

Tuesday 1st September 2020



Dear parents and carers,

Arrangements for the return to school

I hope you and your family have had a peaceful summer despite all the restrictions.

I am writing to you to update you on our plans for the safe reopening of the Academy for all pupils. We are looking forward to welcoming them back, and to being able to come back together again as a whole school. Some of this guidance may be familiar from my previous letters but because things have continued to change over the summer, we have continued to work on the issue of safety and there are therefore some significant changes that I would like to make you aware of.

As you will know, the Government expects all pupils, in all year groups, to return to school full-time from the beginning of September. You can read [their guidance here](#)/or by searching for 'Guidance for full opening: schools' on www.gov.uk There is also a summary later on in this letter.

The Government have set out the actions our academy must take to minimise the risk of transmission of coronavirus, and have guided us to consider how this will impact on school operations, curriculum and behaviour, assessment and accountability, and the plans we have in place to continue education should there be a local outbreak.

Our response is to do everything that we can to maximise safety for our pupils, families and staff. I will summarise the arrangements in this letter. Please visit our school website for more information.

Summary

1. As part of Oasis Community Learning, we have completed an in-depth risk assessment, which has been reviewed by the Oasis' national leadership and by the academy's health and safety committee. The risk assessment will be updated on a weekly basis by the academy and reported to Oasis. The local committee will continue to meet weekly until further notice.

2. In order to reduce the risk of transmission across the whole academy and each group of children, we have thought carefully about how we use the space in our Academy. We are repurposing some of the Academy to maximise the space both between pupils, and between pupils and staff.

This is in addition to how we will group our young people, which we wrote to you about at the end of term. Pupils from each Year Group will be taught together and have break and lunchtimes together. This will reduce the number of contacts each pupils has with other year groups, and reduce the chance of spreading infection.

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3. Hygiene remains an essential part of a safe return. Pupils and staff will be required to wash their hands thoroughly upon arrival at school, before and after eating, and after break times. Pupils will have access to a sink for handwashing. We will also have hand sanitiser dispensers at all receptions, all entrances and exits, dining rooms, halls and first aid rooms.

Everyone will be reminded of the importance of 'Catch it, Bin it, Kill it' approach and we will have enough tissues and bins available throughout the school to follow this routine. Hygiene will be everyone's responsibility, including all pupils, to ensure we make the Academy as safe as we possibly can.

The Academy will be cleaned every day as normal, and we will be wiping down surfaces and equipment more frequently to reduce transmission of the virus.

4. The Government does not recommend that facemasks are used by primary-aged children within school, but has mandated the use of face coverings for secondary students as they move around their school, and left it up to the discretion of schools about further use.

Again, this is a matter that Oasis has given a lot of thought to. Oasis believes that health and safety is **not** a discretionary matter. It is not permitted for primary students (children 11 or under) to wear face coverings but we will be requiring all staff to wear visors when they are teaching and face coverings when social distancing is not possible.

Questions and feedback

Please take the time to look over our returning to school information video on our website:

<https://vimeo.com/453362996>

If you have any questions or concerns please contact school in the usual way.

I wanted you to have the full information on the preparations we are completing to make the Academy safe and welcoming for everyone. I recognise that for some of our pupils this will be the first time back in school after many months and the arrangements will be unfamiliar. We will take the time to ensure they understand the changes as soon as they return and will provide additional support for those who are apprehensive.

If you do not have any further questions, we look forward to seeing your child on their first day back at school.

As a member of Year 1 to Year 6 your child's first day back will be Thursday 3rd September at 8.45am. Their school day will finish at 3pm. If your child is in Nursery or Reception, you should have received a separate letter with start dates on.

Thank you for your continued support as we make these arrangements.

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2. More Details about our arrangements

1) Attendance

The Government's guidance is clear that pupils are expected to attend school from September following the DfE statutory guidance.

This means that parents have a duty to ensure that their child regularly attends school, and that schools have a responsibility to record attendance and follow up absence.

