

Friday 22 May 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

About our Provisional plan for re-opening some year groups

As you will be aware, the government has published an intention for primary schools to consider opening for certain year groups from 1st June at the earliest, pending the continued stabilisation of the national situation. Due to constantly changing factors, we wanted to wait for as much advice and guidance to be available before sharing our decisions with you. We wanted to wait for the SAGE scientific report to be published before proceeding and announcing plans. This has now been published and clearly says the risks would be halved by holding back a wider return until the 15<sup>th</sup> June.

<http://www.independentsage.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Independent-Sage-Brief-Report-on-Schools.pdf>

Thank you to those of you who have told us in advance of your decision regarding your children returning or not. Bear in mind, this is your choice and if you do not feel it is safe to do so, the school will respect your decision and continue to supply assistance with home learning and all normal attendance procedures are lifted for the time being. Please be aware that we surveyed all parents to find out broad sweep yes or no to would you send your child back this term or not. If you answered yes this does not mean your child will be in first trial cohorts of children.

All the guidance that we have received from national government and the local authority has stressed that individual schools should use national guidance to conduct thorough Risk Assessments of their capacity and physical spaces before opening. We, in LEAP schools, have been conducting thorough Risk Assessments on all aspects of school life and these will continue to be updated and enhanced as more information becomes available. Individual schools need to create plans, organise classes and spaces, ensure they have resources and timetable activities, lunchtimes and breaks to ensure that the children return to school in as safe a way as possible for our families and staff. This will result in schools making different decisions when factoring in these matters.

Undoubtedly, you will have seen some of the media coverage on the issues that have been raised by both science experts and the teaching unions concerning this proposed partial reopening of schools. There are serious concerns over the impact it will have on causing infection transmission rates to rise and also the ways it may put members of staff at risk – not only through the increased contact at school but also for those who have long journeys to work. Schools are being told that social distancing is not possible or necessary within the pods, this makes staff very uneasy as this is not the message in general to us all about how to keep each other safe.

There are also concerns over staffing schools given that many staff are on the clinically vulnerable or vulnerable list or live with family members who are. This puts a heavier burden on those who are in-school.

There has been much discussion in the media and elsewhere around other countries, for example, Denmark where they have had less than 600 deaths overall and where their children don't start formal education until they are seven years old and therefore are not a useful comparison to us in London when looking at our 4, 5 and 6 year olds starting back.

We must work closely with the education unions, local authority, staff groups and governors – consultation is key at the moment. The combined unions groups are saying that it is not safe to open more widely and advising their members not to attend work if they feel it is unsafe. The combined

union checklist can be viewed here <https://neu.org.uk/media/10536/view>. This puts further strain on senior leaders who cannot rely on staff attending work or agreeing to all parts of our proposal.

We mention all this because you need to hold in mind that any plan for LEAP Federation to open its schools needs to be received cautiously. It is our intention to open, as outlined below, however this plan will be subject to daily review depending on the national and local situation and the union response. As track and trace becomes more established after 01 June, we hope the community risk will become much reduced. We are sending it out now so that you have an idea of our plans – but please be mindful that these plans may be subject to change through circumstances outside of our control.

The Executive Headteacher, three Associate Headteachers and the Governing Body have looked carefully at our individual schools, following detailed Risk Assessments and devised a reopening plan that we think represents a sensible way forward. We have audited staff numbers, consulted staff and unions and surveyed parents on whether they would participate in wider opening and completed the necessary Risk Assessments. We have read scientific evidence and weighed up the benefits for our children against the risks. We have successfully managed to ensure that every child has access to online learning through our laptops programme and we have ensured our home learning is of high quality.

Due to staff numbers and spaces available we quickly run out of further expansion options. Picture for example in Reception, 75 children are divided into separate pods of between 10 – 12 children, each pod needs two staff, each pod needs a specially prepared room, each pod need to access separate toilets from other pods, each pod has to eat separately and not touch same surfaces. We therefore need to use Nursery spaces, staff, play areas and toilets to accommodate Reception. Taking staff who are shielding or vulnerable and will not be attending school into account, we then need to use staff from other year groups as well as all nursery staff to cover the Reception classes. Many of the staff leading pods involved will not be teachers but will work under the guidance of a teacher. We are also expected to keep home learning going for all children so taking teachers away from their own classes to cover Reception pods will impact seriously on the children in home learning year groups.

