

Conditional Re-opening Plans for Sowe Valley Primary School

Dear Families,

Firstly, I hope this letter finds you all safe and well. The staff at Sowe Valley are missing you all! The staff and I would like to thank you for your support and patience during these challenging times.

I am sure you have been anxiously awaiting news regarding our re-opening plans. I have been working hard alongside senior school leaders, all school staff, governors, unions and the Coventry Local Authority with regard to organising our re-opening, also ensuring that the safety of all children and their families, all staff and their families as well as the wider community is at the heart of any plans we make. We are adhering to guidance and taking into consideration other credible reports or guidance from the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (known as SAGE), who also advise Central Government.

As you may be aware, schools may begin their conditional re-opening from 1st June 2020. In order to prepare school for opening we have put up additional signage and purchased supplies of PPE and additional hand washing and sanitization supplies, more soap, paper towels, cleaning products etc to ensure school staff are able to keep the school clean in line with updated COVID-19 guidance, as well providing all that we can to ensure the children and staff, when on school site, are as safe as possible. To ensure that all of this is in place our site team is working extremely hard to prepare our school site. I am sure you all understand the safety of everyone on the school site is of the utmost importance, and I cannot compromise this for any reason.

These preparations all depend on whether the Government's 5 tests are met. The 5 tests are:

1. The NHS is able to cope with demand for critical care and specialist treatment
2. There is a sustained and consistent fall in the daily death rate
3. The rate of infection is decreasing to manageable levels
4. There is confidence that operational challenges such as testing capacity and PPE can meet demand.
5. There is confidence that any adjustments will not risk a second peak of the virus.

Yesterday, during the Prime Minister's briefing we had confirmation that these 5 tests have been met and therefore Sowe Valley will begin to open up to further year groups over the coming weeks. However, this will be subject to the relevant risk assessments being fully in place.

I would like to share our re-opening plans with you today, with the hope that it will give you all time to consider the details and for any questions you may have to be responded to. This might seem a little bit daunting initially, but I hope that we can return to some form of routine which will help the children enormously both emotionally and academically. There will be some new rules and routines to get used to, but I am sure that the children will cope as they will be with known school adults where possible, and we will guide them gently and reassuringly.

Year Groups returning to school

Following Government announcements and guidance regarding conditional re-openings, schools have been asked to prioritise Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6. I have decided not to reopen our Busy Kids pre-school as yet. This decision has considered parents'

responses, the age of the children, their needs both emotionally and physically, the set-up of the building and the risk to all. I will review this decision on a weekly basis and will also consider any additional information/guidance that reassures me that the risk to children and staff is reduced.

Following the completion of our whole-school risk assessment, the Governors and I have decided that we will reopen in the following order, should it be safe to do so:

<u>Phase 1</u>		
Vulnerable/Key Worker group	As you are aware this group has been housed at Ernesford Grange Academy during the last few weeks. We intend moving this provision back to Sowe Valley from 2.6.20	Date 2.6.20
Phase 2	Year 6 – Monday + Friday only Year 1 – Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday	Subject to risk assessment Date to be confirmed
Phase 3	Reception – All day Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday. Friday will be a day for deep cleaning and planning for provision.	Subject to risk assessment Date to be confirmed

I am aware that a SAGE report released on Friday 22nd May discussed that some rural schools may be in a position to re-open safely. As we are not classed as a rural school, the report recommends that schools delay their re-opening until 15th June at the earliest, as this approximately halves the risk to children both catching and transmitting COVID-19 (this information can be found on pages 2 and 3 of the SAGE report). This is a credible report and must be considered seriously. Therefore, with the agreement of Governors, Sowe Valley will not be reopening for Phase 2 until 15th June at the very earliest and then only if the 5 tests have continued to be met and risk assessments are fully in place.

What the provision will look like;

Initially, children will not be in school every day. Our timetable has been put in place taking account of the number of staff and classroom space available. Some of our staff are classed within the extremely vulnerable/vulnerable categories and therefore are not able to return to work yet, we therefore currently have a smaller number of staff. Alongside this, we are following the Local Authority guidance and have measured each classroom to ensure that the children are at least 2 metres apart – on this basis most of our classrooms are only able to support a maximum of 10 children. This will be reviewed weekly in line with Government guidance, and the numbers of children/time in school will increase as the science and data tell us it is safe to do so.

