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**Houghton Conquest
Lower School**

Growing together

Headteacher
Miss C A McCarthy

15th May 2020

Dear Parents/Carers of school children

Survey – please respond on or before Monday, 18th May

As you will be aware the Government have announced that Primary schools will reopen 'at the earliest' on June 1, as part of Boris Johnson's 'conditional plan' for reopening the UK.

The reopening will begin with the youngest pupils in Pre-school, Reception and Year 1, plus Year 6. As a 'lower' school we will be taking direction from our local authority as to whether, in Central Bedfordshire, this includes our year 4's. Keyworker children will continue to attend school along with these groups regardless of their year group. Please note that if your child is within the remaining year groups, more information will be provided at a later date.

In order for the school to plan this phased return it is extremely important that we understand the likely numbers of children attending. Therefore, we will be using a platform called '**Survey Monkey**' to send you an anonymous survey by email, to canvas parental opinion.

We understand that in order for you to answer our questions and state your intention you will have questions that you want answered to inform your decision. So, we have put together a Q&A sheet of questions that we feel parents may want answers to.

Clearly, dependant on the numbers of pupils expected our planning of the school day, class structure and infection control measures may change. We have therefore based our planning for all children coming back at this stage.

Once we have received your responses, checked the availability of staff, completed a full risk assessment and action plan for a safe and sensible way to return, which is best suited to Houghton Conquest Lower School, we will confirm our intentions to you, before half term. Our paramount concern is, as always, the safety of our children, our families at home and staff. These remain at the centre of our entire decision making process.



Please look out for the survey in your mailbox, we would appreciate it if you could reply on or before **Monday 18th May** in order that your response can form part of our strategic planning (*please check your junk mail if you can't find it in your inbox*).

Thank you.

Yours sincerely



Miss J Heaslip
Acting Headteacher



Ms A Harvey
School Business Manager

Questions and Answers

1. How will schools get pupils to remain two metres from each other?

- Where possible there will be an expectation to promote social distancing throughout the school day, including in the classroom and outside.
- Low class sizes will promote this factor considerably.
- Visible markings will be displayed around school to help children understand what 2 meters actually looks like and to visually prompt distancing.
- Classroom layout will take into consideration this factor and desks will be spaced as far apart as possible.
- Children and staff should, wherever possible, will only mix in a small, consistent group and that small group will stay away from other people and other groups.

2. If children forget to social distance at school will they be told off?

- No, we would only use a gentle reminder to reinforce social distancing.
- The government have released in their documentation that early years and primary age children cannot be reasonably expected to remain 2 metres apart from each other and staff all of the time.
- It is still important to reduce contact between people as much as possible, so children, young people and staff where possible, should only mix in a small, consistent group and that small group should stay away from other people and groups.

3. Will schools be allowed to close if there is an outbreak of the virus or staff need to self-isolate?

- Schools are fully supported by the DfE , Local Authority and Public Health England (PHE). Where a school is concerned about the levels of reported

cases/incidents, the school can report this to PHE and take advice on whether it is required to close or not. Schools must take direction from these agencies.

- If a number of staff become ill and this puts pressure on staffing ratios to a point that affects the running of the school, the school will liaise with the local authority. It is possible that members of staff from another school or agency staff could be asked to come in to assist. A further school closure would be as a last resort.

4. Will those starting school for the first time have a phased start, considering many have received very little nursery time?

- We are considering the needs of these children and we are in the process of formalising a plan for the beginning of September. We will potentially phase these children in to this class over a period of weeks whilst supporting their wellbeing.
- In the meantime, we are looking at composing virtual tours of our setting to help introduce your child to their new environment.
- Our current pre-school children already know the school well, spending time on the playground, field, attending assembly and lunch.

5. Will there be a transition phase for children going to middle school?

- We are awaiting further clarification from the local authority with regards to facilitating our year 4's transition. Please rest assure that they are a key priority for us and we want to ensure our year 4 children are fully supported during their transition to middle school.
- We are working closely with transition schools

6. Will parents receive fines/lose their school place if they do not send their child to school because they feel it's too risky?

- Parents will not be fined for non-attendance at this time, and schools will not be held to account for attendance levels.
- The Government have been clear that they strongly encourage children to be back at school as soon as possible.

