



Branscombe Church of England Primary School
Branscombe
Seaton
Devon
EX12 3DA

Executive Headteacher: Mrs Katie Gray

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31st May 2020

Dear Parents

Since the announcement was made that schools were going to re-open for a small number of pupils in a safe, phased and well considered way, we have been working long hours to find ways in which that could happen at Branscombe CE Primary School.

We have been determined to do the very best we can do within a range of important safety constraints, following DFE guidance and taking advice from the Local Authority and relevant governing bodies.

Our planning and preparation has been driven by the legal completion of a Risk Assessment document provided by the Local Authority. This has identified the factors which have determined our decision making throughout this process. The measures we are taking are designed to support the safe return to learning whilst protecting all children, parents and staff, for as long as the risk to health still exists. As part of our prioritisation we have had to consider the appropriateness and availability of spaces in the school as well as the availability of staff, some of whom are currently shielding.

I am pleased to say that the Governors of the school have agreed a plan for a phased return at Branscombe. From Monday 8th June, we anticipate that we will be able to welcome back the older children in nursery (aged 3+) and pupils that are Reception age – as well as children of Key Workers and vulnerable children who have already been attending. **However, this date may need to be put back if orders of sanitiser, cleaning materials, PPE etc haven't arrived in time. As you will appreciate these items are in high demand.** Unfortunately, due to the space in school and staffing required we are unable to open for other year groups at this time. Government guidelines encouraged us to begin the opening for the youngest children in the age categories that were chosen nationally for the phased return. Once we have a clear idea of children requiring spaces we will start to look at opening for Year 1 and lastly Year 6, if and when it is safe to do so.

School is going to look a very different place from before The Lockdown began. I hope that the information in this letter answers any queries you may have. I apologise for its length - the letter is detailed because what we have to do is quite complicated.

Bubbles of Children

To help to keep everyone safe we need to try to control the risk of transmission. Therefore, pupils and staff will be working in smaller classes, called 'bubbles'. Bubbles will work in isolation to the other bubbles. Social distancing for young children is a recognisable problem and we are not going to deny that this is going to be very hard to achieve. The school has put into place what it considers to be appropriate measures in order to encourage and support children and staff at a time when social distancing is still required to take place.

- Children will be allocated to key worker/vulnerable pupil groups or age appropriate bubbles.
- Each bubble will be staffed by at least two members of staff and children may not be taught by their usual teacher.
- The amount of contact between different groups of children will be limited. This means that your child may not be in the same group as their friends and therefore they will be unable to play together.
- Each bubble will stay in the same room all the time, including for lunch. They will work outside as much as possible too.
- Breaktimes for 'bubbles' will be staggered and pupils will not interact with other 'bubbles'.
- The playground and grass areas will be zoned off for use by the different 'bubbles'.
- There will be no gatherings during the school day e.g. collective worship.



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- The use of general play equipment will not be allowed.
- The environment and classroom layout will incorporate two metre distancing. Timetables will introduce staggered breaks and lunchtime arrangements.
- All movement across the site, via appropriate one-way systems, 2 metre queuing measures, and social distancing will be in place in line with guidance.
- Children will have access to sanitiser and regular opportunities to wash their hands with soap and water.
- They will have timetabled access to the school toilets. We will ensure that children who visit the designated toilets are supervised and follow sanitisation procedures. Queuing for the toilets will be within the 2m social distancing measures.
- All classrooms will be as well ventilated as we can make them, whilst still considering school security.

Children of Key Workers and Vulnerable Pupils

The children of key workers and vulnerable pupils who have been accessing child care will continue to be offered a place. This will continue to be full time, running from Monday to Friday each week.

- These sessions are allocated by the school to individuals and any change of circumstance or need must be reported to the school office.
- Sessions must be booked at least 5 days in advance so that we can ensure that staffing levels are appropriate.

Lunch

The school kitchen will continue to provide lunch – details of this are yet to be confirmed. School meals will be handed out and eaten in the classrooms. Children can bring in a packed lunch too if they prefer. School meals should be ordered in the same way as usual although the menu will be different.

