

Questions and Answers for parents

Provisional Planning for Nursery, Reception and Year one pupils returning on site during the second half of the summer term.

29th May 2020

Introductory points

- This is a preliminary version of what is very much a dynamic working document.
- Government guidance is still changing almost daily which means that our planning is in a constant state of flux.
- This document and other related planning documents and decisions being made by the school relate specifically and solely to the staged return to school of a capped Nursery provision, with Reception and Year one pupils choosing to return to school in June 2020.

There is a lot of government guidance issued to help schools in this situation. Which guidance is most relevant to parents?

The government has published a Q and A document for parents and carers which you should read (the 'Guidance for Parents'). This school Q and A document will not repeat information already provided by the government Q and A.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers/reopening-schools-and-other-educational-settings-from-1-june>

Will it actually go ahead?

At the moment, the government has asked schools to make plans to open from the 1st June.

Does Taunton Prep School necessarily have to follow government guidance in relation to the return of Nursery, Reception, Year one and Year two pupils?

It would be difficult for the school to deviate significantly from government guidance in this situation unless it has very strong grounds to do so. Any deviation leaves the school at risk of being challenged either now or retrospectively. In addition, we are mindful that the government has referred to it being 'the duty of schools' to assist the country in taking early and careful steps to come out of total lockdown.

When might be the first day back on site for Nursery, Reception and Year one pupils?

The government has said that children can return from June 1st. As the government has now confirmed this request and set the June 1st as the possible start date, we would not consider it safe for us to plan to have pupil's on-site on June 1st. Some of the staff involved in supervising the children in school, would need to be unfurloughed and time will be allocated to train all staff in involved in the on-site provision. This is likely to result in a phased return on June 3rd for Pre-Prep children and June 4th for the capped Nursery provision to start receiving children in greater numbers.

Will uniform be worn?

We would like the children to be in freshly laundered clothes each day and we are aware that the school shop is currently closed. We will therefore allow children to attend in their home clothes for this limited number of weeks.

What about Year two?

When we receive notification from the Government around Year two returning, we will adopt a phased return of this Year group.

Would Taunton School give guidance to parents as to whether they should send their child into school?

We do not wish to add anything to the government's Guidance for Parents which states that "we strongly encourage children and young people in the eligible year groups and priority groups (such as children of critical workers) to attend, as requested by their school or college, unless they are self-isolating or there are other reasons for absence (such as shielding due to health conditions). You should notify your child's school or college as normal if your child is unable to attend so that staff are aware and can discuss with you."

What would Taunton School's view be if parents wish to keep their child at home?

We would fully respect and understand a decision by parents not to send their child into school, irrespective of whether there are shielding issues.

What proportion of the pupils would we be expecting to come into school?

On 12th May 2020, we asked parents to give us an indication of whether they would send their child into school or not. Approximately 70 % of parents in Nursery and Pre-Prep said that their child would be returning to TPPS. Because of capped numbers attendance may be limited to three days.

What would the school day timings be? Would my child be able to spend part of the day in school?

The Critical Worker provision will continue to run during the hours of 8.00 am – 5.00pm. For all other children we are provisionally planning for staggered timings to prevent a large number of parents and children arriving and departing at any one time.

If my child doesn't come into school, what changes would there be to the educational experience which he/she has been receiving during the first half of the summer term?

Our intention would be for there to be little change for pupils not in school. They would be working to a very similar timetable, with lessons taught in predominantly the same way, although this remote learning may be delivered by the other year group class teacher – from home. Feedback from our surveys tells us that our remote learning is working very well for the vast majority of parents. We would not want to jeopardise this for pupils not in school.

What would happen if, with pupils back on site, a pupil or a member of staff were to develop symptoms of COVID-19?

If anyone develops a fever, or a new continuous cough, or a loss of, or change in, their normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia), they should not come into school. If these symptoms first become apparent whilst a person is in school, they will be cared for on-site by our medical team and leave the site as soon as is practicably possible. They will then be advised to follow the [COVID-19: guidance for households with possible coronavirus infection guidance](#) (which states that the ill person should remain in isolation for 7 days and the rest of the household in isolation for 14 days).

