

18.5.20

PARENTS AND CARERS OF PUPILS IN RECEPTION, YEAR 1 AND YEAR 6

Dear Parents and Carers of all Oak Trees Multi Academy Trust School,

Like many of you, Oak Trees MAT Trust leaders have been trying to work out what the changes outlined by the Prime Minister and the subsequent guidance provided by the Department for Education mean for us – and for our schools in particular. We are looking forward to our schools being filled again with happy children, enjoying learning and the company of their classmates. It is clear however, that we must go step by step and above all, ensure that we are keeping everyone safe. We have studied the guidance documents very carefully and would like to share our initial thinking on this, so you are aware of any implications for you and your children.

All Oak Trees MAT schools are already open to the children of key workers and vulnerable children. Children in these groups are now being encouraged to attend if they are not already doing so, therefore numbers are likely to increase. We have also been advised that all children must be in small groups of no more than 15.

Schools are being asked to prepare for children in Nursery/F1 (if they have one), Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 to begin a return to school, **no earlier than 1st June 2020**. These children must also be in small groups, no more than 15.

This guidance gives schools in the Trust, and throughout the country, much to consider. Schools will be limited by how many groups of no more than 15 they can accommodate in suitable spaces in schools. For example, a typical Primary school with 7 classrooms plus a hall would only be able to accommodate 8 groups of no more than 15 – a maximum of 120 children; just over half the number of children usually in the school.

Schools will also be limited by the numbers of staff available. Staff who are shielding will not be able to return to school at this point and have been instructed that they must remain working at home. Our schools may be affected by this necessary measure.

As children must be in small groups, they may well not be with their own class teacher, their friends or in their own classroom. The government guidance says that as far as possible, they will need to remain with the same group and the same adult while they are in school. Breaks must be taken in the same small groups, staggered so that the children do not mix in larger groups. As a result, playtimes and lunchtimes will be different than the children are used to.

Our schools will need to carry out additional stringent cleaning everyday so that when children leave, the spaces and resources that they have used are thoroughly cleaned to reduce the risk of the spread of the virus. This is already happening daily but as numbers increase, there will be more areas and resources to clean. Additional time for cleaning will have to be factored into any arrangements that our schools make for the return of more pupils.

The guidance states that all classroom items and resources that cannot be easily cleaned must be put away. Activities must be limited to things that can be cleaned regularly. In early years settings this will inevitably change the classroom environment the children are familiar with. For example, there would be no sand, water, playdough or dressing up clothes. We must avoid children sharing resources where we can and if they must share, we need to be able to clean equipment after each use.

let's school

Stanton Road
Primary School
Stanton Road
Bebington, Wirral
UK
CH63 3HW

Website: oaktreesmat.co.uk
Telephone: 0151 334 1398
Email: admin@oaktreesmat.co.uk

Companies house Number:
1064 1561

Our schools
Great Meols Primary School
Poulton Lancelyn Primary School
Egremont Primary School
Stanton Road Primary School
Church Drive Primary School



So what does this mean for parents of Oak Trees MAT schools?

- Children of key workers and vulnerable children must continue to be accommodated first. Schools will then be able to see how many additional children they can care for dependent on spaces and staffing available.

This clearly may mean that not all children in Nursery, F2, Y1 and Y6 will be able to attend. We are looking carefully at this, considering what provision we can safely offer. It will not be the same for all schools in the Trust – this will depend on the accommodation and staffing available in each school. Whilst we accept that we need to social distance, it is widely accepted that this is impossible to completely eradicate in a school setting and as such our goal is to maximise social distancing as much as possible with the premise that it is not possible to prevent pupils and staff coming into close contact over the course of the week.

- School will be different for children returning. The children need to understand that they may not be with their own teacher or in their own classroom as this may not be possible. Routines and systems will be unfamiliar and more formal than usual. They will however, be well cared for and welcomed by the adult who is working with them.

When the time comes for some children to return, which may be June 1st or later depending on whether we are fully ready to open, our schools will be doing everything we can to follow the guidance issued by the DfE to keep everyone safe and parents will need to help too:

- ✓ You will be given staggered times to arrive at school and to collect children so that schools can try to safely manage this and ensure there is minimal adult contact – 2m distancing between adults must be maintained. Parents must not gather at the school gates when arriving or departing.
- ✓ Only one adult can accompany children to school.
- ✓ Children must wear clean clothes each day to school.
- ✓ Families must continue to observe the current social distancing guidance out of school so must not be mixing with other households.

These are challenging times for us all. Many of you will be anxious to get back to work but many will be worried about sending children back to school. School staff understand and share those anxieties for their own children and families. Oak Trees MAT schools will do everything they can to respond to the guidance given by the government but will also be ensuring that we do this safely. If you feel the time is not right for your children to return, that is your choice. There is no compulsory education at the moment, and parents will not be penalised in any way for choosing to keep their children at home for a little longer.

As a Trust, we are working tirelessly to ensure that we can welcome children back to school as soon as we can. Headteachers meet with Trust leaders regularly, and all schools are risk assessing and action planning currently as to how best to safely organise the school for more pupils to return. Each school is carrying out all reasonable endeavours to prepare for a safe return. The Trust Board and Governing Bodies are also rigorously challenging schools to ensure that they are robust in their plans to return, and we have been well supported by our Health and Safety providers Ellis Whitham.

In the coming days, as the schools firm up risk assessments and plans to return, your Headteacher will write to you to outline further how the school is planning to open, including details of drop-off and pick-up times, lunchtime organisation and other relevant safety information. As stated previously, schools will only open when we feel that we have done everything to make them as safe as possible, and we may see different Trust schools opening on different dates and times to maximise safety.

Whilst June 1st is the suggested date for schools to re-open for more pupils and year groups, I would like to make clear that this is an aim rather than a definitive date to reopen. Oak Trees MAT has a duty of care to all staff and families to ensure the health, safety and welfare of everyone attending our schools, and as such we will only open to more children when we feel we have done everything we can to limit, but not eradicate, the risk of infection. This may mean different schools coming back on different dates and times. We understand that this may not be ideal for working parents, but as stated our number one priority must be putting in as many measures as possible to limit the risk of infection, and only when this is done will we consider opening for more pupils.

We would love nothing better than to have everything back to normal and to welcome your children back with open arms, but we are all in unprecedented times. Welcoming them back safely must be our priority and we know you would want this to be the case. Oak Trees MAT takes the duty of care to keep staff and pupils safe incredibly seriously, and any measures taken in the next few weeks to ensure safety of all will be the number one priority moving forward.

On 15.5.20 we asked you to let school know if you want a place for your child/children from 1st June (at the earliest). Having read this letter, you would now like to change your response, please email school to let us know (if you could do this by 12.00pm tomorrow that would be very helpful). The email address to send your responses to is helpmemilne@poultonlancelyn.wirral.sch.uk

Yours sincerely,



Tony Lacey

Chief Executive Officer

Oak Trees Multi Academy Trust

let's school

Stanton Road
Primary School
Stanton Road
Bebington, Wirral
UK
CH63 3HW

Website: oaktreesmat.co.uk
Telephone: 0151 334 1398
Email: admin@oaktreesmat.co.uk

Companies house Number:
1064 1561

Our schools

Great Meols Primary School
Poulton Lancelyn Primary School
Egremont Primary School
Stanton Road Primary School
Church Drive Primary School