



## The Grove Primary School

The Grove  
Oakfield Lane  
Consett

County Durham DH8 8AP

**Head Teacher:** Bernadette Atkinson



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**Friday, 12 June 2020**

Dear Parents/Carers

Firstly, thank you for your patience while we have given significant thought and effort as to how we can reopen school safely more widely for children in the suggested year groups.

Senior leaders and The Governing Body have been working tirelessly to create detailed plans to make sure we can safely welcome Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 groups back when it is safe for us to start the phased reopening of our school. Thank you, to you, as parents and carers for the patience, support and kind comments during these past few difficult months while we strive to continue to support all in our school community.

It was so positive to see so many responses from parents/carers of children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 and I hope that you feel reassured about your decisions and want to remind you that you know what is best for your child's health and wellbeing and we will not be pressuring you to send your child(ren) to school. We appreciate that this is an important decision for you to make. The government has also said it will be up to parents/carers whether they send their child or not.

For all of our children wishing to return to school, this will be a very different experience than when they left in March. Children will be taught in a classroom different to their own, working with different members of staff and with different resources too. For our Year 6 children, there will be no additional transition events apart from the Transition Tuesday information that we share on a weekly basis from Consett Academy.

Detailed risk assessments have been carried out in line with current government guidance to ensure that protective and safety measures are in place for all staff and children. Our school site will look very different and routines will be somewhat different too.

### **Government guidance has asked us to consider:**

- stagger the times of any movement around the school as well as start and finish times
- keep class groups to a maximum of 15
- keep children in these smaller groups for the whole time they are in school
- not allow these groups of children to mix with each other at all
- encourage children to maintain social distancing where possible.

A lot of work has taken place behind the scenes to ensure this guidance is in place. We cannot ensure that all children will socially distance but have taken steps to minimise the risk so that staff will endeavour to keep children and themselves safe.





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We have also updated certain policies in line with COVID-19 measures and these policies can be found [here](#) (Behaviour and Additional Safeguarding Guidance).

Last month, Durham County Council advised that schools wait, until 15<sup>th</sup> June, to begin the phased reopening of school to more pupils. From then we have been working very closely with the Local Authority to decide what is right for our school and our site. The Local Authority has provided risk assessments which has allowed senior leaders and governors to consider the health and safety risks for children and staff at all levels. After carrying out robust risk assessments, we have decided that the following approach would be best for all at The Grove Primary School.

### **Welcome back arrangements**

**We are looking forward to welcoming those children (who have requested places) back to Year 6 from Monday 15<sup>th</sup> June.** We have started with Year 6 first due to the nature and the layout of our building in line with social distancing measures. These children will be based in a small group working with 2 members of staff at all times supporting them to get to grips with new routines and social distancing measures.

**We are not going to invite the Reception and Year 1 children back yet but we would hope to do this during the next phase of reopening our school.** This will be subject to further risk assessments and meetings with senior leaders and governors and we would hope to have more information regarding these children next week.

In line with guidance from the Government, we have to stagger the start and finishing times of the school day for different year groups. This will be:

**Year 6 will enter via the pupil entrance at 9.15am and will leave school at 2.45pm from Monday 15<sup>th</sup> June. We will contact the parents who requested places later today to find out lunch arrangements.**

**When our Year 1 and Reception children return to school, they will start the school day at 9.30am and finish the school day at 2.00pm. Please remember this will be subject to further risk assessments and meetings with governors next week.**

### **Dropping off and collecting children**

In line with social distancing measures and risk assessments, parents will not be permitted to enter the school building and we remind parents that they can contact school via telephone 01207 502938 or via email [enquiries@thegroveprimaryschool.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@thegroveprimaryschool.co.uk)

We would also ask parents who need to drop their children off to do so at the pupil entrance at the allocated times for their child. Parents can also collect from the pupil entrance and we would ask parents to adhere to strict social distancing guidelines at all





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times when picking up and dropping their child off. Parents are asked not to arrive earlier to collect their child or be in the vicinity while other children are being picked up/dropped off as it does put others at risk. We would also ask parents do not collect children from other families. If you are late for dropping of or collecting your child, you must contact the school office to arrange alternative arrangements.

If you choose to send your child into school, we ask that you continue to maintain social distancing at home to ensure everyone is protected within their group/bubble. We need to be aware that for every social contact you make you could come into contact with the virus so we need to minimize these risks to protect children and staff. All government social distancing guidance **MUST** be followed.