2) Social Distancing

We will have a number of one-way systems in place, and there will be 2m distance tapes in place around the Academy so that pupils can be reminded of the need for distancing wherever possible. Desks will be side by side and forward facing to avoid students breathing over one another. There will be as much ventilation as possible.

3) Amended start and end times dependent on year group

The school gates will open at 8.40am. Please do not arrive before this time. The school gates will close at 9.05am. This allows children and families to enter the academy in a spaced out way, avoiding large groups gathering. Parents will not be able to enter the school building, so please drop your child off at the door. **Any child who arrives after 9.10am will be marked as late and unauthorised absence.** Your child's temperature may be taken on arrival, and if it is too high, they may be asked to return home with you. Nursery times will be as normal 8.40am until 11.40am.

The school gates will open for home time at 2.55pm. Please do not arrive before this time. The school gates will close at 3.25pm. This allows children and families to leave the academy in a spaced out way, avoiding large groups gathering. **Please make sure you collect your child on time.**

Year group	Drop off	Pick up
Nursery	External nursery entrance	External classroom door
Reception	External classroom door	External classroom door
Year 1	External classroom door	External classroom door
Year 2	External classroom door	External classroom door
Year 3	Side entrance	Y3 Sweden (Miss Bray) side entrance, near nursery
	Side entrance	Y3 Denmark (Miss Smart) fenced area side entrance, near nursery
Year 4	Side entrance	Y4 Slovakia (Miss Saeed) bottom corridor external door
	Side entrance	Y4 Spain (Mrs Saqib) stairs door at the back of school

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Year 5	Back stairs near the ball court	Hall external door
	Back stairs near the ball court	Hall external door
Year 6	Back stairs near the ball court	Ball court area outside
	Back stairs near the ball court	Ball court area outside

4) Hygiene and cleaning

We will ensure that everyone understands that good hygiene is everyone's responsibility and that everyone is responsible for everyone else's health.

We will maintain intensified cleaning routines with a focus on regularly wiping down door handles and hard surfaces. As per normal, the Academy will be cleaned every day and there will be disinfectant sprays and paper for cleaning purposes in each classroom.

5) Risk assessments

The risk assessment described overleaf has been developed following guidance from the Government and detailed guidelines from the Oasis Community Learning. As explained overleaf, it will be signed off by the Oasis national leadership team along with myself as Principal and will remain under constant review as we monitor our progress.

6) Getting to and from school

The Government continues to advise that families should try to avoid public transport especially at peak times and, where possible, travel to and from the Academy by walking or cycling. We know that this will not always be possible, so please let us know any concerns around this.

Wearing face coverings is a requirement for using public transport for children over 11.

7) Face Coverings and Visors

Pupils are not permitted to wear masks inside classrooms, as the latest advice from government is that social distancing and increased hygiene regimes within school is sufficient. However, as explained overleaf, staff will be required to wear visors when teaching. They will be required to also wear a facemask when social distancing is not possible i.e. when they are supporting an individual student.

During pick and up and drop-off, when there are lots of parents and children in a small space, please would parents wear a face covering. This is for everyone's protection.

8) Water bottles

Pupils can bring in their own water bottle for their individual use. These must be labelled and can be re-filled during the day. This must be for water only.

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Pupils should not bring in any unnecessary equipment into school. We will be giving pupils their own pens and pencils to use while they are at school and these will be dedicated for their personal use.

9) Reduced access to visitors and parents

To help us reduce the risk of infection, we are asking parents to communicate with us via the telephone 0114 2012300.

If it is required for you to come into the Academy, you will be required to wear a disposable face covering provided by us.

10) Food and packed lunches

Each bubble will have a time allocated to access the dining area and hot food provision.

Pupils may bring in packed lunches, but they must remain within their bags throughout the day, and any rubbish should be taken home each day.

11) Uniform

All pupils will now be required to return to full uniform. The latest Government advice is that uniforms do not need to be cleaned differently or any more often than usual because of coronavirus.

