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Information Pack - Proposed Phased Expansion of Pupil Numbers in Warrington Schools

BACKGROUND

All Warrington schools have remained open to priority groups (children of critical workers & vulnerable children), as instructed by the governments Department for Education (DfE). As part of national social distancing measures to limit the spread of coronavirus, we had to limit the numbers of children and young people attending educational and childcare settings, to ensure that our children and staff were safe.

Now, we have been advised by the DfE to ask some 'priority' year groups of children to return back into education because the DfE believes it is the **best place for them to learn**, and because it is **important for their mental wellbeing** to have social interactions with their peers and teachers. Please however note that this is only for those years that have been identified as a 'priority' year, and will not include siblings if they are not in the 'priority' years.

The DfE have prioritised the four year groups because they are key transition years. The DfE have recognised that Nursery, Reception and year 1 are at the very beginning of their school career and are mastering the essential basics, including counting and the fundamentals of reading and writing, and learning to socialise with their peers. They acknowledge that attending early education lays the foundation for lifelong learning and supports children's social and emotional development. Year 6 children are finishing Key Stage 2 and are preparing for the transition to secondary school, and will benefit from time with their friends and staff to ensure they are ready.

In order to continue to provide a safe learning environment for our children we will be **gradually increasing** the numbers of children attending school while it remains safe to do so. It is thought that by returning children gradually, we can initially reduce the number of children in classrooms compared to normal and it will allow us to put **protective measures in place to reduce risks**.

Priority Groups Return Dates:

Monday 8 th June:	Critical workers and vulnerable pupils full time Reception Groups A, B and C Monday 8 th June and Tuesday 9 th June Reception groups D, E and F Thursday 11 th June and Friday 12 th June (Wednesday 10 th June will be a deep clean of Reception classrooms and equipment)
Monday 15 th June:	As the week before plus: Year 1 Groups A, B and C Monday 15 th June and Tuesday 16 th June Year 1 Groups D, E and Thursday 18 th June and Friday 19 th June
Monday 22 nd June onwards	As previous weeks plus a school review for further capacity.
Monday 6 th July	In line with the Local Authority's plan for gradual reopening, it is intended that Year 6 will begin part time

The government ambition is to welcome back Years 2, 3, 4 and 5, however it is not yet clear that we will have the space to accommodate all of these year groups - we will need to wait until late June/early July to confirm these arrangements. The DfE is keeping this under review.
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NO after school clubs will run for the remainder of the summer term.
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Current guidance is that school will close for the summer (as previously arranged) on Tuesday 28 th July

The DfE recognises that, unlike older children and adults, early years and primary age children will find it more difficult to remain two metres apart from each other and staff.

The measures we will put in place are:

- frequent hand cleaning and good respiratory hygiene practices
- regular cleaning of all areas in school
- minimising contact and mixing, with children being placed in small groups

Guidance tells us that it is very important to reduce contact between people as much as possible. We can achieve that and reduce transmission risk by ensuring children, young people and staff where possible, only mix in a small, consistent group and that each small group stays away from other people and groups.

We will minimise contact as much as possible by changing classroom layouts, using 'empty classrooms' and staggered break times.

Where we cannot keep children at a safe distance apart (e.g. corridors and at playtime) we will exercise our professional judgement in ensuring the highest standards of safety are maintained. If we need to we will temporarily cap numbers to ensure that safety is prioritised.

GUIDANCE FOR PARENTS of children returning to school.

- Parents will be **allocated times they should bring and collect** children to and from school to further minimise risk transmission and will be advised which entrance and exit to use.
- **If a child needs to be accompanied to school, only one parent/carer should bring them/collect them.**
- **Parents cannot gather** at entrance gates or doors, or enter the school building (unless they have a pre-arranged appointment)
- **Clothes should only be worn for one day at school.** This is very important in order to minimise the risk of spreading infection.

SCHOOL MEALS

Children attending school from the 8th June whose parents would usually pay for a meal, will need to pay for each meal via ParentPay. This applies to those children in the year groups identified to attend, vulnerable children and the children of critical workers. Children eligible for benefits-related free school meals and universal infant free school meals, will receive a packed lunch free of charge whilst attending school.

ATTENDANCE

The DfE has asked for children in **Nursery, Reception, year 1 and year 6, alongside priority groups to return to school**, from 1st June onwards. However in order for us to make the necessary preparations, all schools in Warrington are planning their gradual re-opening for these year groups **from 8th June onwards**.

IS ATTENDANCE COMPLUSORY?

Children in the 'priority year groups' are encouraged to attend school, unless they are self-isolating or they are clinically vulnerable.

No one with symptoms should attend a setting for any reason. If a family member suffers symptoms then children should not return to school for 14 days. If someone in their household is extremely clinically vulnerable, children should not attend as school cannot adhere to stringent social distancing.

