



Information for Year R

Wednesday 20th May 2020

Dear Year R Parents and Pupils,

I am now in a position to outline our plans, **should** we extend our opening next half term to children in Years R, 1, and 6, and provide some face to face support for Years 10 and 12, as per the Government guidance.

It is very important to emphasise that I am still not able to guarantee that this extended opening will occur before the summer holidays. This is dependent on the following factors:

- Confirmation from the Government that the national picture is such that extended opening of schools can begin. This will be no earlier than 1st June, and we have been advised that the earliest we will know if 1st June has become a confirmed date is 28th May.
- Final assessment from myself and the Governing Body as to whether we are able to safely execute our risk assessment in order to maximise the safety and welfare of all pupils and staff. Please note that this assessment will not simply result in a yes or no to extended opening; it may be that we are able to open to these year groups but at a slightly delayed date to that announced by the Government.
- At the point at which a date is confirmed by the Government, a final audit of staffing levels to ensure that, based on the indicated numbers of pupils returning through a survey of parents, we can execute the plans safely. I have obviously already audited staffing very carefully and our proposed plans are based around this current knowledge, but this can alter due to different people needing to self-isolate at different times.

A huge part of our planning relies on us having a clear understanding of how many pupils are likely to return in these year groups, should we reopen to them. Therefore, after reading this letter, please can we ask that you complete a very [important survey via this link](#). It is very important that as many people as possible complete this by **10am on Monday 25th May** please. If you can complete this even sooner we would be very grateful, although we understand that there is a lot of information to digest.

For ease, the following information is for Year R specifically, as there are differences in the plans for each year group. Therefore, if you have more than one child at CFS, please do read carefully each letter you have been sent. For your information, all the letters can be found in the 'Coronavirus Update' section of the CFS website.

The following answers assume that all the factors above have resulted in CFS extending its opening to your child's year group next half term, with the start date to be confirmed. These plans are also subject to change depending on the evolving national picture and guidance.

The Logistics

1. Will all four year groups start back together on the same day?

No. We will be staggering the return of these four year groups, to enable us to focus properly on implementing the correct 'hub' environment for each phase in turn. **Years R and 1 will return first. This will be on a Wednesday in the first week of opening**, to give time for the teaching staff to prepare the revised physical spaces in the building for your children at the start of that week. Years 6 and 10 will return in the following week.

2. When will my child be in school?

For safety at drop off and pick up, we need to stagger the start and end of the day for each year group and vary the locations children will enter and exit the School. **Year R's day will begin at 9.30am. For the first week, the school day will end at 12.30pm** in order to give our youngest pupils time to acclimatise to being in school. **From the second week, the day will finish at 2.30pm Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. 12.30pm will continue to be the end time on a Wednesday** to allow for a mid-week deeper clean of all classrooms.

3. How will drop off and pick up work?

It is very important that the times outlined in Question 2 are noted carefully, as **it will not be possible to accommodate pupils earlier in the morning or later in the afternoon**. Parents will need to plan arrival times to the School site very carefully to ensure no cross over with parents from other year groups, so that we can enable social distancing measures at drop off and pick up. Before any extended opening, **we will be issuing a Parental Protocol** for dropping off and picking up your child at the gate to ensure everyone's safety.

Year R children will need to be brought to the main pupil gate, where they will be met by their teacher and where they will be asked to use hand sanitiser on entrance. **At collection time, parents will need to come through the pupil gate**. Some of you will then come through the reception gate to collect from the classrooms whilst the rest of you will come round to the courtyard and wait for your child there. We will make it clear where you should go nearer to the time. Again, the Parent Protocol will outline how social distancing between you as parents should also be maintained at this time.

4. What if I have children arriving and leaving at different times?

If you have a child in more than one year group that is returning, or another child in the childcare provision, different times will have been outlined to you in those respective letters. We appreciate these different times will make things tricky for you, but staggering the day is the only way we can comply with the necessary health and safety guidance. If preferred, you may bring all your children at the **latest** arrival time. Or, if coming by car, you may prefer to drop each off at the right time and wait in the car in between. **For departure, each child will need to be collected at their respective allocated time**, with you waiting outside the school for the next exit time. We are unable to get pupils out of classrooms earlier than the rest of their year group as this would result in mixing with other groups of children.

5. Where will my child be based?

Your child will either be in one of the Reception classrooms, or one of the Year 2 classrooms opposite, depending on which smaller group they are placed in.

6. Which pupils and teacher/s will my child be with? Will I be able to make any requests?

We will be forming four groups of Reception children of a maximum of 15 pupils in each. Your child's teacher will be devising these groups based on those attending and their knowledge of the pupils. I am afraid we will be unable to

take requests for which group your child will be in, but please be assured that we will have the best interests of your child – educationally and socially – at heart in any decisions we make. Each group will have two adults with them, one of these will be a teacher, the other will be a teacher or learning support assistant. These adults will stay with them throughout the day, and so **your child is unlikely to be with their normal class teacher**. This format allows us to create ‘hubs’ of children and adults. This is to minimise how much each individual is mixing with others. It also means that, should there be a case of Coronavirus in school, we will be able to very easily identify who will have been in the same area as that person and which areas will need urgent deep cleaning.

