



May 2020

Week 31 & 32 Newsletter

Dear Parents and Carers,

THANK YOU!

On Wednesday this week, it was National "Thank a Teacher Day". We are so grateful for the cards, messages and delicious treats that we received! Thank you!!!

Thank you also for your support and patience throughout this challenging period.



HOLIDAY PROVISION



Although schools do not need to be open over half term, we have made the decision to serve the needs of our community and will remain open. Despite us being the smallest of the schools in Gosforth (and Newcastle!), we are proud to say that we have been open every week day of lockdown, including Bank Holidays.

School will remain open during May half term for children of key workers and other families who need support, as we did at Easter. We are again really proud that, compared to only 60% of schools nationally, we have been open **every day** of each school holiday. Thank you to all the staff for making this happen.

TRAINING DAY- 1ST JUNE

The GST schools has decided to maintain the staff training day on Monday 1st June. We intend to use this day to train our staff for the wider reopening of school and ensuring all the appropriate protective measures are in place. Therefore, we will only be open to children of Key Workers and vulnerable families on this day. (ParentMail to follow to relevant families to book places).



PLANNED PARTIAL RE-OPENING OF SCHOOL

Firstly, I would like to apologise for not being able to share information with you earlier. We are still awaiting advice from the Local Authority which has made planning somewhat challenging!

We are all missing our children and families very much and are looking forward to seeing as many of you as we can before the summer. We are being urged, however, to take very cautious steps, based on careful assessments of how well we can keep our children and staff safe. We know that there are a wide range of views about school reopening and I can reassure you that we will respect all of the individual decisions that families make.

The government are due to announce the critical medical and scientific data on May 28th which will set out if schools may be in a position to open after June 1st. Before and after that date, we are determined to work in a cautious and phased way, responding to national and local changes and, above all, ensuring that when we make decisions they are sustainable.

What we do know is that school will need to be different... but we can assure you it will remain welcoming, happy and secure for our children. We will do everything in our power to make it as safe as we possibly can for all members of our school family.



Following recent announcements and proposals, we asked parents of children in Nursery, Reception and Year 1 to consider their wishes for their child's return to school. As you will understand, we needed pupil numbers to be able to form plans for staff and for areas to be used in school. Now that we have this information, we have been able to further prepare. We are risk assessing every aspect of how school life will operate. These risk assessments and plans must then be shared with governors, trade unions and HR for approval. As I am sure you appreciate, creating small teaching groups, in separate classrooms, has huge implications on staffing and space in school. Parents will also understand that, as in any organisation and as with a number of our children and parents, there are members of staff who will be in vulnerable groups who will not be able to be in school, or directly involved in face to face teaching, at the moment.

Now that we have pupil numbers from parents of Nursery, Reception and Year 1, we can develop our school plans in response to guidelines that we have received from the Department for Education. Please be assured that the number one priority for myself, staff and governors is the safety of our children, our families and our staff. All guidance from the government is clear in saying that each school will make individual arrangements, in response to their own contexts and risk assessments.

I would like to take into consideration your feelings before we finalise any plans. Please complete the questionnaire, via ParentMail, by **Friday 29th May** so we can better understand your concerns. We will collate your responses and we will use them to inform our further planning. Based on current guidance, the following information may help you to get a clearer picture of what it will be like to be in school after June 1st.

- Class sizes will be small (15 children per class). We will call these "learning bubbles".
- Children will not be with all of their classmates and mixing outside of these "bubbles" will be discouraged.
- Social distancing of 2m is acknowledged by the government to be impractical for primary and early years children. *"Early years and primary age children cannot be expected to remain 2 metres apart from each other and staff."* However distancing is still important and therefore children will not be able to get too close to each other or staff.
- Where possible, children will have their own stationery and equipment and will be encouraged not to share or swap equipment.
- Drop off and pick up times will be arranged on a rota to minimise pinch points and will be limited to one parent accompanying the children to school/picking up.
- Parents will not be able to enter the school building..
- Child toileting arrangements will be carefully regulated.
- Play times and lunch times will be staggered to reduce numbers.
- Hot meals will not be offered (school packed lunches will be provided to **all children**).
- Children will not bring book bags, water bottles or lunch boxes from home.
- The children may not be taught by their own class teacher and will stay with their "bubble adult", wherever possible, for the remainder of the school year.
- Classrooms will be thoroughly cleaned daily and bins emptied throughout the day.
- Thorough hand washing will be insisted upon at very regular intervals throughout the day.