All other pupils and staff (assuming that they are not members of the affected person's household) are able to continue coming into school. We will not publicise to pupils/parents/staff that someone has developed symptoms (see below, however, if a test reveals a positive result for that individual)

What would happen if there is a confirmed case of COVID-19?

The Guidance for Parents states that 'Where the child, young person or staff member tests positive, the rest of their class/group within their childcare or education setting should be sent home and advised to self-isolate for 14 days'. Pupils and staff who are not classified being within the same class/group are able to carry on coming into school.

Would there be a risk of my child becoming infected with COVID-19 during their time in school?

The government guidance says that 'protective measures will be put in place for staff and pupils to help limit the risk of the virus spreading'. It is impossible to eliminate all risk.

One of the 'protective measures' specified by the government is limiting the amount of contact between different groups of children? How would the school do this for Nursery, Reception and Year One.

Our plans are subject to change, depending on numbers and other factors, but we are provisionally planning to cap numbers in each of the year groups. There may be some change in group location, depending on numbers. Each group will be in a 'bubble' (including the two/three members of staff). We will do all that we can to avoid contact between members of each 'bubble'. Should one of the pupils or a member of staff in one of those 'bubbles' test positive, it would therefore only be the other pupils and staff in that 'bubble' which would need to go home and self-isolate for 14 days.

What would this bubble system mean for the educational provision for pupils in school?

Because of the need to create 'bubbles', it would not be possible for all of the specialist teachers to have any direct contact with the children. Any input will be remote to avoid contact with staff outside of the 'bubbles.'

What about 'extra lessons' for pupils in school (e.g. Individual music lessons? One-to-one lessons from our Educational Progress teachers)?

Where possible, these lessons would continue at the same time and in the same way as they have been running during the first half of term. If this were to prove difficult for any reason, then the pupil (or his/her parents) would contact the relevant member of staff and the school would do all that it reasonably could in order to resolve the issue.

What things would the children be able to do in school which they are currently not able to do at home?

- We would do what we could to give pupils a positive and enjoyable time in school. The activities which we would be able to do in school would change over time according to changing official guidance and what is permitted. In brief, we would aim to 'start small' and build the experience over time as the situation allows, in a controlled way and carefully managed way.
- For example, we are currently unable to plan for the use of the swimming pools or indoor sports facilities.
- Children will be able to play within their 'Bubble' in the playground and on other areas of the school site, within their bubble.

Would it be possible for the school to guarantee that pupils and staff keep their distance from each other at all times?

The short answer is 'No'. There is some ambiguity in the government guidance on this point and the following statements have been made by the government: -

- "We know that, unlike older children and adults, early years and primary age children cannot be expected to remain 2 metres apart from each other and staff. In deciding to bring more children back to early years and schools, we are taking this into account."
- "It is still important to reduce contact between people as much as possible, and we can achieve that and reduce transmission risk by ensuring children, young people and staff where possible, only mix in a small, consistent group and that small group stays away from other people and groups"
- "Where settings can keep children and young people in those small groups 2 metres away from each other, they should do so. While in general groups should be kept apart, brief, transitory contact, such as passing in a corridor, is low risk."

In brief, pupils should not come within 2 metres of anyone outside of their own bubble. However, it is impossible for us to guarantee that pupils will not come within 2 metres of pupils or staff within their own bubble. The important thing would be for us to give to pupils and staff expectations which are as clear as

possible in order to reduce anxiety and worry and to ensure a sensible reduction of the risk of spreading the virus. We know that this is one of the details which is currently being looked at by the government and it is to be hoped that further official guidance would appear before pupils came onto site.

What would be the other main 'protective measures' taken to reduce the risk of transmitting the virus?

We would follow government guidance and give particular focus to the following: -

- avoiding contact with anyone with symptoms
- frequent hand cleaning and good respiratory hygiene practices
- regular cleaning of settings
- minimising contact and mixing

Public Health England (PHE) is clear that if early year's settings, schools and colleges do this, and crucially if they are also applying regular hand cleaning, hygiene and cleaning measures and handling potential cases of the virus as per the advice, then the risk of transmission will be lowered. All of these measures form part of the risk assessment and the setting out of appropriate protocols which the school is putting into place.