Your Child’s Day

1. What lessons will my child be doing?

We will not be able to deliver the full curriculum, but on all days of the week your child will be engaged in reading, writing, phonics and maths activities. In the afternoons activities covering the EYFS framework will be delivered. Use of resources will be very restricted as children are not allowed to share equipment, and only items that can be easily cleaned each evening can be used. We will provide optional remote learning for Wednesday afternoons and extra for each day due to the earlier finish.

2. What happens at breaktime? Will they be able to mix with the other groups of children?

Weather permitting, children will go outside for a morning break and after they have eaten their lunch for playtime. One group will be on the Chapel Green space, one in the courtyard and two groups on the Astro Turf separated by a barrier. **Children will not be able to mix outside of their hub, even at break time. We will be minimising contact between pupils at break time as much as is humanly possible, and no team games will take place.** We understand how worrying this might be for parents – and we will do everything in our power to find a balance between protecting your child’s physical health by limiting contact with others, and protecting their mental wellbeing by allowed them some interaction with their friends.

3. What happens at lunchtime?

Pupils will have their lunch in their classrooms in their hubs, before going out to the same spaces outlined in question 2. (If it is wet break, pupils will remain in their classrooms). We apologise but, for the first week (3 days), we will not be able to provide a lunch for your child, but they will have had their lunch slot before they are collected. We therefore ask that you provide them with a packed lunch in a cleanable lunchbox for the first week. Thereafter, a school lunch will be provided. Our caterers need a fortnight to get the kitchens up and running again, having furloughed staff, and until we know a definite start date we can’t begin this process, hence the delay in your child receiving their lunch from the School. **When the lunches are provided, they will be a cold lunch.**

4. Will there be any behaviour, SEN or pastoral support?

Before your child returns to school we will ask you to sign a home school agreement outlining our expectations of their behaviour in these unusual circumstances. We do of course understand how difficult it will be for children of 4 and 5 to understand the situation they are facing and things like social distancing, and we will of course be extremely sympathetic to that, whilst maximising everyone’s safety. As well as the adults in the room, a member of the Senior Leadership team will always be close by, as well as adults able to offer behaviour, pastoral and SEN support where needed. In situations where your child’s immediate safety or wellbeing requires some interaction with another adult outside of their hub, we will of course allow this, logging any interactions carefully.

Safety

1. What other safety measures have you put in place? Will you be enforcing social distancing?

There is a huge amount that has gone into ensuring that we both minimise risk and maximise the safety of all of your children, as well as the adults in school. As well as the hubs, staggered start times, limited resources etc, your child's classroom will be completely reconfigured. For Reception children we will remove all furniture from the rooms and each child will receive a carpet tile – personal to them at all times - to base themselves on, 2 metres apart, to help them to socially distance in the room itself. Each child will also have their own pack of resources which will not be shared with other children, but will also be cleaned daily and even more thoroughly on a Wednesday and at the weekend. Staff will also remain in hubs themselves, even when they are not with their classes, and not be mixing with any of the teachers with other year groups.

We have increased our cleaning workforce who will be on site every afternoon to prepare for the next day, with a deeper clean on a Wednesday. We will also have a cleaner on site during the day to deal with any emergencies.

Social distancing will be encouraged but we are not naïve about how difficult this will be to strictly enforce with Reception children, and it is important that we are all honest and open about that.

Thorough hand washing will be mapped into the daily schedule, and always when pupils are entering and exiting the classrooms. Children will use specific toilets for each hub and supervised use of hand sanitiser, which we have been able to source, will occur where appropriate.

2. Will I be able to see CFS's new risk assessment?

Yes. This will be sent out to all parents should myself and the Governing Body decide we are extending our opening, before you would be sending your child back into school. It will also be posted on our website and shared with the Local Authority. I hasten to add that a first draft has already been developed - I would not be writing to you with this level of detail if it hadn't. But it needs ratifying, and testing in school very carefully – this will all happen before we make a final decision about opening for Year R, and therefore before you have to make a final decision about whether or not your child will be returning this term.

3. What happens if there is case of Covid-19 at the School?

If a child has suspected symptoms we will contact home immediately and ask you to pick them up. In the meantime, they will be separated from other children to minimise risk. We will contact Public Health either with a suspected or confirmed case in school, from either a member of staff or pupil. Whilst we will be advised by Public Health on either situation, a confirmed case will result in at least the people in that hub needing to self-isolate and an emergency deep clean happening in the areas of the school affected. Public Health may recommend a wider school closure.

4. What will happen if the situation changes e.g. the national picture changes dramatically, staffing levels fall, or the School is asked to open to more year groups?

We will need to take each change one by one, and respond accordingly. Under the current guidance it is likely that, if we are asked to extend the opening to all primary year groups, we will need to reduce the provision put in place for Year R, possibly bringing children in on a rota due to staffing and space capacity. Whilst we are an all through school, and this does give us more flexibility than most primary schools, we need to be mindful of areas of the school that are not suitable for the younger children and staffing levels.

