



# George Dixon Primary School

City Road, Birmingham, West Midlands B17 8LE

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22<sup>nd</sup> May 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

I am writing to let you know of the plan to open our school to children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 6, as the government has requested. This has been an incredibly difficult week for school leaders as we grapple with the guidance produced and the needs of our school community. I am committed to our children and families and strongly believe in the power of education to improve lives and make things better. Please know that I want nothing more than for your children to be back at school. Currently it is not yet safe enough for that to happen.

The last time I wrote to you, I said that the government would make a final decision on the 28<sup>th</sup> of May and the opening of schools in general would be in line with the science telling us it would be safe and this is still the case.

At George Dixon, we have been working hard on a plan to open safely to more pupils and writing a risk assessment with guidance from Birmingham City Council. There is a huge amount of planning, and changes to the school environment, that need to be put in place to ensure we have what the Government would describe as a 'COVID19 secure school', and this is taking some time to complete - but we are working hard to ensure it is completed effectively.

We will be closed to all staff and students for a deep clean the week of Half Term, which is the 25<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> of May. We also want to ensure that all children and staff have a break this week from online learning. We will then spend the week of the 1<sup>st</sup> of June preparing the school. Children of Key Workers who have been in school will be able to come back on the 1<sup>st</sup> of June.

For parents with children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 6, we will start a phased return to school from the 8<sup>th</sup>. We will only welcome one year group at a time, ensuring that our systems work effectively to keep everyone safe within the COVID-19 guidelines.

**If you are considering sending your child back to school, you must be confident that coming back to a very different school environment, with very different routines, and the expectation to be physically 2m apart from everyone in school is the right thing for your child and their well-being. It is your choice to send your child back to school, and there are no penalties for non-attendance.**

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As I stated in my previous letter:

*Provision for the remainder of the Summer Term will certainly not be on a normal basis; children will need to be split into smaller groups, separated from the rest of their year group, and taught by a member of staff who may not have been their usual teacher before lockdown.*

*The curriculum will also be very different to avoid where possible the sharing of resources and mixing of children, and the timetable of the school day will need to be adapted as well, including drop-off and collection arrangements - there is a lot to consider.*

RECEPTION, Y1, Y6:

Please remember, parents will not face penalties for non-attendance. It is completely your choice. Pupils will need time and support to get used to new routines and a new way of school life and so we plan on bringing back year groups one at a time. The timings of the school day will be staggered, and we will finish early (once children have had their lunch) on Friday so that staff can have the Planning, Preparation and Assessment time they are entitled to.

We are provisionally planning to be ready for Year 1 pupils to start back on 8th June, with Reception pupils being invited in on 15th June (this will be confirmed closer to the time with more details for you). We will then ask Year 6 to come back on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of June as we aim to give them at least a couple of weeks together before the Summer.

We do not have the capacity to have all pupils in a year group back. In order to reduce the risk of transmission, children will be put into small 'bubbles' and only mix with the same children and adults each day.

In order to safely plan for the wider opening of school and ensure our risk assessment is accurate, you will need to request a place for your child by Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> of June. We will then contact you by Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> of June to confirm if we can accommodate your request. I will send a form for you to complete shortly. **Do not bring your child to school unless you have a confirmation of a place from us. We will not have the space or staff to accommodate them.**

Y2, Y3, Y4, Y5:

Once we have followed government guidelines and safely accommodated children in the above year groups, we may have capacity for more children. If we have parents who desperately need to return to work but are unable to do so due to school being closed we may be able to have your child in school, but it is still too early to commit to this.

I appreciate that there is a lot of information in this letter. If you have further questions for us, please email [enquiry@georgedixonprimary.bham.sch.uk](mailto:enquiry@georgedixonprimary.bham.sch.uk) to request a call back from the Senior Leadership Team (Mrs Good, Miss Peckett, Mr Darby and Mrs Hussain) if we can help. I have also put together a list of frequently asked questions and enclose it here.

As always, please stay safe and well. We miss you.

Yours Sincerely,



Mrs Good  
Head Teacher

## Coronavirus June Re-opening Frequently Asked Questions from Parents from our school and other schools in Birmingham

Please note that this FAQ is correct on 21/05/20. The situation, guidance and information is rapidly changing and we will update the FAQ as often as we can.

### When will the final decision about re-opening schools be made?

May 28<sup>th</sup> by the Prime Minister

### What is the timeline for re-opening?

Week beginning	What is happening?
25 <sup>th</sup> May 2020	School CLOSED to all pupils for half term
1 <sup>st</sup> June	School open for key worker and vulnerable children
8 <sup>th</sup> June	Provisional opening to Year 1
15 <sup>th</sup> June	Provisional opening to Reception
22 <sup>nd</sup> June	Provisional opening to Year 6

### How is social distancing be ensured between parents during school pickup and drop?

We are planning a staggered start to the day; e.g. Y6 children to arrive at 8.30am, Y1 to arrive at 8.45am, reception to arrive at 9am. The main gate will be open and there will be a one-way system used to minimise any crossing between people. A staggered pick up will also be used.

### Is there going to be sanitisation/deep cleaning periodically of surfaces?

Yes

### I have a vulnerable grandparent at home. How can you ensure attending school will not put them both at risk?

We will not be able to guarantee that.