As you can see from the table, this provision will be different to what the children, parents and staff are used to. During our survey, some parents expressed that both they and their child were looking forward to “socialising with their friends”. However, being mindful of social distancing, they may not be able to socialise with their friends as they were able to do prior to lockdown. I also understand that this provision may not be ideal for every parent. However, it is the safest provision, which has remained the driver for all of the planning and

decisions being made. I am also confident that many other local schools are taking a similar approach to their provisions, although each school is different.

Groupings

Children will be assigned to group A or B for their class (or C depending on the cohort numbers returning). Groups will be no more than 12 in total and the group will be in School as indicated in the table above. For the days that children are in School, they will be learning in a familiar classroom environment and will be with known staff (as far as possible). The children will also be with some of their classmates. Groups cannot unfortunately be swapped around after they have been assigned.

Start and end times

In order to manage the number of people on the school site effectively, the start and end times of the day have been adjusted to ensure that only essential numbers of people come onto the school site at any given time.

Times for drop off and collection times. Parents will receive a text message informing them which group their children have been assigned to prior to starting back.

Group	Drop off	Pick up	Location
Vulnerable/Key Worker Children A	9 am	3 pm	KS1 playground
Vulnerable/Key Worker Children B	9.05 am	3.05 pm	KS1 playground
Vulnerable/Key Worker Children C	9.10 am	3.15 pm	KS1 playground
Year 6A - Monday + Friday only	9am	3pm	Gate in Ernesford Grange drive leading onto Key Stage 2 playground
Year 6B – Monday + Friday only	9.05am	3.05pm	Gate in Ernesford Grange drive leading onto Key Stage 2 playground
Year 6C – Monday + Friday only	9.10am	3.10pm	Gate in Ernesford Grange drive leading onto Key Stage 2 playground
Year 1A – Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday only	9am	3pm	Gate in Ernesford Grange drive leading onto Key Stage 2 playground
Year 1B – Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday only	9.05am	3.05pm	Gate in Ernesford Grange drive leading onto Key Stage 2 playground
Year 1C – Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday only	9.10am	3.10pm	Gate in Ernesford Grange drive leading onto Key Stage 2 playground
Reception A – Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday only	9.30am	2.45pm	KS1 Playground
Reception B - Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday only	9.30am	2.45pm	Outside door for Year 2 classroom

We ask that parents to follow the following guidance in order to maintain social distancing;

1. Only one parent to be on the school playground for drop off and pick up per child please at any one time

2. Hoops have been put out to aid social distancing. Please use these.
3. Please do not sit on the playground furniture or use the gazebos
4. Parents will not be able to come into the school building
5. Please stick to your allocated drop off/pick up times

I understand that the information laid out in this document may seem rigid and is not the usual Sowe Valley way of working, however the school has been tasked with not “contaminating bubbles”, and with keeping everyone safe.

Before and After School Clubs

All before and after school clubs have been cancelled until further notice. As children need to be kept within their assigned group or “bubble” whilst at school, these “bubbles” would be “burst” if the child then went into another “bubble” for an after school club.

We hope this situation will change by September 2020, and that this may be difficult for some of our working parents, but the safety of the children and staff must come first.

Breaktimes and Lunchtimes

Break and lunchtimes will be staggered and children will be assigned their own section of the playground or field, to ensure that children do not mix with children from another group.

Items to bring into school

Children will need to bring:

- A coat
- A healthy snack for breaktime
- Packed lunch in a disposable bag – all children will initially need to bring a packed lunch as the kitchens will not be open. Free School Meal vouchers will continue to be allocated.
- A water bottle
- A hat

Children are not required to bring their bookbag, library books or their PE kit into school for the time being. Children do not need to wear their school uniform at present. The guidance currently states that clean, fresh clothes should be worn each day, and given the time of year I feel it unfair to ask you all to purchase more sets of uniform or to wash and dry worn uniform on a daily basis. Therefore, children can come to school in clean fresh, comfortable clothes for the time being. These clothes should not be normal everyday wear and not fancy dress, but must be appropriate for physical activity (such as leggings, jogging bottoms, shorts, t-shirts). These clothes should be taken off when the child gets home and put straight into the washing machine for cleaning.