- Where a member of staff needs to provide personal care, eg first aid, they will do so using PPE.
- We will ask families to commit to sending their child in every day. This will not be a temporary or ad-hoc offer as we need to ensure numbers are consistent and within government guidelines.
- Government guidelines are clear that no parent will be penalised if they choose to not attend. The LA will not fine parents who do not send their children back to school.
- It is highly unlikely that we will be able to open full time as we will need to ensure a weekly deep clean. At the moment, we are looking at being closed on a Friday afternoon.
- We cannot offer sibling places for those who are not keyworkers and who are not in government chosen year groups.

Please be honest with us about your responses and feelings but please avoid discussing them too widely with other people. The experience of this pandemic has been, and continues to be, very personal to each of us and nobody should feel judged or under pressure to feel differently. The staff and I want to make sure that we move at a pace that is right for all of us and does not put anyone at risk. I take very seriously my responsibility to keep your lovely children and their families safe in whatever level of service we offer to you. The support that you have offered, and the lovely things that you have told us about how you value our school community, have made these uncertain times more bearable and I am very grateful for the positive manner in which you have engaged with us.

Please give some thought to the issues raised in this letter and use this opportunity to inform the plans that we make for our next steps together to continue to educate and support your children during this crisis.

I will be writing to Key Worker parents and other priority children, later today, with more information.

A phased approach

Based on current guidance from DfE, “we will prioritise younger children in the first phases of wider opening, for several reasons. Firstly, because there is moderately high scientific confidence in evidence suggesting younger children are less likely to become unwell if infected with coronavirus; and secondly because evidence shows the particularly detrimental impact which time spent out of education can have upon them. In addition, older children are more likely to have higher numbers of contacts outside of school so pose a greater transmission risk, and they are typically better able to learn at home.”



I have outlined our plan for wider opening below. Please be aware that this will be under constant review and may need to be revised depending on updated guidance, local risk assessment and LA advice. We will keep you informed as far as possible of changes, as they arise. Unfortunately, if school reaches its capacity, this may mean we cannot open to all year groups.

When children return, after any extended break, there is always a time of settling in and the curriculum is adapted to meet the needs of the children. Our focus will be good mental health, wellbeing and relationships.

Phase 1: From Monday June 2nd - Children of Key Workers and Vulnerable Children only

Throughout the lockdown period, school has been open for critical workers and vulnerable children. These children have been together as one large, mixed age group. As we move forward, we will no longer be able to offer this model and school timings will need to change.

During the week beginning 1st June, we will be working to establish new “learning bubbles” and routines for these children who will not be able to mix with children in other “learning bubbles”. Can we please ask all parents who are critical workers and require a place from that date to get in touch with the school via email to support us planning our staffing? Thank you.

For further information on Key Workers, please see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision&critical-workers>

We will no longer be able to offer “wrap around” childcare before or after school to any of our children as we need to ensure all children remain in consistent small ‘bubbles’ who do not mix with other ‘bubbles’. We apologise for any inconvenience that this may cause.

Previously, Key Workers have booked “sessions” for their children, via ParentMail. Unfortunately, we can no longer operate a rota for children and therefore places booked will be full time only. If your child does not take up their place at the point it is offered, places may be reallocated and there may not be places available to your child in later weeks.

Phase 2: From week beginning June 8th, at the earliest

When we have established the critical worker groups and ensured the school is ready, we will be able to offer places to children from one more year group (probably Year 1 dependent on Local Authority guidance).

Phase 3: From week beginning June 15th, at the earliest

When we have established the critical worker groups and ensured the school is ready, we will be able to offer places to children from an additional year group (probably Reception dependent on Local Authority guidance).

Phase 4: From week beginning June 22nd, at the earliest

When we have established the critical worker groups and ensured the school is ready, we will be able to offer further places to children (probably Nursery dependent on Local Authority guidance).

Phase 5: June - July

Throughout this period we will be responding to national and local scientific advice, assessing practicalities of staffing and space and looking to bring more groups into school.

I know, for many of you with work and childcare commitments, this will be a difficult and frustrating period and for all it is one of uncertainty and worry. However, I want to be as open as possible about the stages we are going through and we will keep our parents in touch with every new development. I am always available by email or phone to speak with you about any individual questions, concerns or comments.

For more information on the science, please see https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/overview-of-scientific-information-on-coronavirus-covid-19?utm_source=3997615a-0f3b-415a-b3cb-4d88d98c068c&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate

Other DfE documents have also been updated this week:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers>

It remains imperative that if anyone in your household has symptoms, you and your child must remain at home for 14 days.

