

Mengham Junior School

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Dear Parents and Carers,

The government has announced that schools are fully opening to all pupils from **Monday 8th March**. Despite having improved contact with the children through Google classroom, it doesn't fully compare to being together as a school. We are really looking forward to seeing everyone back in person. It is likely there will be some apprehension in our school community from all ages about the return to school. What last September showed us, is that all our parents, carers, pupils and staff all worked together to make returning a positive experience and as safe as possible.

As parents, we will have all had very different experiences of this latest lockdown. There will have been good days and bad days and everything in between. Thank you and well done for everything you have done with regard to helping the children learn and trying to keep up their morale through the start of this year.

This letter sets out the key information that parents and carers need to know about the school being fully open from the 8th March. The majority of arrangements remain the same as in the autumn term. **We have highlighted significant changes from September.**

There are 3 sections to this letter:

- How we will keep our school community as safe as possible from COVID-19.
- Key information, including school drop off and collection details.
- The procedures that need following in the event of suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19.

Should you wish to discuss anything covered in the pages that follow, please get in contact via the school admin office: adminoffice@mengham-jun.hants.sch.uk

If there is anything relating to the school's wider reopening that you would like to discuss with the class teacher, then please get in touch through the class email or raise it during the virtual parents' evening next week.

We look forward to seeing everyone soon!

Best wishes,

Odele Davies and Edward Harrison
Co-Headteachers

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Keeping our school community as safe as possible from COVID-19

The government has made the decision to fully reopen schools from March 8th. The following guidance is the latest update to how schools should operate in relation to COVID-19:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/963541/Schools_coronavirus_operational_guidance.pdf

It is not possible to make a full school completely COVID-19 secure. However, by using the principle of 'bubbles' and employing precautions, we can make the currently low chance of transmission even lower.

There are 4 key principles that will reduce the risk to pupils and staff:

1. Children and staff will self-isolate at home if they or anyone they live with shows symptoms of COVID-19. They will seek a test as soon as possible and inform the school of the result.
2. The school will operate year group 'bubbles'. This means they are only interacting with approximately 60-70 people rather than the whole school. In the unlikely event of a positive test result, with the guidance of public health, we will hopefully only need to close that year group for an isolation period.
3. Within the 'bubbles', it is not possible to maintain a distance of 2m, however steps will be taken to avoid close proximity with multiple children and the sharing of stationery etc. where possible.
4. Good respiratory hygiene will be encouraged and hand washing will be frequent. Children and staff will wash their hands on arrival and departure from school and also at key times (when transitioning from one place to another, where contact has been made with a surface that is shared by others. E.g. outside spaces, toilets, handling certain equipment etc. or before and after eating).

A full COVID-19 risk assessment has been completed detailing all the control measures being put in place. The following two pages are a selection of the main details that will have the biggest impact and will be most relevant to children, parents and carers.

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Children and staff will self-isolate at home if they or anyone they live with shows symptoms of COVID-19.

Please see the guidance at the end of this document about the official process that needs following if anyone in our school community develops symptoms of COVID-19.

During the Autumn term, we were very grateful for families following the guidance, keeping their children off school when symptoms appeared in the family and seeking a precautionary test. Thankfully the vast majority of these came back negative. There have been 3 occasions where we have had to close a bubble due to positive test results. The families involved took immediate precautionary action which, to our knowledge, prevented any further spread.

The school will continue to operate year group 'bubbles'.

During any academic year, there are lots of occasions when different year groups would normally interact. This will be temporarily stopped so that year group 'bubbles' are maintained. Here are some of the alterations:

*Staggered starts and ends to the day for each year group. This will help adults entering the site maintain distance as well. See the next section for details.

*Upper school children will not enter the lower school wing and vice-versa. Children will not enter each other's classes.

*Year groups will have separate spaces for break and lunch time. Year 3 and 4, at separate times, will have the main playground and amphitheatre. Likewise, year 5 and 6, at separate times, will have the small playground and trim trail. The grass spaces will be open as well but are currently water logged. Lunch will be encouraged outside unless wet otherwise this will be each in the hall with year groups kept apart.

*Staff will work within 1 year group. Where this is not possible due to their role, they will take steps to maintain additional distance.

*An additional temporary staff room is setup in the music room to allow teachers from different year groups to maintain distance.

*Years 3 and 4 will only use lower school toilets. Year 5 and 6 will only use upper school toilets. Cubicles and sinks are allocated to year groups. Hand washing will be essential (as always!).