We are very mindful that this could be a very difficult experience for many children, not being with their usual teacher or classmates or in their usual classroom is going to be hugely unsettling. We would be able to help and support children to understand why these changes had happened and reassure them too.

Year 6 are about to embark on the transfer to secondary schools and as the secondary schools are not able to offer the usual transition arrangements we will be using their one day a week in school to prepare them emotionally and practically for the changes ahead.

Fridays are to be closed to all children except the existing key worker group and are for deep cleaning of the building, teacher planning time, phone calls and contact with children not attending school, visits to families.

We cannot stress strongly enough that you must be aware that we may have to make changes as the next weeks and months unfold and reserve the right to do so. As always, we will endeavour to give you as much notice as possible and also to do our very best for your children and family. Please be aware that there is no requirement for your child to attend school and no child will be missing out on education if they follow the online learning guidance.

If you judge your child to be safer at home we will support in that decision by continuing to provide home learning.



Thank you for your many letters of support and sympathy for the weighty decisions we make at this time and for your ongoing understanding.

Kind regards,

Louise Nichols (Executive Headteacher), Karen Pedro (Gayhurst Associate Headteacher), Marc Thompson (Mandeville Associate Headteacher), Ruth Mackintosh (Kingsmead Acting Associate Headteacher), Ian Mullaney (Chair of LEAP Governing Board)



Week commencing	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
June 1 <sup>st</sup>	Planning day NO CHILDREN IN	KW (key worker) FSM crates distribution and home visits	KW	KW	KW
June 8 <sup>th</sup>	INSET – staff training for COVID H & S – small groups Risk assessing spaces NO CHILDREN IN	KW FSM crates distribution and home visits	KW Prepping learning spaces, playground, dinner hall, PPE and new policies and Risk assessment Reception parents to receive letter with start date and other guidance for their child	KW Prepping learning spaces, playground, dinner hall, PPE and new policies and Risk assessment Virtual staff meeting	KW Deep clean of all areas. PPA and meetings time
June 15 <sup>th</sup>	R & KW	R & KW	R & KW Year 1 parents to receive letter with start date and other guidance for their child	KW Year 6 parents receive start time and entrance allocated information	KW FSM distribution and home visits Deep clean of all areas PPA and meetings time
June 22 <sup>nd</sup>	R & KW	R & Y1 KW	R & Y1 KW	Y1 & Y6 KW	KW FSM distribution and home visits Deep clean of all areas PPA and meetings time
June 29 <sup>th</sup>	R & Y1 KW	R & Y1 KW	R & Y1 KW	Y1 & Y6 KW	KW FSM distribution and home visits Deep clean of all areas
July 6 <sup>th</sup>	R & Y1 KW	R & Y1 KW	R & Y1 KW	Y1 & Y6 KW	KW FSM distribution and home visits Deep clean of all areas
July 13 <sup>th</sup>	R & Y1 KW	R & Y1 KW	R & Y1 KW	Y1 & Y6 KW	KW FSM distribution and home visits Deep clean of all areas



## **LEAP federation information for parents of children in school**

This information is for parents who have indicated that they wish their child to attend to school and are part of one of the trial year groups Reception, Year1, and Year 6.

### **General**

We have conducted a detailed and ratified risk assessment and will be making some changes to ensure that your child can return to school as safely as possible.

Public Health England (PHE) is clear that if schools do this, and crucially if they are also applying regular hand cleaning, hygiene and cleaning measures and handling potential cases of the virus as per the advice, then the risk of transmission will be lowered.

The children will stay with their pod for the whole day. Classes will have different playtimes and lunchtimes to minimise the amount of unnecessary contact they have and observe social distancing. Once in their pods, younger children will not be expected to strictly observe the 2 metre rule but different classes will not mix.

Reception and Nursery classrooms will be used for Reception children

Year 1 and 2 and 3 classrooms will be used for Year 1 children

Year 4,5,6 classrooms will be used for Year 6 children and key worker children

We aim to strike a balance between what is possible, practicable and ensures we are all safe

- minimising contact with individuals who are unwell by ensuring that those who have coronavirus symptoms, or who have someone in their household who does do not come into school ☒
- cleaning hands more often than usual - wash hands thoroughly for 20 seconds with running water and soap and dry them thoroughly and use of alcohol hand rub or sanitiser in classes ☒
- ensuring good respiratory hygiene - promote the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach ☒
- cleaning frequently touched surfaces often using standard products, such as detergents and bleach
- minimising contact and mixing by altering, as much as possible, the environment (such as classroom layout) and timetables

### **Groupings**

You will only be entitled to a school place for your child if you have responded yes when asked in the school survey. If you wish to change your mind about your child attending and wish them to come in you will have to give a weeks notice via email to the school office. If you wish to change your mind and your child will not be attending after all we ask that you let us know. It is important for safety of the bubbles that staff are aware of numbers. It is not possible for you to pick and choose different days the expectation is your child will attend on allocated days.

