



*Consett Infant School*  
Member of  
*Consett Infant and Beechdale Nursery Federation*

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Head Teacher: Mrs J Graham

Dear Families,

I hope that you all remain safe and well. I want to begin by thanking you for your kindness, care, cooperation and support since school closed to the majority of children on March 20th. I know that it has been a difficult time juggling family responsibility, home learning and home working but our whole school family have appreciated the efforts that you have all made to 'stay at home, to keep safe and to protect the NHS'.

We have remained open for some children throughout this period, including during school holidays, at the request of key workers and for some vulnerable families.

We all want to see our wonderful school up and running again. We want to see our children engaged and enjoying their learning but, when school does re-open, it is vital that there is total transparency about how the school experience will change and the wide range of additional restrictions which will be introduced to ensure, as far as possible, children's, staff's, their families and the wider community's safety.

The government has stipulated that we should initially focus on Reception and Year 1 and to have group sizes of no more than 15 children. However, Mrs Stephenson and I have spent time in school assessing rooms so that we can adhere to the 2 metre social distancing rule and we can only accommodate 8 or 9 children into each room safely. This therefore means that we will have to consider carefully which children return to school first, with the priority given to children of key workers, vulnerable children then Reception aged pupils.

As each group of children return to school, we will have to ensure that strict social distancing protocols are adhered to – not an easy task with children who are normally encouraged to share and work closely together. These protocols will involve:

- Staggered drop off and collection times with only one adult bringing their child to school. ***This adult must be from the same household as the child and not a child minder or other relative.***
- Splitting each class into smaller groups (children will then stay in these smaller group 'bubbles' for the duration of the day). As class sizes are reduced, children are not guaranteed to be taught in particular friendship groups, by their usual class teacher, teaching assistant or in their usual classroom
- If a person within the 'bubble' tests positive for Covid-19, the whole group MUST self-isolate for 14 days
- Staggered playtimes and lunchtimes – with no contact between groups
- Limited movement around school – children will eat their lunch in their classrooms

- Adjustments to the curriculum and timetable to reflect new ways of working, with a focus on emotional well-being and a creative curriculum
- Limited access to classroom resources – to reduce the possibility of cross contamination. Each child will have a folder and tray to store their own personal resources. This will be very difficult with Reception children as young children access so many practical resources in their learning. We have been instructed to remove soft furnishings and other play equipment (playdough, water, sand, etc) from our classrooms. Certain resources will have to be cleaned by staff each day. To minimise the spread of the virus, children will not be given reading books or other resources to take. Laptops and iPads will be restricted for individual use (All of our equipment is numbered so children, where possible, will be allocated a device and it will have to be cleaned each day)
- An increased emphasis on personal hygiene – frequent handwashing throughout the school day
- Toilet visits will have to be staggered
- Staff administering first aid or care needs will be required to wear PPE
- Parents will not be permitted to enter the school building at any point during the school day (all communication must be done via email or telephone, and only in exceptional circumstances the school office)
- Children wishing to bring a packed lunch will have their lunchbox cleaned with anti-bacterial spray when entering school
- Water bottles can be brought into school but they must be named and taken home for cleaning and refilling each day
- Children must wear clean clothing each day – this does not have to be school uniform as long as it is practical for indoor and outdoor play
- There will be no whole school assemblies and no whole school events such as sports day, celebration of work evening or Year 2 leavers' assembly
- Breakfast and after school clubs will not be provided (School will typically open from 9-3pm)
- Parents will need to be contactable at all time while their child is in school and must be able to collect them within a half hours' notice if they or another school member displays symptoms of Covid-19
- Parents must encourage children to wash their hands when arriving home from school
- If a child is being collected before or after their allocated beginning or end time, parents must not enter the school site but ring the school office on arrival. This will be more appropriate for the children attending childcare
- Children of key workers that are also in Reception will be given priority and therefore expected to take up a full-time place
- Deep cleaning of rooms and equipment will need to be provided every day so in some circumstances school may need to open later or close earlier on certain days.

I appreciate all this information potentially leaves you with a dilemma. It is important to us, however, that we are honest with you. I recognise that this may seem quite scary but the decision about your child's return to school lies with you. The government have announced that this is not compulsory and parents will not be fined if they do not send their child to school.

As Head Teacher, I recognise the need for children to be in school learning but also recognise the fact that I must feel confident, as must any parent, that everyone in our school family will be safe in school. I fully support the decision of any parent who does not send their child to school if they do not feel it is safe.

I understand that every family situation is different and that families will all have their individual circumstances to consider (self-isolating, shielding, vulnerable family members, etc)

If your child continues to work at home, home learning will continue to be provided via our website and this will be provided on a weekly basis.

Governors meet on the 9<sup>th</sup> June to consider reopening school for some groups of children from the 15<sup>th</sup> June. To help us with our preparations, if you have a child in Reception or Year 1, we ask that you send an email to our school email address by midday on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> June indicating that you wish your child to return to school, potentially from June 15<sup>th</sup>. Places will be allocated on a first come first served basis. Once we have an indication of numbers, I will be in touch with further details on how this will be managed in school.

Yours sincerely

Mrs J Graham  
Headteacher