



# Dereham Church of England Junior Academy

Headteacher: Mrs Kelly Scott

Littlefields, Dereham, Norfolk NR19 1BJ

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16<sup>th</sup> July 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

This letter sets out the arrangements we have put in place so we can open fully from September 2020.

Firstly, I would like to take this opportunity to thank parents and carers for their understanding and cooperation since we had to close to the majority of children from on Friday 20<sup>th</sup> March 2020. I know that this period has been challenging for many families.

I am pleased to let you know that we have taken the necessary steps that are required in order to reduce the risk of virus transmission in Dereham Church of England Junior Academy and we will continue to review our arrangements to ensure that they align with current advice where it changes.

It is understandable that our parents and carers are worried about the safety of their children who will be returning for the first time in September. It is important that we keep each other safe and we want to assure you about the measures that we have put in place in order to minimise the risk of transmission of COVID-19 and to ask you for your support with this. Please be aware there is a lot of information in the public domain that is not based on evidence and can cause increased anxiety. This is why we are ensuring that our response is appropriately based on the Government's scientific evidence.

This letter summarises our arrangements and also details how you can help us by working together. If any significant changes happen to these arrangements, we will keep you informed about them.

## **What we are doing to protect and support pupils and staff**

To reduce the transmission of the virus, a combination of approaches is required to break the chain of infection wherever possible. Public Health England are clear that if we follow these requirements the risk of transmission will be lowered.

### **Start and end of the school day**

As we have so many children at our school, to avoid congestion, we will have a staggered start and end to the school day. It is **incredibly important** that families stick to these times in order keep everyone safe and to ensure that traffic flows. The following arrangements are in place for the start and end of the school day:

	Yr3	Yr4	Yr5	Yr6
<b>Arrival Time</b>	Children can arrive any time between 8.30 and 8.55am			
<b>Where?</b>	Main Gate	Main Gate or Field Gate		
<b>Leaving Time</b>	2.45 for the first week (3.15 thereafter)	3.25		3.30
<b>Where?</b>	Main Gate	Main Gate or Field Gate		



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We have decided to have what we are calling a 'soft start' to the day which will allow families to arrive within a 30-minute window. This flexibility will mean that families can work around other arrangements such as dropping children off at other schools who may have set start times. **However, it is very important that children must be in school by 8.55am and not be in any earlier than 8.30am.**

It is essential that people continue to socially distance at all times, avoid gathering in groups and leave the premises as soon as possible to make sure there is no congestion.

If at all possible, walk or cycle to and from school rather than drive as this will help keep the flow of people entering and leaving. Alternatively, you could arrange for older children (not Y3) to meet you part way along the route rather than congregating on the school grounds. This is particularly important at the end of the day, when more people tend to gather at the same time. If you have to use your car to transport your child, please make sure you stay in the car and that your child is dropped off or collected swiftly.

Only members of a single household should travel together to and from school, by any means, and only one adult from the household should travel with pupils.

If a member of the household has an underlying health condition which means they are clinically vulnerable, they should not accompany pupils to school if it is possible for another member of the household to do so.

### **Cohorting of small groups (Bubbles)**

Pupils and staff have been assigned to bubbles who are separated within the school. Bubbles will not share spaces or resources unless they have been disinfected between use. For us, a bubble = a class. There are a few exceptions to this, one being members of staff who cover in other classes. This is allowed as strict social distancing between staff and pupils will still be adhered to.

Where possible, distancing will be maintained within their bubble by making changes to class spaces and limiting movement within the classroom. We know that younger pupils will not be able to keep apart at all times and this is why it is particularly important to separate different bubbles. We will maintain excellent hygiene standards by everyone handwashing more regularly and increasing our disinfection and cleaning arrangements.

We will carry out activities outside where we can, and we will open windows to increase ventilation inside the building when it is safe and appropriate to.

### **Universal hygiene**

We have implemented these universal hygiene measures and will be encouraging our pupils to do the same:

- Washing their hands (thoroughly with soap and water) often, following the [NHS guidance](#). Using alcohol-based hand sanitiser gel if soap and water isn't immediately available. Everyone should wash their hands on arrival at school, before eating, after coughing or sneezing, after visiting the toilet, as well as at other regular intervals throughout the day



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- **Catch it, Kill it, Bin it** - Covering their mouth and nose with a tissue or sleeve when sneezing and putting used tissues in the bin straight away. Always washing their hands afterwards
- Avoiding touching the eyes, nose or mouth if they haven't washed their hands
- Self-isolating if they or a member of their direct household has a new, continuous cough and/or high temperature/fever or a loss or change in their sense of taste or smell
- Going home if they develop symptoms, no matter how mild
- Washing their hands when they get home at the end of the day.

We will prompt and support pupils to do this at required intervals during the day and educate in handwashing where needed.

### **Cleaning and disinfection**

We have removed items that are difficult to clean and will continue with newly implemented arrangements to disinfect all contact points that are touched regularly such as tables, door handles, toilet flushers, educational equipment and taps. The school building is also cleaned and disinfected daily.

### **Lunchtime and school meals**

As with many areas of school, lunchtime arrangements may be a little different to normal for your child. However, we will continue with the same ordering system for lunches, so it is vital that you book and pay for a lunch through MyEd as usual.

The following arrangements will be different and in place from September:

- Lunchtimes will be 45 minutes long as opposed to 1 hour which reduces the opportunity of bubble mixing. This has worked very well during partial opening
- Lunchtime will be in two sittings:
  1. Years 3 & 5 = 11.45 – 12.30
  2. Years 4 & 6 = 12.30 – 1.15
- All lunches will be eaten in the classroom
- It is our intention that hot meals will still be provided, albeit with limited choice, and these will be delivered to classrooms.