12) Swimming

We have decided that swimming lessons should be removed from the timetable and reconsidered at October half term.

13) Cashless Payments

We are now a cashless academy. Please do not bring cash into the academy to make payments. We now have a card machine to accept payments for items such as uniform, dinner, milk etc. You can use your credit or debit cards to make payments.

14) Suspected symptoms, a confirmed case, and multiple confirmed cases

We will be following the Government's direct guidance on what to do if a pupil or staff member has suspected coronavirus symptoms or is confirmed to have the virus. We have provided this guidance at the end of Government Guidance section below.

3. Government guidance

You may have questions about the Government's approach to reopening schools. I have summarised some of the [Government's latest advice](#) (updated 21st August) which I hope will address some your questions. You can read the Government's full advice by searching '*DfE parent's guidance.*'

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Is it safe to return?

All children, in all year groups, will return to school full time from the beginning of the autumn term. The prevalence of coronavirus has decreased since schools restricted their opening to most pupils, the NHS Test and Trace system is up and running and we understand more about the measures that need to be in place to create safer environments in schools.

The scientific evidence shows that coronavirus (COVID-19) presents a much lower risk to children than adults of becoming severely ill, and there is no evidence that children transmit the disease any more than adults do. There will still be risks while coronavirus (COVID-19) remains in the community, and that is why schools will be asked to put in place a range of protective measures

Attendance

It is vital that children and young people return to school, for their educational progress, for their wellbeing, and for their wider development. School attendance will be mandatory from the beginning of the new academic year. This means that it is your legal duty as a parent to send your child (if they are of compulsory school age) to school regularly.

If you have concerns about your child returning to school because you consider they may have other risk factors, you should discuss these with your school. They should be able to explain ways they are changing things to reduce risks.

Actions you can take

Do not send your child to their nursery or school if:

- they are showing [coronavirus \(COVID-19\) symptoms](#)
- someone in their household is showing symptoms

[Arrange a test](#) if you or your child develops symptoms. Inform your nursery or school of the results.

If the test is positive, follow [guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection](#), and engage with the NHS Test and Trace process.

It is important that you help nurseries and schools to implement these actions by following the advice set out here and wider public health advice and guidance.

Actions that schools will take

We have asked schools to:

- manage confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) in the school, in line with current public health guidance - this means your child may be asked to self-isolate for 14 days by their school (based on advice from their local health protection teams) if they have been in close, face to face contact with someone who has tested positive for the virus

- ensure that everyone cleans their hands more often than usual, including when they arrive, when they return from breaks, and before and after eating - this should be done for 20 seconds with soap and running water or hand sanitiser
- promote the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach, to ensure good respiratory hygiene
- enhance cleaning, including cleaning frequently touched surfaces more often

Nurseries will also minimise contact between individuals where they can. This could mean using different rooms for different age groups and keeping those groups apart. Schools will minimise contact and encourage maintaining distance as far as possible. They will decide how best to do this because it will be different for each school. This will involve asking children and young people to:

- stay within specified separate groups (or bubbles)
- maintain distance between individuals

Younger children may not be able to maintain social distancing. It is likely that for younger children the emphasis will be on separating groups.

Local outbreaks

Nurseries or schools will contact their local health protection team if they:

- have two or more confirmed cases of coronavirus among pupils or staff within 14 days
- see an increase in children or staff absence rates due to suspected or confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19)

The local health protection team will advise what action is required. Usually, closure will not be necessary, but some groups may need to self-isolate. If an outbreak in a school is confirmed, a mobile testing unit may be dispatched. They will test everyone who may have been in contact with the person who has tested positive. Testing will first focus on the person's class, followed by their year group, then the whole school if necessary.