Classrooms

Children will continue to work in their classrooms with school staff as far as possible. The classrooms will look different to the way they look normally.

All surfaces have been cleared as much as possible to enable them to be wiped thoroughly each day. Some furniture has been removed to create space, and some furniture has been moved in order for children to work at a social distance. We have marked out seating at the recommended distances, but want to remind parents that we cannot guarantee that all children will be socially distanced at all times, despite our best efforts. Some resources, such as playdough, will not be used in Reception for the time being. Reception children will continue to have access to a part of the outdoor play area. Teachers and TAs will remain socially

distanced unless they have to support with First Aid or intimate care. In these instances, staff will wear PPE (including plastic aprons, gloves and a clear visor and/or face mask). Some children may struggle with this and I ask that you speak with your child about this before they return to school.

Toilets have been allocated to each year group and children will be able to go to the toilet as normal, but we now need to have a “one in, one out” system in place. This will be supervised by staff. As the corridor will be sectioned off for each group or bubble, children will not be able to access another set of toilets other than those allocated to a particular group, to prevent crossing into any other bubble.

Exiting in an emergency (such as a fire drill) will not be prevented, and children will exit onto the field through their external door, trying to maintain social distancing as far as possible.

Handwashing and Hygiene

Handwashing is still the main preventative measure, and children will be instructed to wash their hands regularly throughout the day. All areas used will be cleaned at the end of each day as usual, but we have put in additional cleaning at lunchtime and each class will have their own cleaning materials so that if surfaces or touch-points need cleaning during the day, there are resources available to do so. All rooms that will be used have windows that enable good ventilation, and will be kept open as much as possible. Classroom doors will be kept open as well to maintain good circulation. Staff have been provided with PPE equipment to be used only when needed (such as supporting with intimate care or for delivering First Aid). Staff may wear disposable aprons, gloves and a clear visor during First Aid treatments. Some staff may also choose to wear a mask, and some may not. Staff that are looking after symptomatic children and awaiting parent arrival, or key staff such as Senior Leaders or Inclusion staff that may be required to enter or “burst” bubbles will wear PPE equipment to reduce the risk to children and themselves. Children that may require physical interventions such as Team Teach will be contacted by the school in advance of children returning to discuss any risks and plans for their child’s return.

Poorly child

Once back at school can I ask that you do not send your child into school if they are poorly or displaying any COVID symptoms or if anyone within your household displays such symptoms, as follows:

- a high temperature – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature)
- a new, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual)
- a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste – this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal

If anyone becomes unwell with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature whilst at school they will immediately be moved to the First Aid room and parents will be called to arrange for immediate collection. Children will be supervised from a 2m distance where possible whilst awaiting collection. However, where the 2m distancing guidance cannot be observed if a child needs further help and support, staff will wear PPE equipment.

When a child develops symptoms compatible with coronavirus, they will be sent home and you will be advised to self-isolate them for 7 days. Their fellow household members should self-isolate for 14 days. Any staff or children that display symptoms should take a test.

Where the child or staff member tests negative, they can return to school and household members can end their self-isolation

Where a child or staff member tests positive, the rest of their group will be advised to self-isolate for 14 days.

Learning at school

Where possible, we will maintain as much of the children's usual routine. However, we are well aware that some children may find coming back to school difficult, and staff will do all they can to support this. Our staff will therefore be delivering more PSHE and positive mental health activities to the children. The National Curriculum for the moment has been "relaxed" but we aim to keep learning going and to start addressing learning gaps where possible and appropriate. School staff will reaffirm expectations, rules and routines, and reinforce these throughout your child's time in school. School staff will also timetable some time outdoors, as it is recommended that being outdoors also reduces the chances of contracting the virus.

Learning at home

Learning at home will still continue. Each day your child's class teacher will upload the day's home learning. The home learning will reflect what the teacher is delivering in school that week. Home Learning will continue to be uploaded onto Google Classroom.

