

26th February 2021

Dear Reception Parents and Carers,

RETURN TO SCHOOL ON 8TH MARCH 2021

As you know the Government announced that we will be reopening schools on Monday 8th March. We are keen to share our plan for this reopening and what it will look like, specifically for our Reception group.

The Government and Lewisham Council have sent the latest guidance, which we have followed to ensure the most successful and safe way to return to school. They urge teachers that the outdoor education opportunities should be given a focus so we will continue with the free flow opportunity outside. This provides all children with access to the outdoors throughout the school day. From experience we know how valuable this is for the children's learning as well as their mental and physical wellbeing. We are very aware that not all children would have had access to outdoor space as frequently as they would need during lockdown so to provide this at school is essential.

However, at this time we have decided to stop the free-flow inside. This means that the children will not be able to freely enter the other Reception classes in the morning or afternoon sessions. If they want to come inside they will need to come into their classroom only. We want to limit the time they spend inside with the other classes, particularly during free-flow when the session is not adult led.

Phonics

The guidance acknowledged the gaps that may have occurred during this lockdown period, particularly "language, early reading and mathematics" and urges teachers to address these ensuring a focus on "acquisition of phonics knowledge and extending their vocabulary". In order to meet the needs of all the children they need to be in groups which best suit their learning styles. We are going to have them 'mixed' during their phonics session, according to their learning style, but this will be organised very carefully. On entering the room they will sanitise their hands (which they are already in the habit of doing), they will only be next to children from their class, and they will be given a strict seating plan to ensure space between the classes e.g. some children on the carpet, some at a table.

Lunch and Playtime

Lunchtimes will continue to look the same; the hall is on a rota system so only Reception children will be allowed in the hall during their slot of 11:30 – 12:00. Within the hall they will sit with their class and there is plenty of room to ensure the three classes are apart from one another. The hall is also well ventilated with all windows being open. The children wash their hands before entering the hall and then have them sanitised before eating their food. After eating they will continue to have the large grass area and wild garden to themselves for half an hour.

Drop off and Pick up

You may have seen that the drop off and pick up times have changed for the Reception classes. The Lions' school day will be 8:50 – 15:20, the Tigers' will be 8:55 – 15:25 and the Bears' will be 9:00 – 15:30. After meeting the 'bubble' parents at the gate (Elsinore Road) during lockdown we are keen to continue this. We felt this was best because it ensures that there are not too many parents/carers in a small space during this period of the day. We will ask that you promptly arrive at the gate at your class time and continue to wear a mask and socially distance from other adults. You will need to line up along the fence, the Reception end, whilst the Nursery parents will line up along the fence down the Nursery end. This will be clearly signposted. We will call your child one at a time and ask you to leave as soon as you have dropped off or collected your child so this is quick and efficient, ready for the next class' parents to drop off/pick up their children. Unfortunately, this means there will not be

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time to speak to the class teacher during the drop off/pick up times but you are always able to email or telephone the office, who can pass on any message. If your message requires a response the class teacher will email or telephone you after the school day.

Continued Procedures

Reception, just like the rest of the school, will continue to be separated from the other year groups. The previous procedures such as thorough and frequent hand washing, having well ventilated rooms and promoting the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach will still be in place. We will spend time getting the children back into the rules and routines of the school day. Additionally we will continue to have regular time to talk sessions where they can share their thoughts and feelings in a safe space as well as focusing on their personal, social and emotional skills which has been harder to do at home where they haven't had their peers to turn take and negotiate with.

Learning

We are aware that some parents and carers may be concerned that their child needs to 'catch up' after their time away from school. We want to reassure you that whether there is a pandemic or not the Early Years curriculum is all about looking at what the child needs and adapting the learning accordingly. All of the Reception staff are used to changing the planning daily based on what they have observed and the children's interests, wants and needs. One of the many benefits of the early years curriculum is that it enables practitioners to take the children where they are and move them on in their learning in a play-based provision. Where particular needs are identified, targeted interventions will take place during the day. If you have any particular concerns about your child's learning you will have the opportunity to share these with class teacher during your meeting on Monday 1st March.

We hope you can understand why we have had to make these changes and that we have the best interests of the children at heart when making these decisions. With any new measures we will continue to reassess these and if needed make changes. We are all very excited to welcome the children back; we have really missed our classes during this time.

Kind regards,
Ashleigh

Ashleigh Blackwell
Reception Teacher
Early Phase Leader