### **Inside school**

Children will be arranged in small groups/bubbles with the same staff working with children on a rota basis. These groups/bubbles will follow a strict timetable for staggering breaks, lunches and play times so that children do not mix. Parents cannot request to move their child to a different group/bubble.

There will be no before or after-school provision.

Parents will not be allowed to gather on the playground or enter the school building. You will have to communicate with staff by telephone and call the office to make an appointment. Only one parent or carer is permitted to bring their child to school and collect them at the allocated time.

Staff will not wear any PPE – unless for intimate care, first aid or if a child/adult develops symptoms.

Movement in corridors will be different and as far as possible, there will be continue to be a one-way system with 2m distance markings.

Children will be in a group of no more than 8 children with 2 members of staff. Government advice stipulates a maximum group of 15 but our classrooms sizing means that we can safely manage 8 children- taking into account- social distancing measures.

Activities will focus on children's wellbeing and basic skills appropriate to their age/stage.

Activities will involve more independent tasks as the teacher will not be able to go side by side or sit next to them to give them targeted support

Your child may not be with their usual class teacher or with their friends but we will try our best to take these things into consideration

Your child will have their own learning areas and will need to stay in this space – they will have to, where possible, remain 2 metres apart from staff and children.



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Many of the activities children are used to accessing, such as, water play, sand, construction, and playdough for the younger children, cannot for safety reasons be available.

Classrooms will have all unnecessary furniture, equipment and all soft furnishings removed.

The children will only be allowed to use individually allocated stationery and a small selection of activities and resources as they are not allowed to share with others.

### **School Meals**

If your child receives a free school meal or you pay for school meals, the meal will be served to your child in their class base. We would ask that children bringing their own lunch to school bring this to school in a disposable plastic bag each day. The bag would go into the bin after they finished their lunch.

For those children entitled to Free School Meals and currently receiving a £15 Tesco voucher, parents will not receive this voucher if your child attends school. Instead they will receive their entitlement of a Free School Meal daily while in school.

### **Hygiene**

To maintain social distancing and maintain appropriate levels of cleanliness, the start and finish times of the school day will be staggered (see dropping off and collecting children section).

Children do not need to wear school uniform but do need to wear clean washed clothes daily as the virus is known to sit on clothing and paper for a period of time. We would ask that children do not wear any jewellery as per usual uniform guidelines.

Children should not bring anything from home apart from: packed lunch (see school meals section) a water bottle, a coat or sun hat depending upon the weather. We would ask that sun cream be applied- if necessary- before a child comes to school.

Strict hygiene rules will continue to be implemented. Children will frequently wash their hands with soap and hot water for 20 seconds and dry thoroughly. They will sanitise their hands on arrival at the setting each morning and after playing outside. They will wash and dry their hands frequently before lunch and after coughing or sneezing.

### **Illness**

If a child becomes ill during the school day, we will ask that they are collected immediately by a parent and are taken home.

Children who display coronavirus type symptoms or children who live with someone who has coronavirus will not be able to attend school. Isolation and self-isolation rules MUST be followed.



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If a child or an adult in their group is confirmed as having the virus, the whole group including the staff working with that group, will be sent home immediately to self-isolate in line with Public Health England advice.

### **Additional information for parents**

Online learning will still be added to the website each Monday for any child not attending school and in the other year groups not expected to return to school. Those attending school will spend some time, each day, completing online learning tasks in school so that all children are accessing the same activities.

We understand that our Nursery (those moving to other schools as well as those moving into Reception) and Year 6 children will be disappointed that leaving celebrations and transitions will not take place or take place in a different way than usual. It is disappointing too but we must remind ourselves that it is to adhere to advice and hopefully it is to keep everyone safe.

It has been a difficult time being a Headteacher, these past few months, but it makes things easier when you work with staff and governors who want to go above and beyond for children and families like those at The Grove Primary School. No job is ever too big and never too small for them and they have been tremendous at adapting to new ways of working. It has been tremendous that our families have stayed in touch and sent lots of amazing photos, activities and comments to help us stay together and keep in touch. It makes me so proud to see how our families have looked after one another and adapted to different ways of learning over these past few months.

When the time is right, when things are safe, we will look forward to welcoming more of our children back but until then I hope that all of our families take care, stay safe and look after one another.

*Bernadette*