



## Emmanuel CE Middle School

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21<sup>st</sup> May 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

Following my letter to you dated 15<sup>th</sup> May, I am writing to update you on how the return to school will be organised for children in Year 6, Key Workers' children, those children with an EHCP or a social worker and those who have been identified by the school as vulnerable.

We will begin the phased approach on the 1st June 2020 with the increased numbers of key workers' children and vulnerable children. From the 8th June 2020 we will then invite pupils from Year 6.

Having had the opportunity to speak to parents and staff, I know that many people are feeling a mix of relief and anxiety as we enter this next stage of a phased re-opening of our school. After so many weeks at home, some children will be able to return to school in some capacity and be with other children and members of our staff team. However, it is understandable that as a community we are anxious about returning after such a long time away and with the on-going concerns about COVID-19 very much in our minds.

I hope that the information below will provide reassurance to those families that have decided to send their children back to school, explaining how we will operate when we reopen so that everyone is kept safe. I also hope to reassure families across the school that Google Classroom will continue for all pupils who are working from home.

The health, safety and wellbeing of everyone in our school community is our highest priority. We will be putting in place all recommendations that have been made for 'protective measures' as part of a full risk assessment process that is already underway.

In its advice, the government has set out a 'hierarchy of controls' - 5 important areas that schools can act on to significantly reduce the risk of infection. It is important that we therefore share our plans for addressing each of these with you.

### 1. Minimising contact with those who have or live with someone with symptoms of COVID 19

We will continue to strictly follow government guidance regarding any staff or pupils who develop symptoms or become unwell. The government has also set out clear guidance to schools regarding any confirmed cases of COVID 19 and all staff will have additional guidance on this. We will be expecting all staff and families to continue to do all they can to follow guidance in and out of school regarding contact and social distancing.



## 2. Increasing pupils and staff personal hygiene

We will incorporate handwashing into our daily timetable. In readiness for opening, we have ordered plenty of soap and hand towels. We will plan regular opportunities for children to wash their hands throughout the school day and will monitor this to ensure that it happens for at least 20 seconds each time.

We will have posters around the school sharing several important messages and use virtual assembly times to reinforce important messages.

## 3. Ensuring good respiratory hygiene

At Emmanuel Middle School we will continue to support pupils to 'catch it, bin it, kill it'. We will have additional tissues around the classrooms and will be increasing the amount of times that bins are emptied during the school day.

## 4. Increased cleaning of surfaces and equipment

Over the course of the school day, surfaces do and will get touched, for example door handles. We will have effective cleaning arrangements in place but will also need to take additional steps.

We will need to limit children's use of shared equipment (including IT equipment). Where we can, we will give individual children their own equipment to use each time. We have organised a school equipment set for each child, individual workbooks will be provided, and these will be kept in a folder that we will provide. This will always remain on a child's individual desk. Children will keep their bags, lunch and drinks bottle with them under their chair. Where individual equipment cannot be provided, we will ensure equipment is cleaned between uses.

Children will not be able to move around the classroom as they have done previously and will be encouraged to stay at their desk. However, we have planned regular breaks and outdoor time to provide physical movement and time to learn and relax outside.

As the guidance dictates, all soft furnishings and items that are more difficult to keep clean, have been removed from the classrooms. Therefore, please support us in keeping all non-essential items at home.

Pupils will follow the Google Classroom timetable they have become familiar with at home. Teachers will guide them through this, support self-marking and verbal feedback will be provided during lesson time, but work will not be marked to ensure reduced contact contamination.

## 5. Re-organising pupils and the school day

The biggest change to school life that we are planning at this stage is how we can effectively manage the number of pupils and staff that your children learn alongside and meet with in social times.

### Class Groupings

In order to make class sizes smaller and minimise unnecessary contact between groups of pupils and staff, we will organise children and staff into 'bubbles'. Each bubble will have no more than 15 pupils in it and these bubbles will not mix with children or staff from any other bubble during the school day. Children will be placed into bubbles by senior staff



and notified of their group by the allocated teacher before we return on 8<sup>th</sup> June. Whilst we know that it is not possible for everyone to be with a teacher they are familiar with, or to work alongside their full friendship group, staff involved will do their very best to make this a positive experience for your child.