Key Worker Children

Key Worker children from any year group are still welcome to attend school as they have been over the last 10 weeks of lockdown. Their arrival times, pick up and drop off points are in the table above. As always, Key Worker children must be booked in via the two weekly form sent out to parents. Key Worker children will remain in their Key Worker group, even if their year group is on site. This is so that their "bubble" is not burst. This may also mean that if your child is accessing the Key Worker provision, they may not be able to see or socialise with their classmates. Please be advised, there will be no swapping between bubbles as this is not safe. It is unclear as yet how long the key worker group will be in place for. As soon as there is further guidance on this, I will share any amended plans with you.

Provision for children not returning to school

I am sorry that school will not be reopening to all year groups, but recognise that a phased return is the most sensible and safest approach. Additionally, with Government guidelines in mind, Sowe Valley would not have enough staff or rooms for us to welcome all children back in our present climate. I also recognise that some parents may choose at this time not to send their child back to school until they are satisfied that it is safe. I hope that this plan demonstrates to you all that safety of all children, families and staff is paramount. I have reduced the risk as far as I possibly can but I am not able to eliminate risk all together. I also respect parental choice that, at this moment, you may not feel wholly comfortable with sending your child back to school just yet. I would like to reassure you that if this is your choice, you will not be penalised for your child's non-attendance at this time. Any formal attendance monitoring has been suspended between 14th February 2020 until the end of this Summer Term. I am awaiting further guidance with regard to September 2020.

As mentioned above, home learning will continue to be set, and support is available if needed via a phone call to the school or via emailing: school@sowevalley.coventry.sch.uk. Some staff that are unable to return to work will be supporting virtually also. We expect children remaining at home to continue learning as they have done over lockdown. At present, the government guidelines state that children that are classed as medically vulnerable and are required to shield, should not return to school unless medically advised otherwise. Therefore, children that fall into this category, should not attend school for now. We ask that you please let the school know if your child has been advised to shield when your child's year group is invited to attend school. Your child can still access Home Learning through Teams, the school's website or the school app to continue learning. Teachers will also be contacting you regularly to see how you are getting on.

Other Year Groups

At present, we will only be welcoming back our vulnerable/key worker children from Tuesday 2nd June. A further letter will go out to Year 1 and Year 6 and then Reception, when I am confident that all measures are in place for these year groups, and all precautions have been taken to lower the risk to your child and our school staff. We have no plans as yet to open to other year groups, but the plan in place should be sustainable for when we are in a position to reopen to more children.

What next?

For all parents of Year 6, Year 1 or Reception, I ask that you please complete the form that will be sent out shortly, informing us whether your child will be returning or not. This will enable our school staff to make the necessary arrangements and prepare for your child's return. We will then be able to organise the group your child will be assigned to and communicate this information to you as soon as possible. It is vital that this form is completed by Friday 5th June and that you do not turn up with your child without completing the form. Again, I want to stress that although school staff have taken all precautions they can, I cannot guarantee that your child will be socially distanced from others for every moment of their school day, and it would be irresponsible of me to promise you this. Children are children, and naturally gravitate towards both staff and peers who they feel comfortable with. All of our staff continue to work hard to provide your child with the safest learning environment that they can under these very difficult and unusual circumstances. I fear that school as we know it may not be "the same" for some time, and we are all learning to adapt day-by-day.

Thank you for reading all of this information. It has been quite a challenge unpicking all of the guidance, adapting plans after updates have been released and trying to think of different eventualities. As a school, we are confident that our plan is the safest for all, and are looking forward to inviting children back to school so they can get back to learning together, laughing and achieving together. Ultimately it is your choice whether you send your child back to school and you must make the decision based on what is right for your child/children and your family. I hope this information will help parents to make their decisions.

Can I finish by saying that, although life is still going to be a little strange as we bring our lovely school through these uncertain times, our ethos remains the same. We will always put our children first – their safety and the safety of our families is crucial. I know that, although the classrooms and playgrounds will look a little different to before, that the love we have for our children will shine through and I promise that by working together with our staff, families and children Sowe Valley will remain Sowe Valley.

Thank you so much for your wonderful patience and support throughout,

Take care,
Carole