Since the start of COVID19 we understand that there has been a 60% increase in families eligible for Universal Credit. If you think that you might now be entitled to Free School Meals, please do not hesitate to contact the school office by email and we can provide help and support for you to do this. Any claims for FSM support the overall school budget income.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- Government guidelines say that children and staff don't generally need to wear PPE. The guidance says that changing habits, cleaning and hygiene are effective measures in controlling the spread of the virus. Face coverings (or any form of medical mask where instructed to be used for specific clinical reasons) should not be worn in any circumstance by those who may not be able to handle them as directed (for example, young children, or those with special educational needs or disabilities) as it may inadvertently increase the risk of transmission.
- If your child chooses to wear a mask on their way to school these must be removed at the school gate, placed in a bag which is tied, and taken home by the parents.
- For usual intimate care e.g. nappy changing, staff will have access to gloves and aprons and sanitiser.
- If a child or member of staff becomes unwell during the day then there is an isolation room where they will go. Whilst a staff member looks after the poorly child in this room there will be face masks and visors, gloves and aprons available for staff use. The child or adult will stay there until they are collected.



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Hygiene and Cleaning

Social distancing needs to be combined with good personal hygiene, including frequent hand washing with running water and soap for at least twenty seconds and dried thoroughly. All children will be required to wash their hands on entering school, at regular intervals during the day, and before they go home. Pupils will be encouraged to adopt good respiratory hygiene practices, including the disposal of used tissues. We have purchased new lidded bins in all areas.

Our cleaning staff, supported by all school staff, will work to keep high standards of cleaning, including the emptying of bins throughout the day, and the cleaning of high-traffic surfaces and door handles during the day.

Additional protective measures, such as increased cleaning and encouraging good hand and respiratory hygiene will be in place

- Staff will receive training linked to all new safety measures and precautions.
- Once children are back in school, all frequently touched surfaces, equipment, door handles and toilets used will be cleaned regularly throughout the day by staff and again by cleaning staff at the end of each day.
- The availability of soap and hot water will be in every toilet area. We will encourage the cleaning of hands more often than usual – washing hands thoroughly for 20 seconds with running water and soap and drying them thoroughly.
- The location of hand sanitiser stations will be around the school.
- The location of lidded bins in classrooms and in other key locations will be around the site for the disposal of tissues and any other waste, which will be emptied regularly.
- The provision of a good supply of disposable tissues will be available to implement the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach to ensure good respiratory hygiene in each classroom.

Your role in keeping everyone safe

The health, safety and wellbeing of pupils and staff remains paramount and so we need to insist that you continue to comply with Government Guidelines in relation to social distancing. This advice can be obtained from <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

If it becomes clear that families have not complied with Government Guidance in relation to social distancing, then a period of self isolation may be needed for their children before they can return to school.

Maintaining the integrity of the 'bubbles' is essential. At the start of each day we would like you to do the following:

- Check your child for symptoms of COVID-19 (<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>)

Seek medical advice if you have symptoms and **inform the school office urgently to let us know.**

- Ensure that your children wash their hands for 20 seconds using water and soap before and after school.
- Discuss the importance of social distancing with your child.
- Talk to them about any worries they might have.

What happens if there is a suspected infection in a bubble?

If we have a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the school population, I will inform parents.

Guidance says that if there is a suspected case in a bubble then the child or staff member involved will be eligible to access a test and should self isolate (along with their family members) until the result comes back. Teaching and Learning will continue in school for the rest of the bubble if staffing allows. If the test is negative the child will return to school. If the test is positive



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the child or staff member will be advised to self isolate for 7 days. The rest of their bubble will also then be sent home and advised to self-isolate for 14 days. The other household members of that bubble do not need to self-isolate unless the child or staff member they live with in that group subsequently develops symptoms.

If a staff member becomes ill with any illness then we may have to close the bubble until they are well enough to return due to staffing levels.

What will school be like?

This will be different to normal school.

We understand that children will probably be feeling unsettled and we will therefore be making their social and emotional needs our first priority on return. We have been working as a staff to ensure resources are available to do this.

Pupils will need to bring:

- A filled, named water bottle, a sun hat and a packed lunch if they aren't having school dinner.
- Please ensure you have put sun-cream on them as staff won't be able to do this for them.
- Pupils must not bring any bags to school other than a named packed lunch box/bag.
- **Pupils must not bring anything else to school** - individual named stationery packs will be given to each child that won't be shared.
- Pupils will not bring reading books home - please use our online reading resources - Bug Club.
- Pupils should wear freshly cleaned clothes every day. This is preferably school uniform but if they have grown out of it during lockdown there is no need to buy new at this point in the school year. The important thing is to wear FRESHLY CLEANED clothes each day. School shoes should be worn with uniform. Trainers should be worn with other clothes.
- Any notes or dinner money etc should be in a named envelope and please ask your child to hand it to the adult as they are collected from the gate.

