

August 28th 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 our children back, and also 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.'

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, attach more detail in the accompanying document, and finally provide a shortened copy of the Government's latest advice to parents for your reference.

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, reported to Oasis and 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. In order to reduce the risk of transmission across the whole academy there will be four 'bubbles' – Reception, Year 1 and 2, Year 3 and 4 and Year 5 and 6. These bubbles will that will arrive and leave the academy at the same times and have break and lunchtimes together. This will reduce the number of contacts each pupil has with those in other year groups and reduce the chance of spreading infection.

For primary-aged pupils, there is no in-class social distancing required. However, we are implementing a no touching policy from year 1 upwards (no hugging, high fives, hand holding etc.)



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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 face masks 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 read the included arrangements document where we explain in more detail how school will work. If you have any questions or concerns that are not addressed in these documents, please contact us at the academy by phone on 02086684877 or by email byron@oasisbyron.org.

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 don't have any further questions, we look forward to seeing your child on their first day back at school on Monday 7th September.

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

Yours sincerely,



Principal

Oasis Academy Byron



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

In addition to the information in my letter, 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. There will also be notices reminding students about the need for good respiratory hygiene (catch it/bin it /kill it) and we will ensure ventilation wherever possible.

3) Amended start and end times dependent on year group

Each year bubble will have a different start and finish time. It is important pupils are dropped off in their allotted time slot so as not to make contact with pupils outside of their bubble.

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

Year group	Arrival time between	End time	Enter via
Reception	9 – 9.15am	3.15pm	Internal gate by Children's Centre
Year 1	9 – 9.15am	3.15pm	Internal blue gates
Year 2	9 – 9.15am	3.15pm	Internal blue gates
Year 3	8.45 – 9am	3.20pm	Internal blue gates
Year 4	8.45 – 9am	3.20pm	Internal blue gates
Year 5	8.30 – 8.45am	3.05pm	Internal blue gates
Year 6	8.30 – 8.45am	3.05pm	Internal blue gates

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 thorough risk assessment following guidance from the Government and detailed guidelines from the Oasis Community Learning.

The risk assessment 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 and as the country's situation changes.

6) Getting to and from school

The Government continues to advise that pupils should try to avoid public transport especially at peak times and, where possible, travel to and from the Academy by walking or cycling. We have staggered arrival times with this in mind – see point 3. 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) Coming into school - mask procedures

When pupils arrive at school they will be required to use sanitiser on entrance to the building and wash their hands immediately. They will then be required to dispose of any temporary face coverings they may have been wearing in a covered bin, or place reusable face coverings in a plastic bag which they can pick up later when leaving to go home, and then wash their hands again before heading to their classroom.

Pupils who wear face masks on the way to school must remove them on arrival by using the straps rather than the front of their mask.

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 face mask when social distancing is not possible i.e. when they are supporting an individual student.

We continue to have a stock of PPE within the Academy, including face-masks, disposable gloves, disposable aprons, hand sanitisers and soap, if required.

In light of Government advice, we will no longer be undertaking thermometer testing upon arrival.

8) Water bottles and other equipment

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

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.

We are asking children to limit the items they bring to school to only a coat and lunch bag if necessary.

9) No access/no visitors

To help us reduce the risk of infection, we will not be able to receive visitors or parents until further notice. During the day, we ask that parents communicate with us only via the telephone 02086684877.

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 eat during the day and there will be 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 return to full uniform which will need to be changed daily

If possible please can your child wear Velcro footwear as it will be difficult for staff to support with tying laces

As our usual uniform policy states, all long hair must be tied up and no jewellery is to be worn by children.

12) Swimming

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

13) Behaviour

We will be making some amendments to our behaviour policy to reflect our new arrangements. We will publish this on the Academy website's policies page before the beginning of term.

14) Breakfast Club

There will be a Breakfast Club which will operate from 8am each day. The Reception and Year 1 /2 bubbles will be in two separate groups in the small hall and the Year 3/4 and Year 5/6 bubbles will be in two separate groups in the main hall. Hygiene is essential and pupils will be required to wash their hands thoroughly upon arrival at school, before and after eating and surfaces and equipment will be wiped more frequently. Children should come in the main entrance as previously.

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

We will be following the government's direct guidance on what to do if there a student 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 and Frequently Asked Questions section.

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 parents guidance.'

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. 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 really 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 2 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

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 and 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.
- 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 we have more than one confirmed case

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.

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.

