



# Montalbo Nursery and Primary School

Tel: (01833) 637718

E-Mail Address: [montalbo@durhamlearning.net](mailto:montalbo@durhamlearning.net)

Web Site: [www.montalbo.durham.sch.uk](http://www.montalbo.durham.sch.uk)

Head Teacher: Mr C Minikin

22.05.20

Dear Parents and Carers

## Plan for the Reopening of School

I hope that you and your families are well. I am writing to inform you of the steps taken after the recent closure and also of how we intend to move forward following the government's plan to reopen schools in a phased manner from June 1st. This plan is subject to change should we receive further guidance or have issues concerning staffing levels. The government, I understand, are planning to make another announcement on May 28th and I also note the concerns of some Local Authorities and Trade Unions. I understand that the decision on whether or not to send your child back to school is a difficult one, and each family's circumstances are different. I also appreciate that you might want to send your child back at a later time before the end of term, and this is fine to. I would be grateful if you could complete a survey to help us to plan effectively, a link for which is at the end of this letter.

### Recent closure

On the morning of Monday 18th May I received notification that a member of staff had tested positive for Covid 19. This person was asymptomatic and not on site at the time and was tested on Friday because a family member was feeling unwell. As soon as I was notified, the children on site were taken outside until parents/carers could be contacted to explain the situation and to arrange to take the children home. All of the parents/carers of children who had been in over the past few weeks were contacted, even if they were not present on Monday. I also contacted Public Health England and the Local Authority. As the member of staff had been in the same environment with many staff (some of whom were not on the rota but setting up for the June 1st arrangement) and the children of key workers, we advised both children and staff to self-isolate for 14 days. During the closure the school has been deep cleaned by a specialist company.

As this closure has impacted on our ability to prepare in school for June 1st, we are planning to open on June 3rd instead. On Monday 1st we must ensure that all of the classrooms are free of unnecessary furniture, displays, fabrics, soft toys and anything that cannot be cleaned easily and effectively. This includes moving furnishing from the offices, foyer, staffroom and corridors. The classrooms will look and feel very different for all year groups. We must also ensure that all staff are very clear about policies and procedures as we try to consider every eventuality.

The following extract explains the government's rationale for this phased reopening: -

### 'Why can more children now attend school and childcare settings?

We want to get all children back into education as soon as the scientific advice allows because it is the best place for them to learn, and because we know it is good for children's mental wellbeing to have social interactions with other children, carers and teachers.

As a result of the huge efforts everyone has made to adhere to strict social distancing measures, the transmission rate of coronavirus has decreased. We anticipate with further progress that we may be able, from the week commencing 1 June, to welcome back more children to early years, school and further education settings. We will only do this provided that the 5 key tests set by government justify the changes at the time, including that the rate of infection is decreasing and the enabling programmes set out in the recovery strategy are operating effectively. As a result, we are asking schools, colleges and childcare providers to plan on this basis, ahead of confirmation that these tests are met.'

The government listed Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 as the year groups to return as well as the group of children of key workers and vulnerable families.

## **How are we planning the phased return at Montalbo?**

There is an enormous volume of updates and guidance which underpin the planning process. The safety of children and staff is our absolute priority. The guidance talks of creating 'bubbles' by separating classes into smaller groups of no more than 15 children. These bubbles will be taught by the same teacher or teaching assistant each day, every day and where possible, two members of staff will be with each bubble. Due to the nature of these arrangements, it is possible that your child would not be placed with their usual class teacher. The classrooms will each have a distinct and separate outdoor area where much of their learning will take place. The reason for this is to ensure that the bubbles do not mix.

### **Organisation**

Children of Key Workers whose year groups are returning will return with their usual year group; where the year group is not due to return they will form a new bubble (Y2-Y5). As a result of guidance, children in different year groups will be split in the following ways (A and B is for identification purposes only).

Nursery A – Mrs Patterson and Miss Moody taught in Nursery

Nursery B – Mrs Miller and Miss Rudge - taught in the Reception Classroom

Reception A – Miss Lauder and Mrs Thomas – taught in Club Room

Reception B – Miss Bean and Miss Earl – taught in Year 4 classroom

Year 1 A – Mrs Newton and Mrs Spence – taught in Year 2 classroom

Year 1B – Miss Scott - taught in Year 1 classroom

Year 6A – Miss Richardson – taught in Year 6 classroom

Year 6B – Mrs Leonard – taught in Year 5 classroom

Key workers Year 2-5 – Mrs Daniels and Mrs Dupuy – taught in Year 3 classroom

### **Arrangements within school**

The children will stay in their bubbles with the same staff and children each day and not mix with children from other bubbles. Break times will be staggered with the bubbles accessing separate areas of the school site. Packed Lunches will be eaten within the classroom. School can provide these or children can bring their own labelled packed lunch which should be in a bag which can be disposed of after eating. We are not offering hot meals at this time. Water bottles should be filled at home, taken home and cleaned thoroughly each day as the water cooler will not be available for use.

Children will not be required to bring anything apart from clothing that they are wearing, packed lunch and water bottle. Book packets and work books will not be going backwards and forwards. Children will work in books at school and they will stay in school. Unfortunately, reading books will not be sent home during this period.

