

Questions and Answers for parents

Provisional Planning for Nursery, Reception, Year one & Year two pupils remaining on site in the first weeks of the Spring term

8th January 2021

Introductory points

- This must remain a dynamic working document. Any updated and revised version will be published for parents following any changes made. More detail may need to be included on certain points in future versions.
- Government guidance is changing continuously and at short notice which means that our planning is constantly changing and we are almost trying to anticipate any changes in Policy. For the Early Years we currently await 11 policy changes from central government.
- This document and other related planning documents and decisions being made by the school relate specifically to the Critical Worker provision and a capped Nursery provision. This will remain under weekly review and any changes will be made on the published schools guidance.

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

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision>

How long will this last for?

At the moment, the government has asked schools to prioritise vulnerable children and those children with critical workers as parents. This guidance has also been backed up by Somerset County Council. Remote Learning will be available for those children remaining at home and the Critical Worker children in both the Nursery and Pre-Prep.

Does Taunton Prep School necessarily have to follow government guidance in relation to providing an on-site provision for vulnerable children and those children with Critical workers as parents?

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. As a geographical area with a large amount of cases, we are following the guidance to reduce the number of pupils and potential contacts on site.

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

The government has said that it will be reviewing this based on their statistics. As soon as we have more guidance and we are told it is safe to do so, our aim will be to get as many children as possible back in school and nursery.

Will uniform be worn?

We would again 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 time.

What about the children remote learning?

When we receive notification from the Government around the full return to school, we will endeavour to get as many children back on site as safely and as quickly as is possible.

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. Both vulnerable and the children of critical workers or those unable to access remote learning can attend, unless they are self-isolating or there are other reasons for absence (such as shielding, self-isolation or due to health conditions). You should continue to notify us of your child's absence from school as normal, if your child is unable to attend (and you have indicated that they will do so).

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 or nursery, irrespective of whether there are shielding issues.

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

We currently have approximately 60 Nursery pupils attending daily and approximately 30 Pre-Prep children.

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 run during the hours of 7.30am – 5.30pm. For those wishing to send their children for the core school hours only, these children will attend from 8.00am – 3.30pm.

If my child doesn't come into school, what changes would there be to the educational experience which he/she is receiving?

Our intention would be for there to be little change for pupils not in school. They will both be following the same online learning provided remotely by their class teachers.

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 in the Nightingale unit and leave the site as soon as is practicably possible. They will then be advised to follow the most up to date [COVID-19: guidance for households with possible coronavirus infection guidance](#)

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, this will be referred to PHE and the track and trace system will then take over from here.

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

PHE and the 'track and trace' system would use our information provided to identify close contacts. Those close contacts would then have to follow the most up to date government guidance.

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, Year one and Year two?

Our plans are subject to change, depending on numbers and other factors, but we are provisionally planning to continue to operate in year groups during the core hours of 8.00am – 3.30pm. There may be some change in group location, depending on numbers. Each year 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' during these core school hours. Rooms will also remain well ventilated and hand washing and hand sanitising will take place on a regular basis. 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' classed as 'close contacts' who would need to go home and self-isolate for 10 days (or the most up to date guidance on this).

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 'year group bubbles.'

What things can the vulnerable and critical worker 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.
- We are currently unable to plan for the use of the swimming pool or our indoor sports facilities.
- Children will be able to play within their 'bubble' in the playground.

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'. 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"
- "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 during the core hours of 8.00am – 3.30pm. 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 currently have additional cleaning in place, Sao water is in use by all staff, all children and staff wash and sanitise their hands on a regular basis, staff avoid contact with each other and wear masks in public areas and when in transit.

During the hours of 7.30am – 8.00am and 3.30pm - 5.30pm, year group bubbles will be mixing in our before and after school provision. Children will be encouraged to stay in the year group allocated space in the hall.

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

We will 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 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 our risk assessment and the setting out of appropriate protocols which the school has put 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 and staff. We currently do not accept visitors on to site. Staff will now be tested for COVID-19 weekly. We will also be taking the temperatures of all pupils on site during the day.

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 primary schools is not required" and that "schools and other education or childcare settings should therefore not require staff and children (under 11) to wear face coverings".

PPE other than face masks or face coverings may be worn by staff involved in direct personal care for a child. Face coverings will be worn in public spaces, on transit throughout the school and in contact with parents or if staff 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 is open and manned by trained staff during any term time dates from 8.00am – 7.00pm currently. This service may not be accessed directly, if there is any COVID-19 risk to our pupils by their direct attendance.

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

This will remain paramount and we are aware that the current circumstances are affecting the mental health of pupils (and staff). We continue to review key policies including those relating to Behaviour, Discipline, Pastoral Care, Anti-Bullying, Safeguarding and the Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural development of the pupils.

How will the school manage safeguarding?

Mr Burnett will continue to be the Designated Safeguarding Lead for the whole school and Mrs Louise Leah will 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 will not be running.

How would drop-off and pick-up work?

We will follow government guidance which means:-

- Telling parents 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 and the use of face masks by staff and parents).
- Asking parents not to gather at entrance gates or doors, or enter the inner Pre-Prep School site.
- Asking only one parent to accompany at pick up and drop off.

Would cooked lunches be available?

Pupils can currently access our snack and lunch service. Additional fruit will be available. This may have to change according to numbers on site and the availability of staff.