If your local area sees a spike in infection rates that results in localised community spread, the government will decide what actions need to be taken. Your child's school should provide remote education if:

- groups of pupils need to self-isolate
- a larger restriction of attendance at school is needed

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Face Coverings

Nationwide, the Government is not recommending face coverings are necessary in education settings because a system of control, applicable to all education environments, provides additional mitigating measures. Schools have the discretion to require face coverings in communal areas where social distancing cannot be safely managed, if they believe that it is right in their circumstances.

More information on [Face Masks is available here](#) or by searching 'face coverings in education.'

Curriculum

The Government has set out what they expect schools to teach when pupils return. Schools will provide an ambitious and broad curriculum in all subjects. There may need to be changes to some subjects, such as PE and music, so that schools can teach these subjects as safely as possible.

Extra-curricular activities

The Government advises that schools will be permitted to run breakfast and after-school activities. They must be delivered in line with the guidance on protective measures, so things may need to run things differently.

Suspected symptoms of coronavirus amongst the school community

The Academy will fully engage with the NHS Test Trace process, and contact our local Public Health England health protection team. Parents/carers need to be ready to:

- book a test if you or your child are displaying symptoms. Pupils must not come into the school if they have symptoms, and must be sent home to self-isolate if they develop.
- provide details of anyone you have been in close contact with if you or your child test positive for coronavirus or if asked by NHS Test and Trace
- self-isolate if you have been in close contact with someone who develops coronavirus symptoms or someone who tests positive for coronavirus

Anyone who displays symptoms of coronavirus should get a test. Tests can be booked online through the NHS testing and tracing website. Parents must inform us immediately of the results:

- if you or your child tests negative, and if you or your child feel well and no longer have symptoms similar to coronavirus (COVID-19), you can stop self-isolating.

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- if you or your child tests positive, you should follow the 'stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus infection' and must continue to self-isolate for at least 7 days from the onset of their symptoms and your child may only return to school if they do not have symptoms other than a cough.

Confirmed case of coronavirus amongst the school community

The Academy will take swift action if we become aware that someone who has attended has tested positive for coronavirus. We will contact the local health protection team that will carry out a rapid risk assessment to confirm who has been in close contact with the person during the period that they were infectious, and ensure they are asked to self-isolate. Based on the advice from the health protection team, we would then send home those pupils who have been in close contact with the person who has tested positive, advising them to self-isolate for 14 days since they were last in close contact with that person when they were infectious. Close contact means:

- direct close contacts - face to face contact with an infected individual for any length of time, within 1 metre, including being coughed on, a face to face conversation, or unprotected physical contact (skin-to-skin)
- proximity contacts - extended close contact (within 1 to 2 metres for more than 15 minutes) with an infected individual

The health protection team will provide definitive advice on who must be sent home, and we will keep a record of pupils and staff in each bubble to help in this instance.

Household members of those contacts who are sent home do not need to self-isolate themselves unless your child who is self-isolating subsequently develops symptoms. If someone in a bubble that has been asked to self-isolate develops symptoms themselves within their 14-day isolation period they should follow 'stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus infection'. They should get a test, and:

- if the test delivers a negative result, they must remain in isolation for the remainder of the 14-day isolation period.
- if the test result is positive, they should inform us immediately, and must isolate for at least 7 days from the onset of their symptoms. Their household should self-isolate for at least 14 days from when the symptomatic person first symptoms had, following 'stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus infection'.

If the Academy was to experience an outbreak (2 or more confirmed cases of coronavirus among pupils or staff within 14 days, or if there is an increase in absence due to suspected cases of coronavirus), we will contact our local health protection team. This team will advise any additional action, though the closure of the whole school will generally not be necessary.

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Where an outbreak in a school is confirmed, a mobile testing unit may be dispatched to test others who may have been in contact with the person who has tested positive. Testing will focus on the person's class, their year group, the whole school, if necessary. If our local area sees a spike in infection rates, we may be advised to implement further measures.

If you are not clear on any of the information provided in this letter, you can call the main office on 0114 201 2300 and a member of staff will assist you.

Yours sincerely,

Principal, Oasis Academy Fir Vale

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