

Frequently Asked Questions – July 2020

Do schools have a choice about reopening?

No. Due to the decreased risk of COVID-19, it has been deemed safe by the Government. It is mandatory that all children return to school in September. There are two non pupil (training days) on 1 and 2 September and then children return to school on Thursday 3 September. If your child is going to be absent from school, you must inform us as soon as you are able to.

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 (Department for Education) and our Academy Trust, including social distancing measures where possible, and strict cleaning protocols. Testing for COVID-19 is now widely accessible for all.

How will you prevent year groups from mixing?

At Martlesham we will have two bubbles. EYFS and KS1 pupils will be Bubble 1 and KS2 pupils will be Bubble 2. The number of staff who work with each bubble will be limited. We will avoid sharing equipment across bubbles and there will be designated play times and areas to reduce cross-contamination. The outside space will be 'zoned' so that groups do not mix.

What will the classroom look like?

We have removed all soft furnishings where possible. Children will have their own set of equipment to use and tables will be placed in rows and children will be discouraged from facing one another in key stage 2. 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. No equipment will be allowed to move between 'bubbles'.

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

Yes. As usual, as long as we have written consent from the parents.

Will Breakfast & After School Club be open?

Black Tiles Out of School Club plans to open from September for before and after school club. We are working closely with Alpha Nurseries to ensure Martlesham pupils are cared for in their respective bubbles and do not mix with children from other bubbles (unless siblings) or other schools supported. Please let us know if you will be accessing this service.

After school clubs will be different for the Autumn term as we have to offer these in bubbles only to begin with. We hope to offer a range of outdoor sporting (non-contact) clubs run by Inspire Suffolk. Please see separate communication.

How will school manage social distancing?

We must be honest with parents that social distancing amongst primary age children is difficult to maintain and the Government has now advised us that it is not essential, as long as children remain in bubbles. We are asking adults to remain 2 metres from one another and also for adults to maintain a distance from the children, wherever possible. The school has a one-way system in place and movement across the school is limited. We will not be holding whole school assemblies for some time. Each bubble has its own toilet facilities and only one child may visit the toilet at a time.

Will my child need to bring their own pencil case / any other equipment?

No. We will provide children with a set of equipment in a wipe-clean case. Parents will be asked to send their child into school with no pencil case and no unnecessary items. Children should carry their water bottle with them and, if applicable, their lunch box. All items must be clearly labelled. We ask that children do not bring any other items from home (toys, teddies, etc.). We will be able to send reading books home from September.

Will the children be expected to wear uniform?

Yes. During this period, uniforms should be washed daily.

Do the children need to wear face masks?

Government guidance states that children should not wear face masks to school. It is dangerous for young children to wear a face covering or mask. If you and your children opt to wear face coverings (for example if you travel in using public transport), we will ask children to remove these on entry to the school site. Zip lock plastic bags will be given to children to store their face coverings safely. These will need to be safely placed in drawers or bags and not touched until the child is off school premises. Children will need to wash their hands before and after removing and storing the face covering away.

Should children bring their own hand sanitiser?

No. The school will ensure hand washing facilities are in place for all pupils.

Will my child have PE or Forest School?

We are adapting PE and Forest School in accordance with safety guidance. It is not possible to offer all types of PE (i.e. contact sport) and some Forest School activities are not acceptable at this time. Your child will be informed which days they will be outside.

What if my child needs medication?

Please return all asthma pumps and Epi-Pens when your child returns to school. We can continue to give prescribed medication as long as the child has their own bottle of water to wash this down. Please ensure you have protected your child with sun cream (12 hour / one application) before they come to school if the weather is hot.

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 a safe space 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 to arrive and this member of staff will be provided with full 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 has now announced that children, and their families, will have access to testing. We will ask parents 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, it may be necessary for the whole bubble (including associated staff) to remain at home for 14 days from the date the symptomatic person first became symptomatic. We will work with the NHS Test and Trace application and the East of England Health Protection Team in the case of confirmed cases of Coronavirus.

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

Yes, all parents will be notified. We always have the health and safety of all children at the forefront of our minds and this will allow parents to make decisions for their child with the relevant information. It is essential that families inform us if anyone in the household is having a test for COVID-19 and then updates us as soon as possible with the outcome. This will enable us to accurately assess risk of transmission.

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

Martlesham staff will continue to look after your children to the best of their ability. Staff will be provided with PPE for intimate and personal care. We will not routinely wear PPE for first aid from September but will do so if there is a heightened risk of the spread of bodily fluids or if the child is showing symptoms of COVID-19.

Will the school offer hot meals from September?

Yes, we will be able to resume the production of hot meals for children. Catering staff will wear PPE to make and serve the dishes. Menus will be published at the start of the academic year.

Can parents come into school if we need to?

No, we must limit the number of visitors into school as much as possible. Parents 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. The foyer and main office are for emergency use only. Parents are not permitted to approach a member of staff on the gates or doors.

If a meeting is required, only one parent should attend, and social distancing measures will need to be applied. We ask, respectfully, that only one adult brings the children to and from school where possible.

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.

What if there is a further spike of COVID-19?

We will be drafting a contingency plan should this occur. We will prepare ourselves for another phase of supporting home learning should the need arise. We will ask for your guidance on the levels of support that you require. We hope to be able to offer some more live lessons and instructional videos should we enter another period of lockdown.