7. Will class sizes be reduced and how will the schools deliver the same teaching to each child if this happens?

- Children and staff where possible only mix in a small, consistent group - and that group stays away from other people and other groups.
- Our aim is to provide our children teaching time with a teacher; however this may not be their own class teacher. Where this is not possible, teaching assistants could be allocated to lead a group, working under the direction of a teacher.
- These small groups will be kept 2 metres away from each other where possible (e.g. own playtimes, seated together for lunch). Brief contact such as passing in a corridor is considered low risk and acceptable.
- The government guidance is that there are to be no more than 15 pupils per class group and one teacher. However, we are looking to achieve small groups of 10 children, but this will be dependent on the numbers returning to school.
- Desks should be spaced as far apart as possible.
- Children will be given their own named, clear, sealed plastic bag of equipment to avoid cross-contamination of the virus. If parents wish to support the school by supplying a large clear pencil case we would be grateful, if not we can supply this.

8. How will social distancing work with children who need one-to-one support?

- An individual risk assessment will be carried out for these individual children and it will be agreed in collaboration with their parents.

9. What is the Government's advice for families who have a parent who is shielding?

Children:

- Pupils classed as **Clinically extremely vulnerable** due to pre-existing medical conditions will be shielding and not attending - will be supported with work at home.
- Pupils classed as **Clinically vulnerable** - parent follows medical advice on whether pupil should attend - supported with work at home if decision made not to attend
- Child **living with someone extremely clinically vulnerable** can attend their education setting if stringent social distancing can be adhered to, and if that child can follow those instructions. If not, the child will be supported to learn at home.
- Child **living with someone clinically vulnerable** can attend their education setting

10. Is the Government going to provide PPE for children and staff?

PPE (the wearing of a face covering or face mask) is not recommended in schools **except:**

- if already used for a child during intimate care (gloves, aprons, masks)
- if child becomes unwell with symptoms of coronavirus, then a face mask will be worn by supervising adult and a distance of 2 metres will be maintained. The child will also be asked to wear a child face mask to stop the spread of infection. If contact with young person is necessary then gloves, an apron and face mask worn by supervising adult. If a risk assessment determines the risk of splashing of a cough, spit or vomit into the eyes then eye protection should be worn.
- We will have these items available in school should they be needed

11. How will risk of infection be reduced?

Effective protection and control of the spread of the virus will be maintained through:

- Minimising contact with those with symptoms (pupil, or household member, should not attend school)
- Cleaning hands regularly
- Good hygiene (bin tissues & wash hands)
- Cleaning surfaces regularly
- Deep cleaning at the end of each day
- Minimise contact by altering class layout and staggering break/lunch times etc.
- All adults and children will frequently wash their hands with soap and water for 20 seconds and dry thoroughly.
- Sufficient handwashing facilities will be available, and where a sink is not nearby, the school will provide hand sanitiser in classrooms and other learning environments.
- Surfaces which are regularly touched will be additionally cleaned mid-day, including toys, books, desks, chairs, doors, sinks, toilets.

- Bins for tissues etc. will be emptied every day.
- Where possible, all spaces will be well ventilated using natural ventilation.
- Doors will be propped open to minimize handling, bearing in mind fire safety and safeguarding regulations.
- Toilets will be monitored to avoid becoming crowded, lines to be marked on floor to support distancing.
- Wherever possible, staff will reduce the use of shared resources between pupils (e.g. own pencil “cases”) and equipment will be cleaned between groups (e.g. laptops)
- It is not necessary to take children’s temperatures every morning as this is not a reliable method of identifying coronavirus. However, we will reiterate to parents the need for them to look out for symptoms that might be due to the virus and to keep their child off of school if they are unsure. Parents may wish to take their child temperature at home before they come to school if they suspect their child is unwell.

12. Is the Government tracking whether there have been outbreaks of Covid-19 within schools that are open for children of key workers?

- Schools are fully supported by the DfE, Local Authority and Public Health England. Where a school is concerned about the levels of reported cases, the school can report this to PHE and take advice on whether it is required to close or not.

13. Will schools still make learning available to children if parents keep their children at home?

- Yes, we will support pupils attending school as well as those remaining at home.

14. Will there be emotional support for children following lockdown?

Where year groups are returning to school, we will be:

- Providing opportunities for children to talk about their experiences of the past few weeks
- Providing some refocussed lessons on relevant topics, for example, mental wellbeing or staying safe
- Pastoral activities, such as positive opportunities to renew and develop friendships and peer groups
- Other enriching developmental activities
- Assessing where pupils are in their learning, and agree what adjustments may be needed to the school curriculum over the coming weeks.
- Our quest, our mission as educators, is to go on a journey with each child through a process of re-engagement, which leads them back to their rightful status as a fully engaged, authentic learner

15. Will schools still break for the summer holiday?

Gavin Williamson the Secretary of State for Education commented "There are currently no plans to have schools open over the summer period and we haven't been working on plans to have them open over the summer period."