



Greenway Primary  
& Nursery School



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Head Teacher: Katharine Ellwood

Wednesday 17 June 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

**URGENT - Return to School for ALL Year Groups from 22 June 2020**

Thank you for your patience. We trust that you are all keeping well.

You will recall from our previous communications that the offer that we were able to make for those children eligible to return to school on 1 June was always to remain available until such time as Government stated otherwise. The Government ambition in mid-May had been to re-open primary schools to all year groups on 22 June. For this to happen, some of the restrictions imposed by Government would have had to have been relaxed.

Since then, you will have seen a lot of media coverage about whether or not primary schools would in fact re-open to all pupils before the end of the summer term and around the fact that some Local Authorities were not recommending that their schools do so based on their own local data.

The Government issued written guidance on 15 June stating in summary that *'there is no expectation on primary schools to welcome back additional children where they do not have capacity to do so'* but that *'It is up to schools to decide which pupils to prioritise, based on their knowledge of their children and communities.'* and based on the fact that schools continue to adopt *'.....the approaches set out in the protective measures guidance and their own risk assessment'*. Government made clear that schools would not be entitled to any additional funding, staff or classrooms to support more children returning to school in the summer term.

We know from the recent parent survey that overwhelmingly you want us to get your children back into school. Governors and staff are clear that they want all children to be back at school and continuing with their learning as quickly as possible, but we need to be sure that we do this as safely as possible. With this in mind, and having taken on board all the relevant Government and Local Authority advice, guidance and statements, we have updated our detailed risk assessments (covering staff, pupils and the school itself) and produced a plan that will allow **children in all year groups to spend time back at Greenway from Monday 22 June** in a way that we are confident remains as safe as possible for everyone.

However, we trust you will understand that getting every child who wants to return, back to school, will mean changes for almost every family ie for those of you with children who have already returned to school as well as for those for whom returning to school will be new.

## **Safety**

We can only reiterate what we have said in our previous communications that it is our **absolute priority** to ensure as best we can that **staff and children are safe in our school environment**.

We have been absolutely delighted as to how well staff and those children who returned to school have coped – their ability to adapt to new routines, to classrooms which probably feel a bit different, and sometimes to different staff, has been brilliant. Regular handwashing has become second nature to all, and the children have even enjoyed their new cleaning responsibilities!

## **Logistical Challenges**

Since 1 June, schools locally and nationally have needed to offer different types of provision to eligible year groups depending upon their own specific circumstances. We have been **incredibly fortunate** at Greenway in having all our teaching staff in school teaching from 1 June, which has meant that we have had around 100 eligible children (from Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6) back at Greenway for nearly three weeks.

If all children attending Greenway were now to return to school full time in the summer term, adhering to the current guidelines of 'bubbles' of 15 pupils 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 or any funding to support this.

As a result, changes to the existing arrangements in place since 1 June need to be made to enable us to extend access to school to the children in Years 2, 3, 4 and 5 who also now wish to return.

## **Plans moving forwards**

**For those of you with children in Nursery, Reception and Year 1 who have already returned to school, your provision will reduce from 4 days to 2 days per week in school.** We appreciate that this may be disappointing for many of you but trust you share with us the desire that every child in our school community should have the same opportunity to come back to Greenway before the summer holidays.

**For those children who have already returned in Year 6, provision will remain unchanged at 2 days per week in school.**

**For children in Years 2, 3, 4 & 5 we are able to offer provision of 2 days per week in school.**

In welcoming all children back to school from Monday 22 June we are currently required to retain 'bubbles' of a maximum of 15 pupils only (to assist with tracking and isolating in the event of an outbreak). The following arrangements will therefore be in place **for the following three weeks** (see below):

- In creating the 'bubbles', priority has been given to siblings so that families will attend school on the same days;
- Every child within the school has been allocated to a 'bubble';
- Bubble A for each year group will attend school on Monday and Tuesday each week;
- Bubble B for each year group will attend school on Wednesday and Thursday each week;
- Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 will remain as much as possible in their current 'bubbles' – you will be advised as to whether your child is in Bubble A or Bubble B shortly;
- Years 2, 3, 4 & 5 will be split into 2 'bubbles' per year group limited to 15 children maximum. We will let you know whether your child is in Bubble A or Bubble B for their year group shortly;
- Children will not be in school on Friday;

**Children whose parents are key workers in all year groups**, who the Government says must be the highest priority of all, will have provision available Monday – Thursday inclusive as now. Keyworker parents of these

children are aware from our individual conversations with them this week that if they require provision their child/ren will be placed in the 'Key Worker' bubble. However, if they do not need this and wish their child/ren to be in a 'bubble' with their peers, they will be placed in Bubble A or B for their year group and attend for 2 days only each week. **No child can be in more than one 'bubble'.**

We have had to consider many factors when deciding which children will be placed in which 'bubble' not least where a family has two or more children at the school. Some decisions are also the direct result of the school's risk assessments based on information that will not be widely known or that is confidential. It has been a carefully thought through process and we are confident that if your child is returning to school they will be with friends. Knowing your children as we do, we will do our absolute best to ensure that their return is as easy as possible for them and that they feel comfortable in their 'bubble'. We would ask you to support and respect the decisions taken by school.

Breakfast Club and WACCY will remain closed for the time being.

### **Home Learning Activities**

We will continue to review our provision but regardless, teachers will continue to plan home learning activities for children when they are not at school. For the time being, home learning tasks will continue to be uploaded every two weeks onto the school website. The home learning activities will be delivered to those children attending school, however a key focus (particularly for pupils now returning in Years 2, 3, 4 and 5) 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 making use of these.

### **Practicalities for Children Returning to School**

We appreciate that, particularly for pupils in Years 2, 3, 4 and 5, you will have a lot of questions about the practicalities of how the return to school will be managed. We had circulated an Information Guide previously (which is also on the school website), prior to the return of eligible children on 1 June and you may well find this helpful.

We will amend it to incorporate the specific new arrangements for the week commencing Monday 22 June and will circulate this shortly but the additional detail will remain the same. We suggest that you share this with your child/ren as you prepare them for their return to school on or after 22 June. We are also updating our entrance plan, which will clearly highlight where each year group will meet on the field at the beginning and end of the school day, along with the relevant timings.

We are finalising a letter for those returning 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.

We would in any event refer you all to the video on the school website which welcomes everyone back to school. We know from parents and pupils who have already returned to school that they have found this very reassuring and that, supported by the Information Guide, their children have successfully managed to see all of the inevitable changes in school as something of an exciting new challenge rather than anything to worry about.

### **Finally...**

We all need to keep in mind that circumstances and Government guidelines are changing rapidly and that all schools are likely to need to continue to be flexible with provision moving forward.

Getting all children who can, back to Greenway, is our immediate priority. We hope to be able to write to you with details for the last week of term ie the week commencing Monday 13 July next week. Our provision for the children for that week will look different to what will be in place for the next three weeks not least to support transition arrangements and to say goodbye to our Year 6 children. We will try to give you as much notice as possible of what different provision we will be putting in place for you to plan ahead.

We are very conscious of the need to support our entire school community as we move forwards and to do as much as we can to prepare everyone for whatever school will look like in September in these uncertain times. We will share with you our plans when we are in a position to do so but you will appreciate that much depends on the steer that we are given by Government and that some of the decisions that will be taken are outside of our control.

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 continues to try 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 in very difficult circumstances. We have missed them and can't wait to see them all again.

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

Regards

**Katharine Ellwood**  
Headteacher

**Elizabeth O'Reilly**  
Chair of Governors