Families should notify school as normal if their child is unable to attend so that staff can explore the reason with them and address barriers together. **Parents will not be fined for non-attendance at this time and parents will not be penalised if their child does not attend school.**

ATTENDANCE OF VULNERABLE CHILDREN: vulnerable children of all year groups continue to be expected to attend educational provision where it is appropriate for them to do so (for children with education health and care (EHC) plans this will be informed by a risk assessment approach).

ATTENDANCE OF CHILDREN CLASSED AS 'CLINICALLY EXTREMELY VULNERABLE DUE TO PRE-EXISTING MEDICAL CONDITIONS' have been advised to 'shield' and they should not attend and they should continue to be supported to learn or work at home as much as possible.

ATTENDANCE OF CLINICALLY VULNERABLE (BUT NOT CLINICALLY EXTREMELY VULNERABLE) children are those considered to be at a higher risk of severe illness from coronavirus, parents should follow medical advice if their child is in this category.

ATTENDANCE OF A CHILD WHO LIVES WITH SOMEONE WHO IS CLINICALLY VULNERABLE (BUT NOT CLINICALLY EXTREMELY VULNERABLE), INCLUDING THOSE WHO ARE PREGNANT can attend school (aligned with government guidance).

ATTENDANCE OF A CHILD WHO LIVES WITH SOMEONE WHO IS EXTREMELY CLINICALLY VULNERABLE it is advised they only attend an education or childcare setting if stringent social distancing can be adhered to, so are not expected to attend school. They will be supported to learn or work at home

ATTENDANCE FOR A CHILD/MEMBER OF HOUSEHOLD WITH COVID-19 SYMPTOMS: children should not attend if they have symptoms or are self-isolating due to symptoms in their household

HOW WE WILL FOLLOW PUBLIC HEALTH ADVICE?

The DfE have advised us that a range of approaches and actions should be employed to help prevent the spread of the virus. By adopting these control measures they believe that, when implemented, an 'inherently safer system' will be created, where the risk of transmission of infection is substantially reduced.

These control measures include:

- **Cleaning and Handwashing**
 - cleaning hands more often than usual - washing hands thoroughly for 20 seconds with running water and soap and dry them thoroughly and/or using hand sanitiser ensuring that all parts of the hands are covered and cleaned
 - cleaning frequently touched surfaces often using standard products, such as detergents and bleach
 - ensuring good respiratory hygiene by promoting the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach
- **'Deep' Cleaning**
 - Deep (thorough) cleaning of all areas will take place at the end of the school day
 - Throughout the day, classroom areas, hall, office spaces, staff areas etc will be regularly cleaned
 - surfaces that children touch will be cleaned regularly more regularly than normal (at least twice a day), such as toys, books, desks, chairs, doors, sinks, toilets, light switches,
 - sufficient handwashing facilities will be provided – sinks, hand sanitisers in other spaces
 - bins will be emptied throughout the day
- **PPE** (personal protective equipment)
 - Wearing a face covering or face mask in schools or other education settings is not recommended by the DfE, so children and staff will not be wearing masks in school. The exception to this is if a child, young person or other learner becomes unwell with symptoms of coronavirus while in their setting and needs direct personal care until they can return home.
 - Staff will wear appropriate PPE when carrying out any tasks where risks have identified a need to wear them, such as looking after a child who becomes unwell at school.

- **If someone becomes unwell in school?**

- We need to minimise contact with individuals who are unwell by ensuring that those who have coronavirus symptoms, or who have someone in their household who does, **DO NOT** attend school.
- If anyone becomes unwell with a new, continuous cough, a high temperature and/or a sudden loss of taste or smell in an education or childcare setting, they must be sent home and advised to follow the [COVID-19: guidance for households with possible coronavirus infection guidance](#).
- If a child is awaiting collection, they should be moved to a designated room, where they can be isolated behind a closed door, with appropriate adult supervision. Ideally, a window should be opened for ventilation.

If they need to go to the bathroom while waiting to be collected, they should use a separate bathroom, which should be cleaned and disinfected using standard cleaning products before being used by anyone else.

PPE should be worn by staff caring for the child while they await collection

As in any medical emergency, staff will call 999 if a child is seriously ill or injured or their life is at risk

- All children who are attending school will have access to a test if they display symptoms of coronavirus, and they will be encouraged to get tested in this scenario.
- Where the child tests negative, they can return to their setting and the fellow household members can end their self-isolation.
- Where the child tests positive they will be advised to self-isolate for 7 days. The rest of their class or group 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 or household members they live with subsequently develop symptoms.

We will endeavour to keep all parents and carers up to date on the school opening plans and will provide more detail on the management and minimising of risks over the coming weeks, aligned with government guidance.

Yours sincerely

Mrs J Wightman

Headteacher