*All assemblies will be streamed virtually into classrooms.

*The library will operate differently with a mixture of allocated times and a book delivery service.

*Ventilation is important. Windows will be opened in the classroom. Please make sure your child has a school jumper/cardigan with them and a coat on colder days.

*The government advise against trips at the current time.

*After school clubs will not be running before Easter but will run in the summer term.

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Avoiding close proximity with multiple children and avoiding the sharing of stationery etc. where possible.

Previously we have always had shared resources in pencil pots in the centre of the table. These are now disbanded and we will provide children with what they need in individual trays. Please do not bring in additional stationery items or toys from home.

Careful consideration will be given to table layouts, with pupils not swapping spaces for different lessons. Where different groups of children need different inputs, this will be done on either the carpet space or at separate tables in the wing that can be cleaned between use. **Classrooms will be setup with all tables facing forwards.**

Collaboration and group work remain an important part of what we do. However, pupils need to be working on separate paper and ICT equipment whilst collaborating.

There are occasions where the sharing of items of equipment is unavoidable. E.g. when playing tennis pupils will have individual rackets but will need to share a ball. The risk for this is reduced by handwashing at the beginning and end of the activity and equipment being cleaned frequently.

Hand washing

Pupils and staff need to wash their hands at the beginning and end of each school day as well as at key times during the school day. We will provide suitable soap and access to warm water. We also have a supply of hand sanitiser that can be used.

Please do not send pupils in with their own hand sanitiser as we are only allowed to use approved chemicals in school.

When we first started increasing our hand washing regime, we had several cases where pupils' hands became sore. We worked out that in most cases this was because pupils were putting the soap straight onto dry hands. When they wet their hands first, applied soap and then washed it seemed to improve. Please be vigilant and speak to us should the additional hand washing cause any problems with your child's hands. **Some children's hands became sensitive to hand sanitiser. Please let us know so we can direct them to using warm water and soap instead for all hand washing.**

All these measures will take a bit of getting used to again but we will endeavour to do our best to maintain these adjustments.

This line from the original guidance summarises it nicely:

'Both the approaches of separating groups and maintaining distance are not 'all-or-nothing' options, and will still bring benefits even if implemented partially.'

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Start and end of the day alterations

Normally, the arrival and drop off points are very busy. The footpath up Palmerston Road is definitely not built for social distancing. We will be continuing to operate a staggered drop off and collection to help maintain the year group bubbles.

Staggered drop off and collection

Year groups will have a different drop off and dismissal location at different times to usual. We would like children to arrive in the 10 minute window before their start time and they can go straight into the school upon arrival. Year 3 and 4 will enter through the usual entrance (marked A on the map). Upper school will walk around the school building to enter through the entrance of the north playground (marked B on the map). Usually before school, the children have a bit of a run around before the bell. Unfortunately, this is not something we can offer safely at this time in the day so whilst this plan is in place, please send them straight in through the gate once you have said your goodbyes in one of the two waiting areas.

Temporary year group start and finish times

Year Group	Start time	End time
Year 3	8.40 am	3.10 pm
Year 5	8.40 am	3.10 pm
Year 4	8.50 am	3.20 pm
Year 6	8.50 am	3.20 pm

Please do not arrive more than 10 minutes before start time.

We have tried to ensure the timings are not too early but also do not have too big an impact on parents/carers start times for work. Thank you in advance for any adaptations you are able to make to accommodate this. We are aware that this could create issues where there are siblings in different year groups or over in the infant school. If you have siblings who are both/all at Mengham Junior School you may drop your child off at the earliest of the year groups' start times and the eldest sibling/s can go straight to their class. If any of this causes problems that you are struggling to solve, please get in contact and we can see what can be arranged for individual cases.

One-way system

The temporary one-way system will also continue. It begins at the top of Palmerston Road. Please approach the school on the right hand side of the road, enter through the pedestrian gate, through the children's gate, around the school and back out through the car park gate, keeping to the right of the road as you leave. This will allow for you and others collecting and dropping off their child to maintain social distancing. The allotment carpark will be fenced off at the end to make it safe for pedestrians. From experience, we know that driving down this road causes many difficulties and frustrations. **Please do not try and drive down Palmerston Road to park at the start and end of the day as you will not be allowed access into the allotment area, there is also very rarely a single space in the road leading up to the carpark.** This is for the safety of all pupils and parents/carers. If you must drive to school, please park in the Legion carpark and join the one-way system at the Legion gate. The Bellway gate will be closed. Disabled blue badge holders will be allowed access but there may be some wait until there is a gap in pedestrians.