5. Will there be Senior Leaders, a Designated Safeguarding Lead, and First Aiders on site at all times?

We will always have a senior member of the Senior Leadership Team on site near your child's classrooms, as well as a Designated Safeguarding Lead and First Aider in school. A SENCo will also always be on site or on call.

6. Can you guarantee my child's safety?

All normal safeguarding measures will be in place for your child's safety, as if this was a 'normal' day at school. Can I guarantee that they will not catch Coronavirus due to being in school? Of course not. But everything we will put in place will maximise the safety of your child to the highest possible level in the current circumstances. I reiterate, we will not extend the opening of the school to your child's year group unless we feel we can execute the risk assessment properly, in order to minimise any risk to your child. But this is unknown territory for us all, and we will continue to liaise with external agencies, health experts and the Government to refine our practices as necessary.

Attendance

1. Do I have to send my child back to school next half term?

No. This is entirely your choice, and **no fines will be issued** if you choose not to send your child back before the summer holidays (this will be reviewed in September depending on the emerging situation). I can both understand why you would want to send your child back and why you may not, and I wholly respect your decision either way. As I have said previously, no one has the right to judge you for the decision you make. However, it is important to note that the Government are actively encouraging all Year R parents to send their child back if schools extend their opening next half term.

2. If I am sending my child back, do they have to come in every day as per the timetable?

We would strongly encourage this. Due to staffing and creation of the hubs, it makes logistics very difficult for us if your child returns part time. I would hope that, if you choose to send your child back at all, it would be for the whole time the school is open to them, unless they are unwell of course.

3. What happens if they are ill?

If you have told us that your child is not coming back this half term, we will not need to hear from you each day. However, if your child is returning but is then unwell, the same absence procedures as normal will apply. We would ask you please, for everyone's safety, to be very honest with us if your child has any symptoms that could be linked to Coronavirus.

Practicalities

1. Does my child have to wear uniform?

Where possible, yes please. This will give them some sense of normality, and the Reception uniform is easily washed. However, if you would like them to change clothes more often throughout the week, and you do not have enough items to cover this, please send them in as smartly as possible. Also, if your child has grown out of their current uniform and you are unable to purchase any more at present then, again, please send them in as smartly as possible. If you

have already purchased black trousers or a skirt for your child for next year they may start to wear these. Summer uniform is permitted.

2. What can/should they bring with them?

Please send them in with as little as possible – just a lunchbox in the first week, a water bottle that you can clean at the end of each day, and a coat. All stationery and other equipment will be provided in personalised packs for your child. There is no need for your child to bring in their PE kit to begin with. We will let you know if this changes at all.

3. Can they wear face coverings?

No, the national guidance is very clear that face coverings can actually increase the risk of infection if not worn and dealt with in a very specific way, and we do not feel that Reception children are old enough to engage with this.

4. Does this mean that calendar events will begin again?

At the moment, no. The restrictions in place mean it will be very difficult to deliver anything other than the daily curriculum outlined and, at present, this means that there will be no communal events such as Sports Day this year. Obviously, we will respond to national changes as appropriate.

5. Will I be able to come into school?

Only into the areas specified for collecting your child, and only in line with the Parental Protocol. **Neither Primary Reception or main reception will be open to parents**, and you will need to continue using email and phone to contact us please.

Other Provision

1. Will remote learning be provided for my child if I choose not to send them back this term?

Yes. However, this won't be monitored at the same level as the team will also be providing for Year R pupils in school. But we respect that you may not feel able to send your child back yet, and we want to continue to support all children at home as much as possible.

2. Are you offering Wrap Around Care?

No, we are unable to extend our provision beyond the times outlined due to the need to keep pupils in hubs and carry out extensive cleaning each night.

3. Can my child go to the childcare provision instead?

Unfortunately not. We are expecting an increase in the need for childcare from the year groups that are not yet able to return to school. If you wish your child to return to school this will need to be in the Year R provision as outlined.

And finally, what happens now?

We will be in touch as soon as possible once the factors outlined at the start of this letter have been addressed. We are obviously constrained by the timings of further announcements from the Government. What I have outlined to you is what school should look like if we extend its opening to your child this term. Hopefully this has given you enough

information to complete the [survey](#) to give us an indication of numbers. However, in the same way we are not able to make all decisions yet, we do understand that your mind may alter as the national picture develops and once you receive our full risk assessment.

If you have any queries about how the School may function, that have not been addressed here, please direct these to Miss Griffiths (EYFS and Key Stage 1 Lead) in the first instance via rgriffiths@chichesterfreeschool.org.uk. She will liaise with myself or Mr Hanna if there is anything she is unable to answer.

As ever, I thank you for your continued support, patience and understanding in these testing times. What I have outlined to you is not how I ever envisaged or wanted a school experience to be. But these measures are absolutely necessary at present, and we will continue to do everything we can to support the mental, physical and educational wellbeing of the whole school community whether they are in or out of the building.

Kind regards,

Mrs Louise New

Principal