If you need some information from the School Office, you must phone or email to make an appointment and cannot arrive without prior confirmation.

### **First Aid**

First Aid trained staff are present in each year group to advise and to support with first aid issues. Where there is a greater need, school will contact parents/seek medical assistance as necessary.

### **Uniform**

The guidance also suggests wearing clean clothes each day to reduce risks. As a result, school uniform expectations will be relaxed. Children can still come in school uniform, but could also wear sportswear or casual clothing during this period. Please think about the suitability of the clothing for the weather and school environment i.e. no cropped tops and high heels!

## **What will the children be learning?**

We recognise that not all parents will send their child back to school. We will continue to offer home learning opportunities on our website as we have for the past few weeks. In the interests of fairness to all children, the lessons at school will also follow the activities timetabled for home learning. In essence, both groups will be doing the same thing.

## **Drop off and pick ups**

Pick up and drop off times for different year groups will be different for each year group and will be confirmed next week. This is to try and reduce the amount of people in the vicinity of the school site. In order to try and minimise the spread of infection, most parents will not be able to come on site at drop off and pick up times. The exception are parents/carers of Nursery and Reception children where one adult will be allowed to drop off or pick up from signposted areas near to their classroom. Adults and children will then have to follow the one-way system around school to allow for social distancing along the narrower footpaths. This information will be on the site plan which will be shared next week and staff will be on hand to direct parents to the correct area until the system becomes embedded. For parents of any other year group, you need to say goodbye to your child at the gate and they will make their way around to their bubble's entry point. Each bubble will enter and leave through a particular door and this will be on the site plan which I will share next week.

At the end of the day, your child will be brought to the school gate to be handed over to their trusted adult. For nursery and reception children, one adult will need to wait in the signposted pick up areas near to the child's classroom.

Wraparound care- this will need to take place within the bubble and you must drop off or pick up at the times stipulated if you require care. This is to avoid children coming in at various times making it harder to monitor. Care drop off is only at 7.45am and Care pick up is only at 4.30pm. For clarification, you cannot drop your child off at 8am, for example. Children will need to bring their own snacks for breakfast club/after school club. There will be a flat rate of £2 charged per session accessed.

## **Which other measures will be in place?**

The children and staff will be expected to follow excellent hand hygiene routines. Hands should be washed regularly throughout the day: on arrival, before break, after break, before lunch, after lunch, after toileting, after coughing or sneezing into a tissue and before leaving. This is the minimum expectation and children will also be reminded not to touch their face, to sneeze or cough into a tissue (and bin it) and to adhere to social distancing. I think everyone will be aware of how difficult social distancing will be in particular for Nursery, Reception and Year 1 children but we will try.

All Risk Assessments will be in place in line with Government and Durham County Council guidelines. The 45-page checklist has been used in this process and Risk Assessments will be in place for those with additional needs. Children will not be allowed to wander unaccompanied around the site and staff will continue to be friendly and reassuring whilst socially distancing. We fully grasp that this situation would be very strange for all.

The Local Authority has issued a new cleaning schedule which we will be following. Further information from the DfE that we will be following can be found here: - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-protective-measures-in-education-and-childcare-settings/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-protective-measures-in-education-and-childcare-settings>

The document above notes the importance of not sending children to school if they are unwell. If you are in any doubts over their health, please do not send them in. This applies to any illness such as a cold or headaches. Transparency between home and school at this time is crucial. The guidance explains what to do if a child displays symptoms whilst at school and using a space where they can be isolated which will be the staffroom. The staffroom will not be used for any other purpose during this period.

The document also states: -

When a child, young person or staff member develops symptoms compatible with coronavirus, they should be sent home and advised to self-isolate for 7 days. Their fellow household members should self-isolate for 14 days. All staff and students who are attending an education or childcare setting will have access to a test if they display symptoms of coronavirus, and are encouraged to get tested in this scenario.

Where the child, young person or staff member tests negative, they can return to their setting and the fellow household members can end their self-isolation.

Where the child, young person or staff member tests positive, the rest of their class or group within their childcare or education setting should be sent home and advised to self-isolate for 14 days. The other household members of that wider class or group do not need to self-isolate unless the child, young person or staff member they live with in that group subsequently develops symptoms.

This is important to recognise as if we had a confirmed case within the bubble then the rules above apply. If it is a confirmed staff case, it is possible that the bubble would not be able to return until the staff member recovered as the staffing model proposed uses all available staff.

### **Will I be fined if I don't send my child to school?**

No. We fully understand that parents may choose that, although the school and Nursery will put every possible sensible safety contingency in place, it is impossible to guarantee that the virus will not be in school at some point. For that reason, the Government are not fining parents if you decide that your child will not attend school. If, having considered everything, you decide to keep your child at home, that is understandable under the current circumstances. I must also stress that if you are on the vulnerable list and shielding, you should not send your child to school according to Government guidance. Several parents explained that they were shielding and expressed concerns over this. We recommend that you refer carefully to the guidance when making your decision.

Questions If you have any further questions, please email [montalbo@durhamlearning.net](mailto:montalbo@durhamlearning.net)

I would very grateful if you could complete the survey below to help us plan in more detail.

<http://www.montalbo.durham.sch.uk/potential-reopening-of-school/>

Mr Minikin

Head Teacher