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Parent waiting areas

At drop off and collection please only wait in one of the parent waiting areas (see map). Please spread out and use all the space to help keep social distancing. Please also keep a walkway route clear across both playgrounds nearest the building.

Year 3 Collection

If you would like to allow you child to make their own way from school instead of a direct handover, then please speak to their class teacher and give your permission. It is then your responsibility to make sure they understand where they are meeting you and what to do in the unlikely event that you aren't there. We will continue to offer a direct hand over where that is preferred.

Year 4, 5 and 6 Collection

You previously let us know which of the below options you wanted:

- A. My child can be dismissed from the classroom and will make their way to the arranged meeting point either inside or outside the school grounds.
- B. My child will go to the main pick up point with the class teacher and a direct handover to a recognised adult will take place.

We will continue to follow what you previously told us. If you would like to change this then please let your class teacher know.

Unaccompanied pupils

Those children who are allowed to walk on their own, please ensure they understand the one-way system and the importance of keeping socially distanced.

Breakfast club

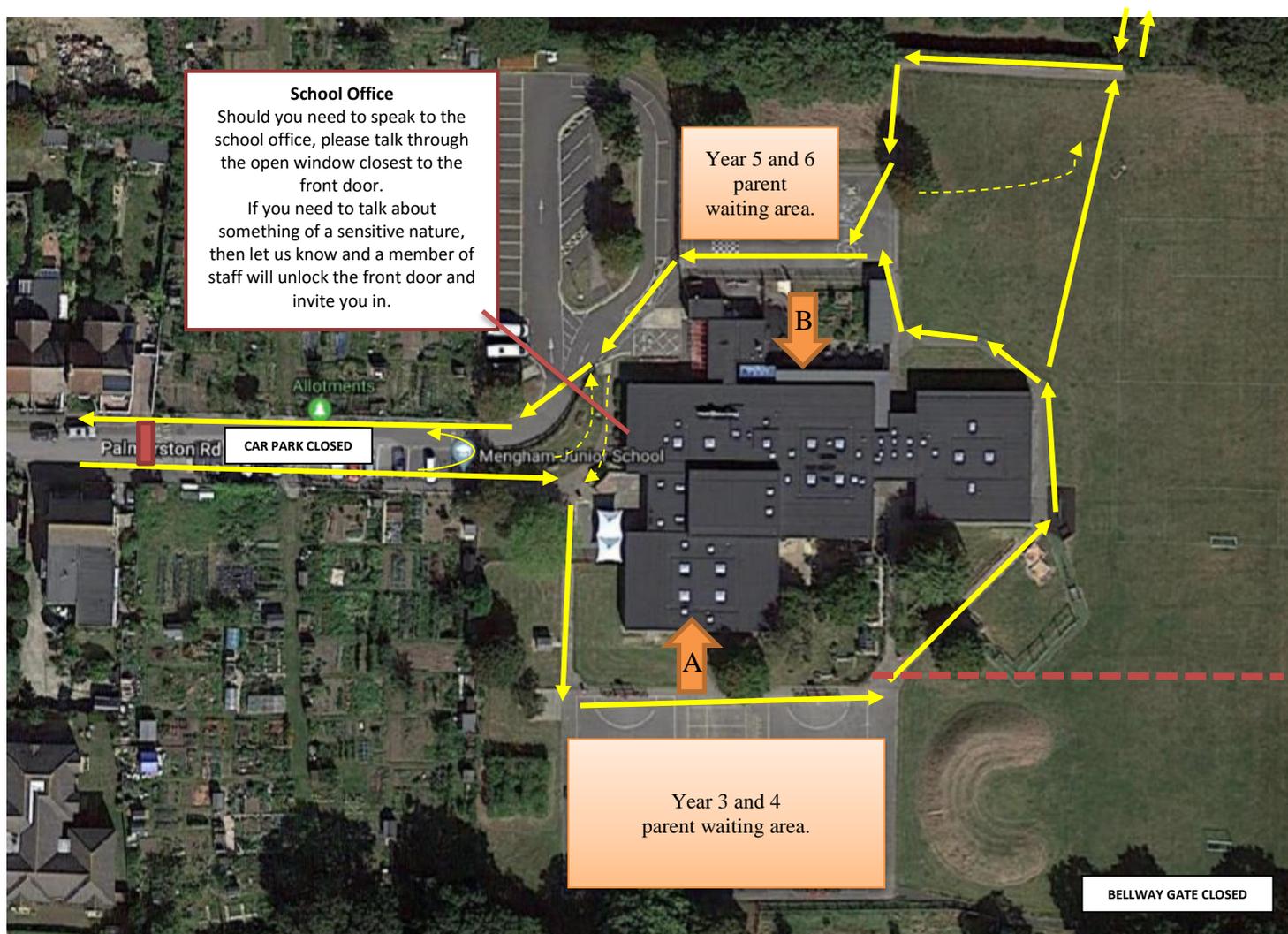
Breakfast club will be running as before (from 7.30). The only difference is once pupils have entered through the front office they will need to **go to the hall** and sit at the separate year group tables. Details can be found here:

