

APPLETREE NURSERY PARENT/CARER LETTER



Dear All,

Thank you all for the fantastic support we have received from you, your children and the local community over the last nine strange and unprecedented weeks. Recent months have been very challenging for all of us managing our home lives, home learning, social distancing, etc. I hope you are all well and coping in these difficult times.

We have really enjoyed seeing all of the lovely things you've been doing at home on Seesaw and we appreciate the efforts you are making with home / school learning. Our biggest priority, as always, is that our Nursery children are safe, happy and healthy which is why we have loved seeing so many pictures of them smiling and laughing.

As you are no doubt aware, the Government has asked schools across England to prepare to reopen to the youngest children in primary school. Schools are trying to work through the current circumstances and guidelines to enable this to happen. Each school is unique and will respond to the reopening request with different outcomes. Every school will have the safety of children and adults in school as an **absolute** priority.

At Appletree, we didn't 'close'. We reopened school to Key Worker children (Nursery to Y4) on 23rd March and this provision will continue during the return to school phase.

Going forward, we have to consider how to open the school to certain year groups and operate in a **safe manner**. We can only expand the number of pupils attending if we are confident it is safe to do so. We will consider all of the following elements carefully; our building, our available staff (some teachers, teaching assistants, caretaking and cleaning staff are isolating due serious health issues), the requirements of additional hygiene and cleaning regimes, and our concerns over children's well-being and mental health on return to school.

Schools are advised to proceed methodically and with caution.

There is a huge emphasis on the ability of children to socially distance and follow the suggested Hygiene Guidelines below, and so after a risk assessment of spaces available, staffing levels and consultation with Governors, we have decided that, from 1st June, school will:

- **Remain closed for Nursery children** (except for in the Key Worker provision)
- Open initially to Y1 pupils (part time initially, building up to full time)

Then, after revisiting Risk Assessments and Government Guidelines:

- Open to Reception children (on a part time basis only)

Please note that all plans are subject to change at short notice.

If you are eligible and require Key Worker provision, please email info@appletree.org.uk or ring the school office.

Hygiene Guidelines and minimising contact between groups of children:

To prevent the spread of Coronavirus we have been asked to use a range of protective measures to create a safer environment.

Hygiene routines within school:

- Children will clean their hands on arrival at school, and also before and after eating.
- There will also be regular hand washing throughout the school day for 20 seconds with running water and soap.
- Staff will do their best (given the young age of the children) to ensure that pupils are encouraged not to touch their mouth, eyes and nose.

- We will encourage pupils to use a tissue, or elbow, to cough or sneeze and to use bins for tissue waste ('catch it, bin it, kill it').
- There will be regular cleaning within school throughout the day; to get rid of the virus on frequently touched surfaces such as door handles, tabletops etc. using detergents and anti-bacterial sprays.
- School will be cleaned thoroughly at the end of the day ready for the next day.
- Toilets will be cleaned during the school day by staff.

Whilst we will make every effort to reduce the contact between us in school **socially distancing is extremely difficult for small children**. We have put the following measures in place:

Minimising contact between groups of children:

- Reducing pupils mixing between groups through staggered drop-off and collection times.
- Smaller classes or group sizes (15 or less) and altering the school environment (classroom/corridors) as much as possible.
- Children staying with one teacher and in one group of children all day.
- Reducing mixing between groups through timetable changes, including break and lunchtimes.
- Restricting the movement around classrooms by changing the layout. Also cordoning off some areas of classrooms to minimise contact.
- Reducing mixing between groups through staggered lunch times.
- Removal of soft furnishings, soft toys and toys that are hard to clean (such as those with intricate parts).
- Play equipment will be appropriately cleaned if used between groups of children.
- The Children will sit at the same table space every day.
- No large assemblies or large group gatherings.
- Packed lunches will be eaten at cleaned tables in the classroom.
- One adult to drop off and pick up child/children.
- Windows will be opened to increase ventilation.
- Classrooms will be accessed directly from outside where possible.
- One way system for entering school yard for all – parents/carers to enter yard via car park main yard gate and to exit the gate at the top of the yard past the Nursery and Reception classrooms.
- No books will be sent home to limit the exchange of take-home resources between children and staff.
- Large equipment (climbing frame) **will not** be used as during a playtime we will be unable to ensure that it is appropriately cleaned between groups of children.

In addition – particularly in relation to toilet and changing of children:

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) including face coverings and face masks

Wearing a face covering or face mask in schools or other education settings is not recommended by the government. Changing habits, cleaning and hygiene are effective measures in controlling the spread of the virus. Face coverings should not be worn by young children, as it may inadvertently increase the risk of transmission. The government advise that the majority of staff in education settings will not require PPE beyond what they would normally need for their work, even if they are not always able to maintain a distance of 2 metres from others. **However, please note that if our staff feel more comfortable wearing PPE they will not be prevented from doing so.**