find that the school goes in full or partial lockdown we will use this method to send work home to your children. We can also upload video lessons and set up one to one calls if necessary.

I am parent who volunteers in school – can I start coming in again?

I'm afraid not. Sadly, we need to limit the adults in school to staff members.

We will be allowing parents of the children in Reception to come into school to drop off their children, but they will need to follow the hygiene measures in place and keep to the Reception classrooms.

So, it's just the same as the end of the summer term?

There is one big difference that I have introduced after advice from governors. When you drop your child off at school we will be taking the temperature of everyone entering the school. Anyone with a temperature over 38 degrees will be sent home as this is an early indication of infection. This additional measure is to keep every member of the school community safe and covid-19 free.

Otherwise everything is the same – there is a **one-way system** established in the school, children will stay in their bubbles and infection controls will still be in place.

What about staff – won't they be moving between bubbles and even schools?

Mr Brown, Mrs Garwood and I will be moving between schools and bubbles. This is necessary for us to assess that the infection controls are in place. We also need to know what is being taught in the bubbles.

Ms McAuley and Mr Pearce will be teaching across both schools.

We will all be following government guidelines and this has been assessed as low risk.

What about school trips? – I’m not sure that they will be safe.

All school trips are rigorously risk assessed before they take place. Unless I am sure that the venue and any transport is risk-free, I will not authorise a trip. There are no trips currently planned for the first half term.

What about Breakfast and (at Rogate) After School Club?

Once again this has been risk assessed and is low risk. Children will be required to wash their hands when moving from club to class or class to club. Please let us know if you want your child to attend these clubs. After school clubs run by teachers will take place – details will be sent later.

I need to talk to my child’s teacher – how can I do this if I can’t come into the school?

At the moment if you need to speak to a member of staff, please email first or give a message to the staff on the gate in the morning. I will make sure the staff member contacts you when they are able. Parent Consultations will happen via Teams meetings unless the situation changes.

My child (and I) are really anxious about starting school. I think that it is not safe. What should I do?

You are required to send your child to school, but I recognise that there will be some anxiety.

The measures I have put in place are rigorous and have been tested out. The risk of infection, especially in an area with very few confirmed cases of covid-19, is very low. Please try not to pass your own anxieties on to your child, however hard this may be. The vast majority of children love coming to school and there is evidence to show that keeping them at home is more damaging to their health and wellbeing than sending them to school.

My advice, if you are still uncertain about your child coming into school, is to talk. Talk to me – I have been back in school for a couple of weeks now and am picking up emails and staff are back in school from Thursday – talk to your child, talk to other parents, particularly those who sent their child to school in June. Do not be afraid to say that you are unsure.

I am committed to making your child’s school experience worthwhile, fun and safe and will do all I can in these uncertain times.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any further questions.

David Bertwistle
Executive Headteacher