

Simon A Wood – Executive Headteacher

Wednesday 27th May, 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

[Update: Arrangements for Opening Our Doors Wider and Admission of Pupils](#)

I hope this finds you all safe and well. I am writing to inform you of the progress made towards the Government request for schools to reopen as **educational establishments** for Nursery, Reception, Yr 1 and Yr 6 pupils. As you are aware, no school within the REAch2 Academy Trust will be opening before **8th June** at the earliest in order to ensure that there has been sufficient time to take every safety precaution reasonably possible.

The REAch2 Academy Trust has supported Copperfield in implementing a robust risk assessment process to allow us to carefully consider the potential risks of welcoming pupils back to school, and how best these can be managed. Our school will only reopen if the risk assessment gives us assurance that it is safe to do so.

[Arrangements for re-opening:](#)

If we are given authorisation by Trustees to open on 8th June, along with other schools in the Trust, **we will be opening to one additional year group every few days. This will enable us to manage safety considerations as effectively as possible as we open up the school to more pupils.**

Our plan at present is to open to Nursery on Monday 8th June.

Following this, our risk assessments will be reviewed each week by Trust Executives, including the number of pupils and available staffing. We will only open to additional year groups where school leaders and Trust Executives are fully satisfied that it is as safe as reasonably possible to do so.

We are currently hoping to open to the following year groups:

- 🌳 Nursery on Monday 8th June
- 🌳 Reception on Wednesday 10th June
- 🌳 Year 1 on Monday 15th June
- 🌳 Year 6 on Thursday 18th June

However, **we will only be in a position to confirm that we are open to these additional year groups**, following our ongoing risk assessments.

When it can be confirmed that we will be in a position to open to any of these additional year groups we will inform you, as parents and carers, as soon as possible.

[Arrangements for admitting pupils](#)

We understand that, for parents of children in **Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6**, the decision about whether to return your child to school is a difficult one. Some parents and carers have asked whether they can say 'no' now, and then change their mind later on in the term. In order for us to maintain the safety of all our children and staff, it is important that we re-admit children to school if we have enough notice to ensure we are prepared for the number of children that will be turning up to school.

Therefore, when the school re-opens, we will only be able to admit children from **Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6** on the dates specified, with any additional children being admitted after we have received notification on the **previous Wednesday** that a parent or carer wishes their child to return to school. This notification period is to give us the necessary time to review all risk documentation, staff rotas, in-school organisation and health and safety

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requirements to safely cater for additional pupil numbers. To support with this process, below is a table indicating the dates by which we expect to receive notification from parents about their child's attendance:

Notification by:	Starting Date:
Wednesday 3 rd June	Monday 8 th June (Nursery) Wednesday 10 th June (Reception)
Wednesday 10 th June	Monday 15 th June (Year 1) Thursday 18 th June (Year 6)
Wednesday 17 th June	Monday 22 nd June (Year 2)
Wednesday 24 th June	Monday 29 th June (Year 5)
Wednesday 1 st July	Monday 6 th July (Year 3)
Wednesday 8 th July	Monday 13 th July (Year 4)

If you decide you wish for your child to attend school, please notify the school by calling us on 01474 352488, or emailing to office@copperfieldacademy.org.

We will respond to you as soon as we can to confirm that we can accommodate your child. **Please do not bring your child to the school unannounced at any time, as we will unfortunately have to turn you and your child away.**

Alongside education for [Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6](#), we will continue to operate a childcare facility for:

- Children of critical workers
- Vulnerable pupils: those with a EHCP, with a Social Worker, or those with vulnerability to whom the school have decided to offer a childcare place.

In addition, we will also continue to provide home learning activities for the following groups:

- Children in [Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6](#) not attending school
- Children in [Year 2, Year 3, Year 4 and Year 5](#)

As always, I would like to thank you for your support in these challenging times.

Included below are a list of questions we have been asked – please take time to read this through – it may well help you in your decision making!