### How can children aged 4-6 be expected to socially distance?

The government documents imply that all risks have been assessed without the need for social distancing. It is very unlikely that the children will remain 2m away from each other at all times, but it will be encouraged by the staff. Markers on the floor and removing at least half of the desks from classrooms will help with social distancing inside.

The main risk control for the children is that they will put into smaller self-contained groups, known as 'bubbles'. They will remain in these smaller groups throughout the day and will not mix with children from other bubbles. We estimate that the maximum bubble size is likely to be approximately 6 children in Reception and Year 1 and 10 pupils in Year 6 with at least 2 staff until we are confident it is safe to increase the number of pupils. The staff will also stay the same for each bubble and therefore the children may not have their usual teachers, although we will try to keep children with their teachers if we can. Bubbles will have separate play space, and will use a specific set of toilets to avoid any cross contamination.

### What will happen once you reach the maximum number of children in a bubble?

If possible, we will open up another bubble using a separate space if its available. If the demand for places is high, we may have to prioritise certain children so that safety is maintained.

### How will you organise the bubbles and which children will be in them?

We will be sending out a booking form by email to parents in Reception, Y1 and Y6 at the end of this week in preparation for more children returning on 8<sup>th</sup> June. You will need to reserve a place

for the whole week because we will need to organise suitable staffing cover. We will contact you to confirm if your child has a place.

**Would the children have to wear mask and gloves?**

No, the use of gloves and masks has not been recommended by the government.

**What about hand washing/hand sanitisation for staff and children? Will there be enough hand sanitiser?**

All classrooms and toilets have warm water and soap. We have plenty of disposable towels for drying of hands. We have bought 1 hand sanitiser station in the main entrance and will source additional sanitiser where possible.

**A study has shown that BAME population is more at risk of having a severe disease. Will there be special consideration for BAME children?**

We are awaiting additional guidance on this question.

**Will you re-start before and after school clubs?**

No, to avoid cross contamination of the children in separate bubbles, it will not be possible to re-start these at this current time.

**Will we lose our school place there if we disagree with government advice and choose to home-school a little longer?**

No, attendance at school is currently voluntary. No fines will be issued for non-attendance.

**Are teachers/children going to be tested?**

No, not unless a person becomes symptomatic.

**Is it going to be 5 days a week/normal school time?**

We are being asked to open in June for all Reception, Y1 and Y6 children, full time. The timings will be slightly different due to the staggered start/ends of the school day. The day will be slightly shorter to accommodate this and we may have a phased return where we start for a half a day and move to a full day, but this is still being considered.

**In the event of my child returning in June what reassurances can the school provide around the children's safety?**

We will be carrying out a range of risk assessments over the coming days and will put these on our school website. This has to be agreed by our school governors before we can open to more pupils. We will follow all government guidance.

**How will reception transition/visits work as the youngest children are due to start in September?**

We are working on plans for this at the moment. You will receive a welcome email soon.

**How confident is the school that they can implement social distancing across the school, without leaving my child exposed?**

We cannot minimise the risk completely but will follow all of the government advice provided.

**How confident is the school that they can ensure all the children wash their hands regularly and sanitise?**

Relatively confident. Children got into a good habit before the lockdown began. With reduced numbers in school this should be possible to re-start and maintain.

**Will the school have regular cleaning and disinfecting of desks, door handles etc?**

Yes, regularly throughout the day and once the children have gone home as well.

**How will children be kept apart at break times?**

Children can only play with people from within their bubble.

**What procedures will the school have in place should a child show symptoms for Covid 19?**

The child will be placed into isolation with a member of staff using PPE. They will then be sent home and recommended for testing. They will remain at home for the following 14 days. If the test is positive, the whole bubble will need to isolate at home for 14 days, along with their families.

**What will the dinner arrangement be?**

Children will eat their dinners in their bubble classroom. They can bring their own packed lunch or have one provided by the school if they normally receive free school meals. We hope to be able to use the dining hall for hot meals in due course, but not at the start.

**Will outdoor play be cancelled?**

No, outdoor play and learning will be encouraged. We plan to divide the playground into smaller sections and each bubble will have their own space.

**How will teachers comfort our children if needed?**

There is a recognition that children may need to be comforted at some point within the day. Limited amounts of PPE will be provided for the staff in order to do this (masks and gloves).

**How will teaching continue?**

Teaching will be supported by the home learning materials being provided for the children not in school. We will work with children on their individual learning, and as we have more pupils in we can begin to pick up where we left off in March. We will focus on well-being before anything else.

**Reception children spend a lot of time playing will they be told to play alone?**

We don't think it's going to be possible to prevent children playing with others and will try to set up the best learning environment we can within the guidelines.

**Will children get into trouble for breaking the rules e.g. if they get too close to another child?**

No. However, we need your support to ensure you will only send your child in if you are relatively confident they can maintain physical distancing most of the time.

**If a child in the class shows symptoms does the whole class (bubble) then self-isolate for 2 weeks?**

Yes, if they test positive.

**Have you had any Covid-19 cases since the lockdown?**

Not as far as we know.

This is a link to a Department for Education Blog with more frequently asked questions for parents:

<https://dfemedia.blog.gov.uk/2020/05/12/5292/>