

Questions and Answers for parents

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

24th February 2021

Introductory points

- This is a dynamic working document. An updated and revised revision will be published for parents prior to any start date. More and updated details will be included on certain points in future versions.
- Government guidance continues to be adapted which means that our planning remains fluid.
- This document and other related planning documents and decisions being made by the school relate specifically and solely to the return to school of our Nursery provision, Reception and Year one pupils on the 8th March 2021.

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 yes, we will be back to school on the 8th March 2021.

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 get the children back in the classroom following the Governments Lockdown roadmap for the forthcoming months.

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

All statutory aged children should be attending school from the 8th March 2021.

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

All statutory aged children should be attending school from the 8th March 2021. Please make contact with the TPPS office, if it is not your intention to return your child to school. All Nursery parents have been contacted directly.

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

The Nursery and Pre-Prep will be open from 07.30 am – 5.30 pm each day. Unfortunately, parents will again be unable to have access to the Pre-Prep or Nursery classrooms. We ask that you continue to drop off at the main entrance for N4, Reception, Year 1 and Year 2. For N1, N2, N3 please continue to use the side playground gate. The core school day for the Pre-Prep will be 08.20 – 3.30pm.

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](#) following the most up to date 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) we will follow the most up to date schools guidance and inform the NHS Tack and Trace service.

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

We would contact Somerset Public Health to inform them of the case. We would also inform the DfE of the positive case and from this follow the most up to date 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. However, the school will endeavour to mitigate the risk by putting enhanced control procedures in place.

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 & 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 group bubbles. 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 those deemed as close contacts who would be affected by this positive case.

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

Specialist teachers from TPS will deliver lessons to the children in the bubbles. However, they will be provided with Face Coverings to transit between lessons and they will only remove their face coverings when they are a safe distance away from the children as they start the lesson.

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 the academic year. 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 adaptations will be made to playtime?

- Children will be able to play within their 'Bubble' in the playground between the hours of 8.20 am and 3.30pm.

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 previously 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 and sensible to reduce contact between people as much as possible, and we can achieve that and reduce the transmission risk by ensuring children, young people and staff where possible, only mix in their consistent group and that where possible they stay 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 – between the hours of 8.20 am – 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.

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

We would continue to 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 the staff will be provided with two test kits a week.

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

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

- Staff should continue to wear face coverings on transit around the school, when talking to parents and when accessing the Staff common room.

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. From 8th – 15th March there will be cover from 08.00 – 7.00pm and from the 15th March the Medical Centre will resume its 24/7 service.

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 can and have affected 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 may experience a degree of anxiety if they have been in isolation at home. We are also aware that it may be difficult 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 consequently lead to an increase in social, emotional and mental health concerns.

How would the school manage safeguarding?

Mr Burnett will 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 will drop-off and pick-up work?

We will follow government guidance which would mean:-

- Telling parents and pupils their allocated drop off points and the process for doing so, including protocols for minimising adult to adult contact (for example, which entrance to use).
- 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?

We expect the usual lunch services to be available for both our Pre-Prep and Nursery from the 8th March 2021.