Please remember that all of the above is subject to change in light of government advice!

ONLINE & HOME LEARNING



As you know, we are a very small school with a very small staff team. We are really proud that our “Home Learning” has been in line with that of much bigger schools and staff teams. We are proud of what we have offered and are grateful for such positive feedback.

After half term however, most staff will be back in school teaching small groups of pupils therefore communications such as the “Monday messages” from Class teachers may need to come to an end. We still want to support children who are working from home and we will use best endeavours to do so.

We will still be signposting to White Rose Maths and Talk for Writing English as well as Oak National Academy and BBC Bitesize. These resources are likely to be used in school too. In addition, staff will also continue to add their “Topic webs” and related topic resources to class pages on the school website.

For the DfE list of online resources, please see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-online-education-resources/coronavirus-covid-19-list-of-online-education-resources-for-home-education>

For guidance on supporting your child at home, please see

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/supporting-your-childrens-education-during-coronavirus-covid-19>

For parents with children under 5 years old, who have not yet started school, the Department for Education’s “Hungry Little Minds” campaign features tips and practical activities that you can do at home with children to support their early learning. There are many simple ways to help your children learn and it does not have to feel like ‘learning’. Having everyday conversations, make-believe play and reading together all make a big difference to your child’s development. You can find more ideas and content from the BBC’s Tiny Happy People campaign and the National Literacy Trust’s Family Zone. They have also published further guidance on how to help children aged 2 to 4 to learn at home during the coronavirus outbreak.

For parents with children aged 4 to 11, to help them support their children’s education at home, the DfE have published guidance for parents of primary school children regarding supporting the continuation of education at home. This includes advice and guidance around:

- structuring the day
- use of digital devices
- language development
- reading and writing
- numeracy
- information tailored to each age group
- information for those with children reaching the end of primary school

The guidance is designed to complement support and advice provided by school. Engaging with your child’s learning will be helpful in their continued educational development.

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

ONLINE SAFETY

Support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online includes:

- Thinkuknow which provides advice from the National Crime Agency (NCA) on staying safe online
- Parent info is a collaboration between Parentzone and the NCA providing support and guidance for parents from leading experts and organisations

- Childnet offers a toolkit to support parents and carers of children of any age to start discussions about their online life, to set boundaries around online behaviour and technology use, and to find out where to get more help and support
- Internet Matters provides age-specific online safety checklists, guides on how to set parental controls on a range of devices, and a host of practical tips to help children get the most out of their digital world
- London Grid for Learning has support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online, including tips to keep primary aged children safe online
- Net-aware has support for parents and carers from the NSPCC and O2, including a guide to social networks, apps and games
- Let's Talk About It has advice for parents and carers to keep children safe from online radicalisation
- UK Safer Internet Centre has tips, advice, guides and other resources to help keep children safe online, including parental controls offered by home internet providers and safety tools on social networks and other online services

The Government has also provided support for parents and carers to keep children safe from online harms, includes advice about specific harms such as online child sexual abuse, sexting, and cyberbullying support to stay safe online includes security and privacy settings, blocking unsuitable content and parental controls

YEAR 4 TRANSITION

We know many of our Year 4 parents and children feel it is important to have some contact in school before the transition to middle school and we agree! As a parent of a Year 4 child, awaiting transition to Middle School, we are frustrated by the Government decision to prioritise other year groups (guidance tells us to prioritise Nursery, Reception and Year 1 pupils first). We understand that Year 6 has been selected as the transition from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3 (which can be a challenging transition).



We have spoken with the Local Authority and Newcastle Diocese about our conviction in supporting Year 4 transition, who have in turn raised the matter with DfE. However, we have yet to have a response from the DfE on this. Although the government did not name Year 4 in their plans, we aim as a school to work with parents and try to ensure we have some time with our oldest children before they leave us. How this will look will be determined by some of the considerations outlined above. Please be assured we will fight passionately for this cause but that, according to the guidance we have been given by the LA and the diocese, we must adhere to the priority year groups that the government have identified.

NURSERY

If you are temporarily not meeting the minimum income requirement for 30 hours free childcare and/or tax-free childcare as a direct consequence of the coronavirus outbreak and would normally meet the threshold for these schemes, you will continue to be treated as eligible.

Please remember you should continue to apply for and reconfirm, your 30 hours entitlement, even when childcare settings remain closed to all but vulnerable children and children of critical workers. This will ensure a smooth transition back into childcare when we fully reopen.



