



The Eliot Bank and Gordonbrock Schools Federation



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20th May 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope that you are all safe and well and managing to enjoy some of the beautiful sunshine we are experiencing.

Since I wrote to you last week, you will have heard a huge amount of speculation in the press about whether or not children in Nursery, Reception, Year One and Year Six will be returning to school from, at the earliest, 1 June 2020. The government's position has not changed and they are still hoping that children in these year groups will be able to start to return then. This date will not be confirmed by the government until they are sure that all of their key tests have been met. In the meantime, school continues to be open for critical worker families and vulnerable children.

I understand that you will have many questions about how a wider opening of school will work and I am now able to give you some further information.

As always, the safety of your children and the school staff is my priority. The senior leadership team are working relentlessly to plan for how we can ensure that children and adults are as safe as possible. This is a very complex matter, with many, many factors to consider and every school is different, with different needs and challenges. I am sure that you will appreciate that we need time to plan, as well as continuing to run school for our critical worker families, support learning for children at home and consult with staff. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your continued patience and understanding. I want to be open and transparent with you about our plans for a phased return to school but I also want to make sure we have a definitive plan to give you before we confirm what will be happening. This will enable parents in Nursery, Reception, Year One and Year Six to make an informed decision about sending their children back to school.

Information for parents of children in Nursery, Reception, Year One and Year Six

Each school is required to carry out a rigorous risk assessment for the wider opening of school and the extensive government guidance documents, issued by the Department for Education (DfE), require school leaders to consider a number of factors in their planning.

One of these documents is [Opening schools and educational settings to more pupils from 1 June: guidance for parents and carers](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers/reopening-schools-and-other-educational-settings-from-1-june) which can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers/reopening-schools-and-other-educational-settings-from-1-june>.

This document may answer some of your questions.

In the document's section on how risks to children, teachers and families will be managed, it says, 'Schools and other settings should communicate their plans to parents once they have had a chance to work through them in detail.'



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The document goes on to describe the approaches that the DfE is asking schools to take, including:

- carrying out a risk assessment before opening to more children and young people - the assessment should directly address risks associated with coronavirus so that sensible measures can be put in place to minimise those risks for children, young people and staff;
- making sure that children and young people do not attend if they or a member of their household has symptoms of coronavirus;
- promoting regular hand washing for 20 seconds with running water and soap or use of sanitiser and ensuring good respiratory hygiene by promoting the catch it, bin it, kill it approach;
- cleaning more frequently to get rid of the virus on frequently touched surfaces, such as door handles, handrails, table tops, play equipment and toys;
- minimising contact through smaller classes or group sizes and altering the environment as much as possible, such as changing the layout of classrooms; and
- reducing mixing between groups through timetable changes, such as staggered break times or by introducing staggered drop-off and collection times.

I think it is also important to note that, although we would work hard to implement the above measures, including, social distancing, in order to minimise risk, it would be very difficult to guarantee their implementation with our children, particularly the youngest ones. It is also important to say that if your child does return to school, they may not be with their current class teacher, due to the fact that children must be in smaller groups of no more than 15. I am sure that, in light of this list, you can appreciate the extent of the plans that we are currently working on and the challenges we are facing.

This situation for schools is an ever changing one, with daily updates influencing our decision making. We plan to share specific details with you early next week but I think it is very important to share the school's current position with you also.

To help with our planning, we would like to know how many of you are likely to send your Nursery, Reception, Year One or Year Six child into school if the government's plans for a phased return from 1 June goes ahead. Please use the following link: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSe_R6HBSxUjRIUOctDrODy33KbsUm2v4y0OwWActlviMffkCw/viewform?usp=sf_link to access and complete our short questionnaire regarding the phased re-opening of school. We would be grateful if you could complete the survey by the end of **Thursday 21 May 2020**. We do understand that you may change your mind about this when you receive further information from us, but your thoughts will help to further inform our current thinking.

Thank you for your continued commitment to working in partnership with us.

Yours sincerely,



Maria Gilmore,
Executive Headteacher
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