<https://menghamjunior.co.uk/for-parents/breakfast-club>

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Drop off and collection map – 1 Way System



Arrow A – Year 3 and 4 pupils will enter and exit through this door (normal entrance to lower school).

Arrow B – Year 5 and 6 pupils will enter and exit through this door (outdoor classroom/school allotment door).

We would ask that parents and carers, do not enter the building please. There will be staff outside at drop off and pick up should you need to speak to anyone.

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The procedure in the event of COVID-19 Symptoms

This whole section is different from our September letter as it is taken from the latest guidance.

The guidance states:

Pupils, staff and other adults must not come into the school if:

- *they have one or more coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms*
- *a member of their household (including someone in their support bubble or childcare bubble if they have one) has coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms*
- *they are required to quarantine having recently visited countries outside the Common Travel Area*
- *they have had a positive test*

In the event this happens, please inform the school.

Where symptoms develop, please get a COVID-19 test. Once a test result comes back, (it seems to take about 24 hours) then please contact the school again. If the result is negative (has not got it) and if the pupil is feeling well then they can return to school.

The guidance also states:

Anyone told to isolate by NHS Test and Trace or by their public health protection team has a legal obligation to self-isolate, but you may leave home to avoid injury or illness or to escape risk of harm.

If anyone in your school develops a new and continuous cough or a high temperature, or has a loss of, or change in, their normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia), you:

- *must send them home to begin isolation - the isolation period includes the day the symptoms started and the next 10 full days*
- *advise them to follow the guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection*
- *advise them to arrange to have a test as soon as possible to see if they have coronavirus (COVID-19)*

Other members of their household (including any siblings and members of their support or childcare bubble if they have one) should self-isolate. Their isolation period includes the day symptoms started for the first person in their household, or the day their test was taken if they did not have symptoms, whether this was a Lateral Flow Device (LFD) or Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) test, and the next 10 full days. If a member of the household starts to display symptoms while self-isolating they will need to restart the 10 day isolation period and book a test.

If anyone tests positive whilst not experiencing symptoms but develop symptoms during the isolation period, they must restart the 10 day isolation period from the day they developed symptoms.

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In the event of a positive test schools are required to follow the following guidance:

You must take swift action when you become aware that someone who has attended has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) having developed symptoms and taken a PCR test outside of school.

The advice service (or PHE local health protection team if escalated) will work with you to guide you through the actions you need to take. Based on their advice, you must send home those people who have been in close contact with the person who has tested positive, advising them to self-isolate immediately and for the next 10 full days counting from the day after contact with the individual who tested positive.

With our current setup, a positive case in a pupil or staff will likely result in the whole year group bubble needing to self-isolate for the 10 days.

This document, the government guidance and our own risk assessment are extensive and run the risk of being overwhelming when read. From our experiences throughout the last year, we have found the school atmosphere was not one of anxiety and worry. It was quite the opposite. Pupils and staff were pleased to be back in school and happy to see their friends. Everyone got used to new alterations quickly and the vast majority of what we love about our school continued.

It is important that we are thorough and the whole school community work together to take sensible precautions whilst the virus remains in the country. We believe that the adjustments are manageable and will allow the children, and in turn adults, to get back to something closer to normality.

Thank you for your support so far and for your efforts as we take the next step to a full reopening. If you are worried about March 8th, then we would encourage you to get in contact with the school so we can work together to make it successful.

We are all really looking forward to having the school under one roof **AGAIN**.

See you on the **8th March!**



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