STAFFING UPDATE

Next year, Miss Young will be pursuing other career opportunities and Miss Orr is returning to university to study heritage. She has always been hugely interested in this so this is an exciting opportunity for her. We would like to thank them both for all they have done to support our school this year. They will both be a big miss!

We want to share with you, somewhat earlier than usual, staffing plans for next year. You will see that we have a couple of new names on the list below.

Class	Teacher
Nursery	Mrs Francis
Reception	Miss Wilkinson
Year 1	Miss Davison
Year 2	Miss Nattress
Year 3	Miss Gray
Year 4	Mr Booth (Mon-Wed) & Miss Burns (Thurs & Fri)



We are delighted to announce that Miss Davison and Miss Gray will be joining our staff team after May half term and will work alongside current teachers (and their future classes!) to get to know some names and faces. We hope that this will help our children settle back into school transition with less of a concern for families if staff are already familiar. Of course, Miss Nattress is already a member of staff in school but she will be moving from Year 3 to Year 2 in September.

A LETTER FROM NUMBER 10!

When Boris was unwell, Bea wrote to him to wish him a speedy recovery and, this week, she received a reply! What a wonderful act of kindness from Bea and a fabulous memento to look back at, in years to come!



FREE SCHOOL MEALS

FSM vouchers are not being issued nationally over half term; however, our Governing Body have taken the decision to issue these to families as a means of continued support.

A reminder that Universal Free School Meals only apply to children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2. Once children move to Year 3 and Year 4 school meals must be paid for (unless your child is in receipt of Pupil Premium funding).

We appreciate many families have financial concerns at the moment, however, as we approach the end of the school year we would be grateful if lunch, breakfast club and Nursery debts could be cleared please. Mrs Pygall will be working through these after half term. Thank you!

SAFEGUARDING

Mrs Massey and Mr Booth are our school's Designated Safeguarding Leaders. If you have concerns about a child please contact one of us.

Members of the public can also report concerns to Children's Social Care directly. If you have a concern about a child please contact one of the following:

- **Initial Response Service** – 0191 277 2500
- **Northumbria Police** – 101 (in an emergency always dial 999)
- **NSPCC Helpline** – 0800 800 5000



There is also a secure online referral form available for you to explain your concern, if you are a member of the public. <https://nccportal.newcastle.gov.uk/forms/referral/public>

OPERATION ENCOMPASS

You may be aware that cases of domestic abuse have risen significantly in recent weeks. Domestic Abuse cuts across all levels of society, across all ages, cultures and races. Children exposed to domestic abuse are victims of child abuse. Operation Encompass was created to support children experiencing Domestic Abuse through



timely information sharing between police and schools.

If you feel at risk, please speak up. You can speak to school staff directly, if you feel comfortable doing so, or you can contact

- **National Domestic Abuse Helpline** - 0808 2000 24724-hour
- **Women's Aid**- <https://www.womensaid.org.uk/information-support/>
- **Live Fear Free Helpline** - 0808 80 10 800 (24 hours a day)
- **Men's Advice Line** - 0808 801 0327 (weekdays 9am-5pm)



For general enquiries contact info@operationencompass.org or <https://www.operationencompass.org/>

Please keep in touch with us and let us know how you are all getting on. It goes without saying that we are really missing everyone and can't wait to get our school back together in some form but that can only happen when it is safe to do so.

Best wishes and stay safe

Mrs KE Massey

Headteacher

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR OF GOVERNORS

The Governors would like to thank our staff who have provided the care and support needed for our key worker children and other vulnerable children whilst providing support and home school resources to our children at home.

We are also incredibly grateful to our parents and carers for their unwavering support and patience and the many kind messages and thoughtful gifts which some of you have been sending to staff. These have provided a very welcome boost and sometimes prompted a tear or two!

Governors continue to support Mrs Massey and Mr Booth in making plans to bring back more children in accordance with government guidance. It is important that you are aware both governors and staff very much want to welcome more children back into school as soon as possible and our focus is very much on how we do this as quickly and safely as possible. This will take a little time as we need to work with the Local Authority, Promise Board, Gosforth School Trust, Unions, staff and of course our children and their families.

It is reassuring that the initial survey of Nursery, Reception and Year 1 parents indicated that around half of you would be happy to return to school. However, it is important to note that parents are under no obligation to send their children to school. For those who choose not to send your children, it is important that you understand our school will be at maximum capacity with only 50% of its children here therefore you cannot simply add your child onto the register at your convenience.