What to do at Drop Off and Pick Up times

Drop Off

There will be staggered drop off times which you will be informed of individually according to the bubble your child has been placed into.

- Please avoid driving to school if at all possible to avoid crowding in the parking areas.
- Only one adult is allowed at drop off per family.
- Please do not congregate around the school premises after drop off.
- Parents will wait outside the main gates keeping a 2m distance from each other.
- There will be markings on pathways to encourage social distancing.
- Children will enter the site without their adult. Parents will not be able to access the school site at all during the school day.
- Children will be collected one at a time from the gate by members of staff from their bubble.



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- Children will be asked to sit in a hoop on the playground floor whilst they wait for the whole bubble to have arrived.
- Children will enter the school buildings through different doors than normal. On entering school, your child will be directed to line up - keeping 2m apart - to wash their hands. A member of staff will supervise this and direct the children to their seats in the classroom. Personal possessions eg coats/lunchboxes will be kept under their desk.

Late Arrival

Prompt arrival is very important for social distancing. Parents who are late must contact the school by telephone or intercom buzzer and wait at the school gate. Arrangements will be made to meet you at the gate.

Pick up - end of day

There will be staggered pick up times which you will be informed of individually according to the bubble your child has been placed into.

- Only one adult is allowed per family.
- Please arrive promptly at your allocated time to avoid congregating around the school premises.
- Please wait at the main gate.
- There will be markings to encourage social distancing.
- There will be a one way queuing system - please queue safely up the lane, not on the school steps, then as you leave with your child walk down the steps and turn right to walk down the lane.
- Your child will wait in a hoop on the playground and we will send them to you in order of the parent queue.
- Parents must not enter the school site.

Breakfast and After School Clubs

Due to groups mixing and new groups of children forming, this facility is not available to parents at this time.

Home Learning

Home learning activities will continue to be put onto the school website for children who aren't attending school.

What happens if I decide not to send my child into school?

From June 1st schools will resume taking the attendance register and continue completing the daily data returns to the DFE.

However, whilst parents and carers of eligible year groups, and critical workers/parents and carers of vulnerable children, are encouraged to bring their children to school, they will not face fines or other sanctions if they don't.

Understandably, some parents have indicated that initially they may not wish to bring their children into the offered sessions. Parents who wish to change their mind for their child to attend can do this by email. School will reply to confirm that there are available places. The place offered will be in line with available timings. You must give the school at least five days' notice that this is something you wish to do.



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School Office and Contacting Us

For much of the time the office will be closed, the admin team are either working from home or in isolation from others. Visitors to the school will be minimal and by appointment only. The office will not be open to parents, all communication should be done through email (admin@branscombe.devon.sch.uk) or by leaving an answer phone message. Please be patient with us as not all adults are in school or available as normal.

Each week we will review the effectiveness of the safety measures, the operation of social distancing, the availability of staff who are not ill, shielding or in a vulnerable category. We will keep you informed about plans to welcome back the other year groups. We will communicate any necessary changes needed to parents.

If your child is one of the nursery or reception children, or if you are a keyworker who now needs childcare please could you confirm via email (admin@branscombe.devon.sch.uk) that they will be returning to school on 8th June. This is important for our planning and for the health and safety of pupils and staff. The quicker we know about take up of places the quicker we can make decisions about opening up for the other year groups.

I apologise for this rather lengthy letter but it is important that we communicate our decisions and plans clearly to you. The Risk Assessment does not give us any room for negotiation, only a planned and phased re-introduction of children back into school which is supported by the Local Authority and agreed by the Governing Body. Every school in the country will have a slightly different response according to their needs and circumstance and we hope that you will feel able to work with us at this time.

It is upsetting not to be able to see all of the children back into school together at this time but we are following strict safety guidelines to ensure that our measures are working well and keeping us safe during this Pandemic. Thank-you for your patience and understanding but most of all thank-you for the support and good wishes received throughout the past weeks of Lockdown. We have appreciated them very much.

Kind regards

Katie Gray

(Executive Headteacher)