Yours faithfully,

Simon A Wood

Executive Headteacher

Frequently Asked Questions (for parents and carers) - planning towards a phased reopening of schools

Do schools have a choice about reopening?

Many of you will have seen a lot of media coverage about other UK nations keeping their schools closed and a large resistance from teaching unions about reopening schools at this time. At the moment, schools are being asked to plan to reopen, **but there is no guarantee it will go ahead on 1st June.** Our Academy Trust has decided that in order to ensure that the opening of our schools is as safe as possible, **no school will open before 8th June.** School leaders are working hard to undertake rigorous risk assessments to determine if sufficient precautions can be implemented in the event of this planned phased reopening. We need to ensure that the premises are as safe they it can be, and that we have the suitable staffing for working with pupils, as well as looking at new routines and procedures. A decision about whether to open our school will be taken once all of these risk assessments have been completed, and reopening will only take place if the risk assessments indicate that it is safe to do so.

How safe will it be for pupils and staff?

Unfortunately, risks will remain for as long as there continues to be people testing positive in the UK, or until a vaccine is available. Our job as school leaders is to take every possible step to minimise risk by implementing the guidance provided from the DfE and our Academy Trust, including social distancing measures where possible, and strict cleaning protocols. The government currently has testing available for teachers and has stated they will extend this to children and family members who display any symptoms.

If my child is in Nursery, Reception, Yr 1 or Yr 6, do they have to attend school, and will I get fined if I don't send my child to school?

No, attendance is **not** compulsory for the remainder of this academic year. The DfE announced earlier in the pandemic that fines will not be issued for non-attendance. Therefore, parents must not feel pressured into sending their children back to school. This is a choice for you to make in the best interests of your children and your family.

What is the benefit to my child returning to school this academic year and what level of education will be provided during this time?

Children returning to school will receive education in key areas of learning, in order to fill any gaps that may have arisen and help prepare them for their next stage of education. This will primarily be in social relationships and well-being. English (reading, writing, grammar, handwriting) and Maths, and Phonics for younger children will also be completed, as will some creative tasks, and learning projects in the afternoon. Children will begin to acclimatise back into some semblance of routine and the purpose of leaving the house each day and interacting with people outside their home may help with children's emotional wellbeing. About 50% of each day will be spent outdoors. All of our learning will be available online – led by Mrs. Harris, a separate letter will follow from her on Friday.

What will the classroom look like?

We will remove soft furnishings, **where possible.** Children will have their own set of equipment to use and tables will be spaced apart in order to support physical distancing. In younger years, if the teachers use carpet areas, the children will have a dedicated space to sit in. Staff will be encouraged to maintain distance from pupils **where possible.** We will continue to think very carefully about what resources we use in lessons to aid pupil's learning, and these will all be cleaned daily.

If my child does not attend, what are the arrangements for their education - how will home learning be provided if teachers are now working in classrooms?

Home learning will continue to be provided. There are some teachers who will not be in school and those who are will receive release time from their teaching commitments in order to help support their planning for both classroom work and online work/home learning. It is important to note that teachers will not be able to interact directly with parents and carers as often as they may have been during recent weeks, as they will now be teaching full time in the classrooms/outdoors.

My child has an EHCP and usually receives 1:1 support in school; will they receive this if they return?

We will make every reasonable endeavour to ensure that children with 1:1 support continue to receive this. However, we cannot guarantee that support will be received from the member of staff that your child is accustomed to.

Can I withdraw my child at a later date if I feel it is not safe?

As mentioned previously, attendance is not compulsory so parents may remove their child/ren from school during this time if they wish to do so. We would however recommend that you speak with us in the first instance in case there is more we could do to alleviate your concerns. Having said that, the pandemic is an ever-changing situation and there may be circumstances outside of our control that change the way schools operate.

My Year 6 child has permission to walk to and from school alone. Can this continue?

Yes. As usual, as long as school is aware and has the correct permission slips completed.

