



Greenway Primary
& Nursery School



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Head Teacher: Katharine Ellwood

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Dear Parents/Carers

Returning to School

Thank you for your patience. Having absorbed huge amounts of Government and Local Authority guidance and having considered the detailed feedback that we received from our survey, we have been able to complete all the necessary and very detailed risk assessments for staff, pupils and for the school itself. This means that we are now in a position to share with you general arrangements that we are able to put in place for a return to school for some year groups on Monday 1 June should this be deemed appropriate by Government.

Safety

We can only reiterate what we have said in our previous correspondence that it is our **absolute priority** to ensure as best we can that on school re-opening **staff and children are safe in our school environment**. Governors and staff want all children to be back at school and continuing with their learning as soon as possible, but we need to ensure that we do this as safely as possible.

You will appreciate that it is Government rather than the school who will determine whether Greenway will re-open to some year groups on 1 June. The Government will base their decision upon the five key tests set by them which will justify changes being made. We understand that a decision will be made in this respect by Friday 29 May at the latest.

You will have seen a lot of recent media coverage as to whether schools will re-open and around the fact that some Local Authorities are not recommending that their schools do so based on their own local data. Hertfordshire County Council's position remains at present that *'We are confident that schools will accept their responsibility to seek to give effect to the government's decision that schools should partially re-open in June and more extensively thereafter'*.

Survey Results

We are very grateful to all those parents who completed our short survey – we had an overwhelming response with 180 returns covering 209 out of a possible 243 children.

Currently of those who responded:

- approximately two thirds of children in Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 wish to return to school on 1 June;
- a small group of children whose parents are key workers now wish to attend school from 1 June should we re-open;
- responses for children in Years 2-5 were slightly lower but even so, approximately half the class in each of these year groups has indicated that if school re-opens to them later in June they would wish to attend;

- we anticipate that if restrictions ease/confidence grows these pupil numbers may increase.

We believe that this demonstrates huge confidence in the school and are immensely heartened by this. We continue, however, to understand that individual families are facing a wide range of differing circumstances and entirely respect the decisions taken by some who have said they would prefer that their child/ren does not return in the early days and others who are undecided as to what to do.

Logistical Challenges

While the survey has presented us with some very helpful information which has supported us with our planning we have also been presented with some challenges by Government, not least as to how we radically change our school environment and practises and accommodate pupils in classrooms limited to 15 children in a short time frame with (understandably) no indication as to how long such arrangements will continue. Prior to the temporary closure of the school in March we had 8 classes of approximately 30 children with each class being taught by a teacher, alongside teaching assistants deployed to some classes.

If all children attending Greenway were now to return to school in the summer term, adhering to the current guidelines of groups limited to 15 children, we would need 16 classrooms and an equivalent number of teachers/teaching assistants able to lead a class under the direction of a teacher. We simply do not have this capacity/resource.

Our immediate priority is to prepare to welcome those children deemed eligible to return on 1 June who wish to do so. On current numbers this will amount to:

- 9 classes (which will be called 'bubbles') limited to 15 children maximum led by two staff ie each year group returning to school will be split into two small classes and we will have one key worker class. We must stress that there will be no immediate return to the national curriculum for those attending school;
- staffing to support those children eligible for school who need 1 to 1 support;

You will appreciate that in making our decisions we have had to consider very many factors including that a small number of staff will be unable to return to the school site when school re-opens for personal (clinical) reasons, which have been risk assessed by school following DfE and NHS guidelines.

The Government has indicated that it is '*...asking schools to welcome back eligible pupils full-time....(but they) do not expect schools to implement flexible approaches, such as rota systems*'. However, the Local Authority understands that it '*....may well not be possible for every child in each of (the) year groups (highlighted) to return to school (on 1 June)*' and that '*...it will not be equally feasible for every schoolto implement the government's plans according to the prescribed provisional timetable*'.