### **Educating and supporting**

Children can become advocates in infection prevention at home and in their community by talking to others about how to prevent the spread of viruses, so we will be educating them about this in an age appropriate way.

We are very mindful about the anxiety children may experience and we will address this if the need arises by encouraging them to talk about their worries and experiences. It is normal that they may have different reactions and some may need to talk to teachers and you about how they are feeling.



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### Health

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- We will ask children about their health and if they have any symptoms on arrival at school and arrange for pupils to go home where necessary
- We will talk to pupils about symptoms and encourage them to tell a member of staff if they feel ill no matter how mild. We will also be keeping vigilant for any signs of symptoms and will be reminding everyone about this regularly
- If a pupil feels ill, we will keep them safe and move them away from others in a designated room while they wait to be collected. We will not leave a pupil who is ill where they are not safe to be left alone. In an emergency we will call the emergency services, but will continue to provide first aid for emergencies as we normally do. Staff will wear personal protective equipment if a pupil develops symptoms or requires first aid and we need to be in close contact with them
- Our staff will go home immediately if they become ill at work with symptoms, no matter how mild
- We have specific cleaning and disinfection arrangements planned in the event that a person develops symptoms at our school
- We will advise you if someone develops symptoms in the school or has tested positive, and will let you know what is happening or if there is anything that you need to do
- Some people may have been shielding or living with someone who has been shielding. This **does not** mean that your child must stay at home. However, if you feel your child needs an individual risk assessment for significant health needs, please contact us to arrange this.

### Bringing items from home

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It is very important that the number of things that come into school from home are kept to a minimum.

We will provide the children with all the stationery they need, so there is no need to bring in pencil cases with things in from home. We also ask that children do not bring in any personal items such as toys.

Below is a list of the things that children are allowed to bring into school. It is very short, as these things will be kept in classrooms so we don't want to take up too much space:

- **A small bag** - large enough to carry the things in this list. (These do not have to be plastic carrier bags as we insisted on during partial opening)
- **A coat**
- **A filled water bottle** – This will need to be filled at home and large enough for the whole day as we will be restricting the use of the water coolers in school
- **A snack** – Only fruit or vegetables as per our policy
- **A mobile phone** – *This should only be brought to school if it is absolutely necessary for safety reasons. They must be turned off and kept in the child's bag at all times and are not allowed to be used in school at all for safeguarding reasons. We take no responsibility for damaged or lost/stolen mobiles.*



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### Supporting each other

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Your support to help us achieve these standards in our school is vital. Please role model the hygiene behaviours that apply when you are at home and encourage your children to follow them. Please ensure that:

- Your child washes their hands before coming to school and on arriving home. Please support and encourage them to follow good hand and respiratory hygiene at all times
- You let us know if any member of your household tests positive for COVID-19 or you are asked to self-isolate through 'Track and Trace' and ensure that your child self-isolates for 14 days
- School uniform (including PE kit on a PE day) is worn at all times – see uniform information on the website. There is no need for clothes to be washed daily. Clothes washing routines can be completely normal
- Your child comes to school in their PE kit on days when they have PE (see third bullet point). Your child will need a tracksuit (or sweatshirt and jogging bottoms) to wear over their PE kit on these days as classrooms will be ventilated as per Public Health England advice and they may get cold
- If your child wears a face covering to travel to and from school, please provide them with a plastic bag in which to keep it during the school day. They will be asked to remove these at the gate before entering school
- Please come and collect your child as soon as you can if we ask you to. We'll contact you if they become ill with either a temperature, a change to their sense of taste, or a new, continuous cough
- **WE HAVE UP TO DATE CONTACT DETAILS AND THAT YOU OR A FAMILY MEMBER/KEY ADULT CAN BE CONTACTED AT ANY POINT DURING THE SCHOOL DAY.**

### Meetings and visitors

Guidance still states that meetings between yourself and the school should take place by telephone or internet and this includes informal conversations we might normally have.

So, if you need to speak to a member of staff, please continue to contact us in the way that you have during lockdown when the school has only been partially open. The best methods of contact are as follows (in this order):

1. Use the MyEd messaging system -we will get back to you as soon as possible
2. Phone the school office
3. Email the school office
4. Only come to the school office if absolutely necessary. We only allow one person in the reception area at any one time so it is likely one of the methods above will be much quicker!

Only absolutely essential face-to-face meetings will take place. Should a face-to-face meeting be required, the school will make specific arrangements with you and we will only meet with one parent if this is the case. **We will not meet with anyone on an ad hoc basis.**



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We have new safe arrangements for essential visitors who need to come onto site such as maintenance contractors. These arrangements have worked extremely well during lockdown when the school has been partially open and we are confident these will continue to work just as well during full opening.

We are really looking forward to welcoming your lovely children back in September. We know we can keep them safe and carry on the great work you have been doing since lockdown began nearly four months ago!

We realise this is a long letter and there is a lot of information contained within it. We will follow-up this letter with other information in the coming days and maybe even over the summer holiday. We want to make sure that you receive any new information as it comes to light, so that you will be as happy as possible about your child's return to school.

Thank you for your understanding and cooperation. If you have any further queries, please contact us using the methods we have outlined above and we will get back to you as soon as possible.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. Scott'.

Mrs K. Scott  
Head Teacher