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September Opening – Yay!!

9th July 2020

Dear Families,

I am so delighted to be able to write to you about opening school to all the children in September. Following the sad day of 20th March when we officially closed the doors to all except the children of key workers and vulnerable children, we have all been on different journeys. There have been lovely moments to treasure but many challenges too. I extend the warmest of thanks to you all for your understanding and support of the school during these times.

Last week on Thursday the government announced plans for September school opening and on Monday this week, I joined a local authority update with information about the Cambridgeshire approach for schools. Since then we have discussing and collaborating both here in school, with our external providers for cleaning, catering and other services, as well as with other local schools to ensure we plan for the best provision possible at Hemingford Grey Primary School.

The government have produced guidance for parents and carers -

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/what-parents-and-carers-need-to-know-about-early-years-providers-schools-and-colleges-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak/what-parents-and-carers-need-to-know-about-early-years-providers-schools-and-colleges-in-the-autumn-term>

As this guidance states, 'things will be a bit different when children and young people return to school for the new academic year'. There will be specific measures in place to support your children and our staff in a safe return to school.

The general expectations to be aware of are summarised as follows:

- School attendance is compulsory
- Anyone who has coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms, or has someone in their household who has COVID-19 symptoms, should not attend school - this means if your child, or someone in your household, has symptoms you should not send them to school

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- It is important to engage with the NHS Test and Trace process so that cases can be identified and action taken - this means if your child develops symptoms, you should arrange for them to [get a test](#) and you should inform school of the results of that test.
- Confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) in the school will be managed in line with current public health guidance - this means your child may be asked to self-isolate for 14 days (based on advice from our local health protection teams) if they have been in close, face-to-face contact with someone who has tested positive for the virus.
- We will ensure everyone cleans their hands more often than usual, including when they arrive, when they return from breaks, and before and after eating.
- We will ensure good respiratory hygiene, by promoting the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach.
- We will have enhanced cleaning, including cleaning frequently touched surfaces more often.
- We will minimise contact and maintain distance, as far as possible, between bubbles (we call them Hemingford Hubs) with Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 (Y1/2), Lower Key Stage 2 (Y3/4) and Upper Key Stage 2 (Y5/6) each forming a Hub who share a learning zone and will have staggered arrival, breaks, lunchtime and collection times.

It is really important to us that you help us to implement these approaches and by following the advice set out by the government and wider public health advice to ensure the safety of all.

As I am sure you will understand, the organisation of getting almost 300 children back in school means that we plan to do this in stages regarding some provision. Therefore some of the usual parts of the day will also be 'a little bit different':

- Initially there will only be an offer of cold 'grab bags' for universal free school meals, free school meals and paid school meals. This will make lunchtime more manageable whilst we are settling in and will be reviewed at the end of September to enable planning to start for warm food as the colder months begin, if we are able to.
- Wrap around provision of breakfast and afterschool care supports many working parents and will be considered in September when we are in a position to review how this may safely run. Please be aware that this provision will not be running for at least the first three weeks of the autumn term with no guarantees of how or when this can be offered.

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- After school clubs and activities will also be considered once we are in a position to review how these may safely run.
- Volunteers supporting school are highly valued and their support will be welcomed as soon as we can safely plan for this.

We know and understand that many of you are concerned about how children can make up for lost teaching time. As you will have seen from the letter that Miss Jones sent out regarding the Recovery Curriculum, we are integrating the wellbeing of pupils into our approach for teaching and learning to ensure that they are ready to learn as well as considering the breadth of curriculum provision and good attainment and progress for all. Staff will be supporting children to feel safe and happy as they return to school and will be using previous data alongside assessments made in September to ensure planning meets the needs of all the children. Should any children be required to self-isolate, we will ensure that home learning is easily supported by continued use of SeeSaw both in school and at home.

With all the explanations above, we recognise that nothing will be 100% as you wish it to be, based on how school previously ran. However, in order to move successfully forward with the best education possible for your children, we fall back to our motto – ‘Together Everyone Achieves More’ with children, families, staff, governors and our local community working together.

I hope this letter provides some of the answers to the many questions that you likely have. With the 1st June partial opening to some year groups, we found that creating a FAQ was really helpful. Further information will follow with details about how each ‘phase hub’ will work with drop off and pick up times and routes around school. We will endeavour to get this information out to you as soon as possible and if there are questions following this information, please do email the office to help us create an FAQ sheet.

With warm regards,

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