Year groups will be split into pods of 12 children decided by teachers and which will not vary at any point and assigned two adults who will stay with that group all day covering each other for breaks.

Please ensure your child does not expect to be with their usual teacher or in their usual classroom. We will also spend time explaining the changes to your child.



We will not be allowed to exceed the two adults per classroom so if your child has significant additional needs that mean they would need they needed one to one support that could not be provided by the two adults with the class they may be cared for in a different class environment. We will discuss each EHCP child with parents individually.

### Arrival at school

In order to reduce transmission risk when dropping your children at school we ask that you wait at 2 meters distance with your child from other families at the entrance you have been allocated. We will provide markers on the floor where possible. Parents will not be allowed into the school premises for any purpose; their child will be collected from parents/carers at the gate by the adults in charge of their pod.

Temperatures of all children will be taken and hand washing facilitated on entry to the building. Any child with a temperature over 37.5 will be isolated and parents will be asked to take them home.

### Playtimes

Playtimes will be staggered so each pod has no contact with another. Your child's pod will be supervised by their assigned adults. Each pod will be assigned a specific play area and equipment.

### School Lunch

All children will be served a cooked lunch in the dining hall in their bubble, they will not be lining up or clearing up plates they will be served food at tables by socially distanced adults. They will arrive and leave together this may involve some children waiting whilst other children eat their food.

Each pod will have its own space and will use the same space each day. The space will be thoroughly cleaned each day.

The meals will be designed specifically for each year group. Dietary needs will be taken into account and you will need to inform us of any specific food needs as they will not be allowed to bring in a packed lunch or any other items from home.

### Uniform

Children do not need to wear school uniform as it would be better if they wear clothes that can be changed daily and washed when they get home.

### Extended day provision

There will be no Breakfast club or After School clubs.

### Collection

You will be given details of your child's collection time and at which school entrance.

We ask that all children are collected on time to avoid cross infection with other pods leaving school at other times.



## Government advice for Parents and Carers

What should parents and carers do? The guidance also highlights some of the things parents and carers can do to help.

The government ask that you consider how you travel to school, and reduce any unnecessary travel on public transport where possible.

We also ask that you do not enter the school building as we are trying to minimise the number of people in the building for staff and child safety

Obviously, do not send your child to school if they or anyone in the household are displaying any symptoms of coronavirus (following the COVID-19: guidance for households with possible coronavirus infection).

You do not have to send your child to school if you need to shield your family due to vulnerabilities or if you do not feel comfortable with them coming in to contact with an increased number of people. There will be no fines issued during this period for nonattendance. The school will continue to provide online learning.

Please read our sudden closure policy so you are aware of how this will occur should it be necessary.



## LEAP Federation - Rapid closure protocol

Over the coming weeks we are very much looking forward to expanding our provision to include a wider range of children. As you will know the team have been working hard to develop robust Risk Assessments to ensure that we can do so in a safe way for your families and our staff.

However, in a fluid and rapidly changing landscape we have developed a protocol in case of the need for rapid school closure. We will do our very best to keep the school open but, as we have stated previously, we reserve the right to close the school if we deem it to be unsafe for children and or staff. This closure may be total or partial.

Examples of causes of school closure (related to Covid 19):

- changes to national guidance from government
- changes to local guidance from Hackney Learning Trust
- lack of available staff to safely open
- guidance from NHS England following infection outbreaks
- any situation that puts children and staff at risk

Protocol for closure:

1. Families will receive a text, email and possibly a follow up phone call explaining why the school is closing and, if known, for how long. Details will also be shared on the website and the school app
2. If the closure is during the school day, collection details will be given
3. All relevant authorities will be informed
4. The school will keep families informed as the situation unfolds regarding possible reopening dates
5. Families to ensure that they are contactable at all times during the school day and inform the school immediately should their circumstances change

As always, thank you for all your support and cooperation during these challenging times. It is much appreciated.