We hope to see you all back in school before too long!!!

Sarah Hawkins

Chair of Governors



“Love to learn, learn to love”

1 Corinthians 16:14

May 2020			
Monday 2th May-Friday 29th May	Half Term		
June 2020			
Monday 1st June	GST Staff Training Day We will be using the day to plan for the phased reopening.	All day	School closed to children except children of Key Workers
Tuesday 2nd June	Phase 1 of wider opening begins (Key Worker children only)		
1-5th June	CANCELLED Year 1 Phonics Screen assessment	All week	Year 1 children must be in school please
Tuesday 2nd June	Pentecost Worship, led by Year 4 CANCELLED	2:30pm	
	CANCELLED Year 3 & Year 4- All Saints' Moses Activities	TBC	
Wednesday 3rd June	CANCELLED Gosforth Voices	3:45-4:45pm	at Grange First School
Thursday 4th June	CANCELLED GST Y3 & Y4 Tag Rugby at RFES	TBC	Selected children only
	CANCELLED GST Inclusion Fair	1:00pm	More info to follow
Friday 5th June	CANCELLED Roy Lawson visiting Years 3 & 4	TBC	More info to follow
Monday 8th June	CANCELLED Year 2 visit to St Mary's Lighthouse	All day	Children will need to bring or order a packed lunch please
	Possible re-opening to Year 1 children who have been offered a place in school	-	Subject to change
Tuesday 9th June	New Nursery Parents Meeting for children starting Nursery in September 2020 TBC	5:00pm	
Wednesday 10th June	New Reception Parents Meeting for children starting Reception class in September 2020 TBC	5:00pm	
	CANCELLED Gosforth Band	3:45-4:45pm	at Archibald First School
11th June	CANCELLED Year 3 School Nurse feelings & relationships session	1:30pm	
15-19th June	CANCELLED Y4 statutory Times Tables test	All week	
Monday 15th June	Possible re-opening to Reception children who have been offered a place in school		Subject to change
Tuesday 16th June	CANCELLED Year 3 & Year 4 playing at the Big Gig (out of school all day)	Performance at 1:30pm	Northumbria Sports Central- Y3 & Y4 parents invited.
Wednesday 17th June	CANCELLED Gosforth Voices	3:45-4:45pm	at Grange First School
Monday 22nd June	Possible re-opening to Nursery children who have been offered a place in school		Subject to change
Thursday 25th June	CANCELLED Year 4 Diocesan Leavers	10:45am	St George's Church, Cullercoats.

	Service		Staff and children only due to space restrictions.
Friday 26 th June	CANCELLED Y4 visit to Vindolanda	All day	Children will need to bring or order a packed lunch please
30 th June	Pyramid Concert (Gosforth Voices & Gosforth Band)	4:00pm Rehearsal 6:15pm at Trinity Church	
July 2020			
Wednesday 1 st July	pm Y4 Skipping Event- GJA	TBC nearer the time	
	Nursery Stay & Play	2:00pm	Nursery parents invited
Thursday 2 nd July	GST Y4 Netball at Grange	TBC	Selected children only
	GST Transition Day	TBC	
Friday 3 rd July	Reports out		
	Y4 Bikeability all day	All day	All children in Year 4 need to bring a bike to school.
Saturday 4 th July	PTFA Summer Fair	TBC	
Monday 6 th July	KS1/2 Sports Day	1:30pm	Parents Invited
	PE Week (Mon- Fri)	All week	
	Drop in for parents	3:30-5:00pm	No need to book an appointment
Tuesday 7 th July	Drop in for parents	3:30-5:00pm	No need to book an appointment
Wednesday 8 th July	Y2 skipping at GJA	9:30-12:30	
	pm EYFS Sports Day	1:30pm	Parents invited
	Full Governing Body Meeting	5:30pm	
Thursday 9 th May	Y2 Team Games festival at Walker Dome	1:00-2:45pm	Children may be slightly late returning to school
Friday 17 th July	Year 4 Leavers' Service	9:00am	
	End of term picnic lunch for staff and children	Noon	Please pay via ParentMail
	Picnic in the Playground	3:15-4:15pm	
	School closes for Summer		
September 2020			
Monday 7 th September 2020	Staff Training Day	All day	
Tuesday 8 th September 2020	School reopens to pupils.	8:45am	
Sunday 20 th September	Children's Cancer Run	TBC	
Wednesday 30 th September- Thursday 1 st October	Y4 Residential	TBC	More info to follow

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