By operating in bubbles of 15 children we can reduce the risk of infection from children or adults in other class groups. Other adults will only enter their class space in the case of an emergency.

In order to best support pupils as they return, we will introduce the following timings for the school day.

Key Worker / EHCP and Vulnerable groups will remain unchanged: from 8.10am into the Sports Hall. Pick up times are flexible, as we have been operating, starting from 2.15pm through to 3.20pm.

Year 6 pupils will arrive and depart in two separate groups:

Wave 1: 8.20am - 8.30am arrival and pick up at 1.50pm - 2.00pm.

Wave 2: 8.40am - 8.50am arrival and pick up at 2.10pm - 2.20pm.

If your child is a year 6 pupils and also falls into the key worker/vulnerable pupil group, you will be contacted concerning the above timings.

It is important you do not miss your drop off or pick-up slot. They are designated to reduce the flow into the campus. We have also worked alongside Verwood First School to keep everyone safe.

Parents will be contacted with more information concerning the above during the week commencing 1st June.

### **What can parents and carers do to help?**

We are mindful of the worry and stress this situation has had on our children and will be planning activities to support their health and wellbeing during the next seven weeks.

Adopting the advice of being outdoors as much as possible and pupils having a PE session each day, I would encourage you to send your child in EMS PE kit. It is not appropriate to use our changing rooms or ask pupils to change in the classroom. PE kit is a white polo shirt, black shorts and trainers. School is cooler than outside and therefore I strongly advise your child to also wear their school jumper or PE hoodie. Also, think about rotating uniform and PE kit, to allow for washing throughout the week. To be clear, it is fine for pupils to wear their formal school uniform with trainers as they will be able to wear this during their PE sessions. Flexibility is key here.

Further information will follow on:

- Behaviour and expectations
- Timetables
- Drop and pick up arrangement
- Social distancing arrangements in school



Can I please ask you to discuss these with your child when they are received?

### **Making beginnings and ends of days easier and safer**

The decision to stagger the school day for pupils in Year 6 has been made alongside Trust Senior Leaders to support a safe start and end to the day; to allow for an enhanced clean to be completed after pupils and staff have left; and also to support our children to adjust to learning in a different way after a long period out of school.

At the allotted drop off or collection time, please wait at two metre distances at the main school gate. Please do not arrive early or late, as we must not have any gatherings outside our school. School staff will open the gate, and the children will individually walk in or out. Verwood First School children will enter the left-hand gate and Emmanuel Middle pupils will enter the right-hand gate and remain on the right side of the campus. We would then ask you to leave the area as quickly as possible to allow for the next group of parents/children. Please also do not walk home in groups. If you miss your allotted time, it is likely other groups will be entering or leaving school and we will be unable to greet and handover your child until this has taken place.

Parents are not to enter the school campus unless requested to do so in an emergency. Children will be accompanied to the school gate.

If your child travels to and from school on their own, they will be expected to wait outside the gate with the parents and children at their allotted time. At the end of the day they will be walked to the gate with their classmates and allowed to leave from there.

If you need to contact the school, please continue to email us or telephone 01202 828100 in an emergency. Our office will remain closed to all but essential visitors.

### **For pupils who will continue to work from home**

For pupils who will continue to learn from home we will maintain Google Classroom and, whilst staff who will be required to work in school will no longer be able to support this process, a team of staff from the Trust will continue to work from home to ensure that high quality learning opportunities are provided. As a result of the challenges of social distancing and cleaning, some curriculum areas will not be able to offer the same opportunities as normal. Middle schools will be following the home learning plan in schools, however as a result of increased staff working with children, dialogue and feedback may be delayed.

I very much hope that this letter begins to answer some of the questions that you will understandably have ahead of a return to school. Planning is ongoing and I would urge you to be patient as we continue to update you over the next couple of weeks.

With very best wishes.

Yours faithfully,

Rob Christopher  
Headteacher