Would it be possible for the school to eliminate the risk of coming into contact with somebody who has symptoms?

In short, the answer to this question is 'no'. However, we would be able to reduce the risk of this by giving regular reminders to all pupils, staff and visitors who come onto the school site that, by coming onto the site, they are effectively declaring that they are, to the best of their knowledge, free of symptoms. We will also be taking the temperatures of all pupils and all staff initially.

Will pupils or staff be wearing clinical facemasks, face coverings or other PPE?

The government guidance states that "Wearing a face covering or face mask in schools or other education settings is not recommended" and that "Schools and other education or childcare settings should therefore not require staff, children and learners to wear face coverings". It also says that masks worn for clinical reasons "should not be worn in any circumstance by those who may not be able to handle them as directed (for example, young children, or those with special educational needs or disabilities) as it may inadvertently increase the risk of transmission". Our current view on this issue is as follows: -

- With regard to clinical face masks, these need careful fitting and handling, and these should not be worn by any pupil or staff without prior discussion with our medical professionals in the Health Centre
- With regard to non-clinical face coverings (including hand-made ones), we are not recommending that pupils wear these and we do not anticipate many pupils wearing them. If a pupil wishes to wear a face covering, this will be allowed, but he/she will need to ensure that it is managed in a way which is safe for them and for others.

PPE other than face masks or face-coverings will not be worn by staff unless they are involved in direct personal care for a child or they are involved in the care of someone unwell with symptoms of COVID-19.

Would there be medical professionals on site during the school day?

Yes. Our Medical Centre would be open and manned by trained staff during any term time dates.

How would the school manage the well-being, mental health, and happiness of pupils (and staff)?

This would remain paramount and we are aware that the current circumstances can affect the mental health of pupils (and staff). We have been reviewing key policies including those relating to Behaviour, Discipline, Pastoral Care, Anti-Bullying, Safeguarding and the Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural development of the pupils, and we will continue to do so. We are aware that pupils coming back onto site would be returning to a very different experience to the one which they are used to. We are also aware that it would be different for pupils not in school to know that some of their peers were in school. Some children will return to school having been exposed to a range of adversity including bereavement and long term anxiety. This may lead to an increase in social, emotional and mental health concerns.

How would the school manage safeguarding?

Mr Burnett would continue to be the whole school Designated Safeguarding Lead for the whole school and Mrs Louise Leah would continue to be the Child Protection Officer for the Pre-Prep School and Nursery. We have many staff who are trained to the level required to be Designated Safeguarding Lead (including Mr Coleman, Mrs Hall-Tomkin, Mr Glaser, Mrs Kane, Mr Edwards and others) and there will always be one of us available on site.

Would the school transport be running?

We would ask parents to read the government guidance relating to travel to and from school ([Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): safer travel guidance for passengers](#)). The government has stated that we should 'reduce any unnecessary travel on coaches, buses or public transport where possible' and our usual school transport would not be running.

How would drop-off and pick-up work?

We would follow government guidance which would mean:-

- Telling parents and pupils their allocated drop off and collection times and the process for doing so, including protocols for minimising adult to adult contact (for example, which entrance to use).
- Parents will be asked to Queue at either gate in order to drop off your child to a member of staff bringing your children on to site. Y1, R & N4 please use the front entrance access point. N1, N2 & N3 the side entrance gate. Nursery opening times will be 8.15pm to 5.00 pm and Pre-Prep 8.30 to 4.00 pm. Please use the markings to socially distance whilst waiting with/or for your child.
- Asking parents not to gather at entrance gates or doors, or enter the inner Pre-Prep School site.
- Asking only one parent to accompany pick up and drop off.

Would cooked lunches be available?

For a number of operational and safety-related reasons, we would not be opening up our kitchens and dining halls. Pupils would therefore need to bring in a labelled packed lunch, snacks and a drink bottle. Additional Fruit will be available.