Will Breakfast & After School Club be open?

No, our school will only be open for teaching hours. The only 'breakfast provision' will be in our 'Copperfield Cares' childcare offer.

Will my child be in their usual classroom, with their teacher and friends?

Unfortunately, we cannot guarantee this. The DfE have placed a temporary restriction on class sizes to 15 as a maximum. In some circumstances, due to the amount of space available, group size will need to be less than 15. This means that children could be in different classrooms with different teachers and children than they are used to. However, children will remain in their year groups and other factors such as different educational abilities and the children's ability to cope with change will all be taken into account, wherever possible. However, it is important to note that for health and safety reasons there will be no consideration given to requests for children to change between 'bubbles'.

How will school manage social distancing?

We must be honest with you all as parents and carers that social distancing amongst primary age children will be difficult to manage, especially with the younger year groups. The government has determined the safest way to achieve this is for each class to become a "bubble" and these children, and the adults working with them, will stay together during the school day. There will be very little opportunity for children to mix between class bubbles. Older children, such as those in Year 6, may be able to understand the importance of physical distancing better and will be encouraged to keep apart where appropriate.

Will my child need to bring their own pencil case?

No. Parents/carers will be asked to send their child/ren into school with no pencil case and no bookbag. Children should carry their lunchbox but have nothing else in hand. We will provide named water bottles which will stay in school. This to avoid cross contamination between school and home.

Will the children be expected to wear uniform?

At this moment in time school uniform is not yet required, especially as clothes **MUST** be washed daily as per government guidance. Once all year groups are back, and we are fully 'educational' again, then uniform will be required. However, given the If your child has outgrown their uniform and you cannot afford to replace this at the moment, please provide them with the best alternative you can. Clothes should be washed daily.

Do the children need to wear face masks?

Government guidance states that children should **not** wear face masks to school.

What will happen if a child in school presents with symptoms of COVID-19?

If staff suspect that a child is presenting with symptoms of COVID-19, the child will be isolated in one of our two medical rooms and parents/carers will be called immediately to collect them. A member of staff will be allocated to look after this child while they wait for a parent/carer to arrive and this member of staff will be provided with PPE. We will do our best not to alarm the children but we must ensure safety measures are put in place in these instances.

The government have now announced that children, and their families, will have access to testing from 1st June. We will ask parents/carers in this situation to arrange a test for their child and to keep them at home until they receive their result. If the result is positive all children and adults in that bubble will need to self-isolate for 14 days.

Will we be told if someone in schools tests positive for COVID-19?

Yes, all parents and carers will be notified. We always have the health and safety of all children at the forefront of our minds and this will allow parents/carers to make decisions for their child with the relevant information.

How will the staff manage to look after my child if they become unwell or have an accident in school?

Our team will continue to look after your children in the usual way. They will comfort and care for children as always. Staff will be provided with PPE for intimate care.

Can parents/carers come into school if we need to?

No, we must limit the number of visitors into school as much as possible. Parents/carers should only come into the school building when it is **absolutely necessary and only by appointment**. We ask that you continue to communicate with us by email and telephone. If any meeting is required, only one parent/carer should attend, and adult social distancing measures will need to be applied.

How will pupils know what to expect when they come in on the first day?

School will look and feel somewhat different to what we are all used to, so we must be honest with pupils about what will happen. New rules and changes to daily routines, as outlined above and in our previous letter, will be discussed with them when they return to school, and pupils will continue to be reminded regularly of these expectations. Parents/carers are encouraged to support us with this by discussing these changes with your child/ren at home prior to their return so that they have some understanding of what to expect.

My child is anxious about returning to school. What can I do to help them?

We recognise that some children are going to adapt well to their return to school and take things in their stride, while others may find this a very hard transition. The emotional wellbeing of our pupils is just as important as their education, so please continue to communicate with us if you have concerns about your child's wellbeing as we prepare to support them to return to school.