Year Groups Returning to Greenway on or around 1 June

As stated previously the Government has required schools to give **the highest priority to the youngest children.**

With this in mind Governors and I have agreed in conjunction with the Local Authority that at the point the Government indicates that schools should re-open (which we are currently anticipating will be 1 June or thereabouts), **Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 pupils** will be welcomed back to Greenway **Monday-Thursday inclusive but NOT Friday.**

For **Year 6 pupils only**, our staffing availability across the school means that children will not be able to attend all four days and instead one 'bubble' will attend Monday and Tuesday while the other 'bubble' will attend Wednesday and Thursday.

In 'normal' times teachers have what is called PPA time during the school week to prepare lessons. As they are now going to be staying with their allocated 'bubble' during the whole day, that time will not be available. School will therefore be closed to Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 every Friday to allow teachers time to prepare lessons (for those in school as well as remote learning activities for those who are not).

Children whose parents are key workers in all year groups, who the Government says must be the highest priority of all, will also return from 1 June or thereabouts, with provision available Monday – Friday inclusive. Key Worker parents of these children are aware from our individual conversations with them this week that if they require provision on a Friday, their children will be placed in the Key Worker 'bubble'. However, if they do not require Friday provision and their year group is returning on 1 June, Key Worker parents have been able to choose for their child to be in a 'bubble' with their classmates and to attend school on Monday – Thursday only. No child can be in more than one 'bubble' (to assist tracking and isolating in the event of an outbreak).

Following the school's detailed risk assessments, Breakfast Club and WACCY will not be open for the time being.

With current restrictions in place it would seem unlikely that we will be able to open the school to **Years 2-5 pupils** later in the summer term. However, we will closely scrutinise any possible changes to Government restrictions.

We are having to take into account numerous factors as to which children will be placed in which 'bubble'. Some decisions will be the direct result of the school's risk assessments based on information that may not be widely known and that may also be confidential in nature. We do of course understand that children may want to be with their friends and/or their 'old' teacher. We are confident that if your child will be returning to school they will be with good friends. We would ask you to respect the decisions taken by school in this respect. Knowing your children as we do, we will do our very best to ensure that their return is as easy as possible for them and that they feel comfortable in their 'bubble'.

We are finalising the allocation of children to their 'bubbles' and the allocation of which days Year 6 will be in school and we will communicate this with you shortly.

Home Learning Activities

We will continue to review our provision and teachers will plan home learning activities for those children who are not at school and this will continue to be uploaded every two weeks onto the school website. The same home learning activities will be delivered to those children attending school, however a key focus will also be on their wellbeing and supporting the children adjusting to school, with the new routines and procedures that they will need to follow.

Resources on the Wellbeing tab on the school website homepage are routinely being updated and we hope that, whether your child/ren is remaining at home or returning to school, you are able to make use of these.

Practicalities for Children Returning to School

We appreciate that you will have a lot of questions as to the practicalities of how the return to school will be managed and to this end we propose providing you shortly with clear and comprehensive guidelines for you to share with your child/ren as you prepare those who are eligible for a possible return to school on 1 June.



We are also working on a letter for your child/ren, inviting them back into school that we hope will give them more of a flavour of what to expect from their new environment.

Finally...

The decision you have communicated to us at this stage, about whether or not you would like your child to return to Greenway, is not fixed or final. It is possible for you to change your mind and ask for your child to return to school (assuming they are eligible to do so) when you have currently indicated the opposite, and our 'bubble' arrangements have been modelled to cater for that. It is also possible for you to withdraw your child/ren at any point, or to provide evidence that you are a Key Worker who needs provision that you did not previously require. All we ask is that you communicate with us as promptly as you can.

We all need to keep in mind that circumstances are changing and that we are all coping in different ways with different sets of challenges. We hope that you are feeling safe, well and able to make the best of what is a very unusual time. However, we also recognise that some within our community will be feeling anxious and struggling more than others, so we ask that everyone tries their best to connect positively (at a social distance of course) to support one another and to be kind.

Please rest assured that we are all trying to do our absolute best for you and your children. We have missed them and can't wait to see them all again, but we trust you understand that many decisions are simply outside of our control.

As always please do feel free to contact the school should you have any queries or concerns at admin@greenway.herts.sch.uk.

Regards

Katharine Ellwood
Headteacher

Elizabeth O'Reilly
Chair of Governors