



Safe Return to School Plan ~ March 2021

It is quite possible, that the past few months have been the most stressful many of us have ever experienced. I am immensely proud of the way we have come together as a staff to teach our children in school and at home.

The relationships with our children and families has really shone through and the number of positive comments has been quite overwhelming.

Considerations	Actions
<p>Schools have not been shut We have had up to 135 (39%) of our children in school each day from our vulnerable and key workers. It has proven highly effective having support staff delivering learning in class, whilst teachers have been master-minding remote learning in school. Pastoral care for all children has been exemplary. 2 staff are shielding: AS and JP.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weekly staff meetings provide an opportunity to focus on on-going issues and standing items: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Staff Well-being ○ Safeguarding and children's well-being ○ Health and Safety ○ CPD feedback ○ Remote Learning • Keeping bubbles 'pure' has helped to ensure staff and twice weekly lateral flow testing for all 58 staff is helping to keep all staff and their families safe • Staff have been meticulous in planning the curriculum to meet children's needs at home and in school • The broader curriculum has continued throughout, including remote teaching of Music by specialist tutors
<p>Support for staff Part of the ethos of our school is the pastoral support provided for our staff both personally and professionally We have worked incredibly well together in phase bubbles ie Upper KS2, Lower KS2, KS1, EYFS It will be beneficial for staff to re-integrate across phase bubbles when safe</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governor, Janet Robinson appointed as Well-Being Governor who regularly liaises with Louise Wilkie (BeWell@Work Champion) • Staff have felt supported throughout • Governors have ensured that all their communication with staff is related to children's and adult's wellbeing
<p>Don't pretend that everything is normal For many, the return to school will be greeted with a huge sigh of relief and we will want to pretend that the world is returning to how it was, but we will all have been changed by the experience of Corona. We recognise and are allowing for this by being kind to each other and ourselves.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actioned during Staff meetings and assemblies. All staff and children reminded that we will take our time to return to 'normal' and it will be done in an holistic way. It is important that we acknowledge the huge historical event we are living through. This is reviewed regularly • Prioritisation of children's social, emotional and mental well-being. It will be a big thing for the children who have been in school welcoming their classmates back and also those children who have been at home for a long time. We will spend time reintegrating them all together again and make sure that they have lots of fun together as a priority, before we focus on their learning. When everyone is happy and settled, we can resume more formal learning

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With a major focus on wellbeing, children will hopefully hit the ground running and make up the lost learning relatively quickly as evidenced in other countries and in school following the September 2020 return • Time will be spent rebuilding relationships with children in school and ensuring that they know they are loved
<p>Re-establishing expectations People have had very different experiences during the 3rd lockdown. Some will have been in school throughout. The majority of children have been at home and each of them will have had their own experience.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behaviour expectations will need to be re-established, how we speak to each other, how we treat each other and our attitude to being in school • Younger children will need to learn to ‘tolerate delay’, turn taking and how to play together etc • Daily visits to each class by the Headteacher, remind children that all is well, thereby creating a safe environment, reminding them they are loved and cared for • Twice weekly virtual assemblies are held to maintain a sense of togetherness and community • Children are thereby reminded of respect for each other, love for each other and what that looks like again, thus reinforcing our ethos and culture • Children constantly reminded that we are here to help. It only takes one emotionally available adult to make a difference to many children • Expectations will take into consideration the impact of the 3rd lockdown and it is important that we don’t think we can just ‘move on’
<p>Differences in learning There will be a huge range in what learning children have engaged in, including remote learning, while not in school. We will respond to what children have learnt, not what we expected them to have learnt and what they have forgotten.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessing learning will take place informally initially • The focus will be on supporting children and creating the correct healthy environment so that when children are ready to learn, they will fly • It is more important to value and celebrate what children have learnt. Teachers will spend time allowing the children to ‘show and tell’ what they have been doing, what they have learned and what their lives have been like over the 3rd lockdown. This will enable us to assess them academically as well as socially and emotionally • Teachers’ responses will be key to how children reintegrate into school
<p>Safeguarding Domestic Abuse We need to remain vigilant about children who may have experienced abuse. Some children will/may have suffered significant harm during this time. We need to be aware of this as a possibility for all our children, not just the ones we identified as vulnerable.</p> <p>Online abuse We need to be aware of the threats and possible abuse that children may have experienced online during this time.</p> <p>Online bullying As the lock down has forced more and more of children’s social lives to move online, we need to be aware of the increased risk of online peer on peer abuse.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will dedicate time to creating a safe environment for all children and allow them many regular opportunities to talk about their experiences • We will provide safe spaces to talk about their experiences and trusted adults who will listen to them and are ready to respond to them effectively. This is 1:1, small group sessions and whole class (RD, LT and BF) • It may take a long time for children to reveal any abuse. They may communicate it through behaviour and other indicators, rather than through disclosure. All staff need to be aware of this and be able to respond appropriately and immediately following safeguarding protocols

<p>Sensory needs Many children will have looked forward to the return to school, but may find being around people difficult, frightening and overwhelming.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At all times, staff to ensure that there is control when walking, gathering etc. Environments are calm and orderly, quiet where necessary, but always quiet space available. Staff use intervention rooms and the hall for separating children out, creating small calm group work if needed • Children will be made aware and should speak with a member of staff if they feel they need some 'down time' • Staff in classrooms ensure the level of noise is kept low where possible, but where it is not, then reminding children where the quiet spaces are • Children have the chance to receive sensory breaks, explore their new surroundings and play to reduce stress. Focus on the 'small steps/wows' • Children have the chance to reflect and this may be as a class, 1:1 or with a special friend on an ongoing basis
<p>Special needs The impact of all these issues will/may be even greater for those children with special needs. Their learning will have been impacted, as will issues of being or not being in school, managing change, routines and anxieties.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For most of our SEND children, the biggest hurdle will be establishing routine again and reassuring them that all is ok • Use the visual timetable every morning to reassure the children how the day will look • Excellent behaviour management is the order of the day, using positive reinforcement, reminding children about not shouting out, talking over each other etc • Re-establish expectations following reinforcement, class and whole school rules
<p>Relationships The key to re-establishing the smooth running of the school, will continue to be the excellent relationships between each other and our children; giving ourselves time and being kind.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take every opportunity to remind children how we play together, compromise, share and work together just as we did before. Staff constantly interacting with the children during playtimes, not standing talking in groups • Take time to remind the children how we do things at Birkwood, helping them to regain that identity and the culture and ethos that comes with it • Rewards used all the time to positively promote the characteristics we seek to see, including Virtual Celebration Assembly. Awarding of House Points a key focus, hopefully towards the Flamingo Land trip
<p>Operational Considerations (with reference to 'Schools coronavirus (COVID-19) operational guidance' February 2021)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and updated Risk Assessment (GL and JA) ~ 26/02 • Fire Alarm practice 11/03 at 10.30am • All classrooms and shared spaces to be organised and deep cleaned ready for 08/03 • Reminders about ventilation and cleaning regimes • Face visors or shields should not be worn as an alternative to face coverings <p>Curriculum key principles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Education is not optional. All pupils receive a high-quality education that promotes their development and equips them with the knowledge and cultural capital they need to succeed in life. • The curriculum remains broad and ambitious. All pupils continue to be taught a wide range of subjects ... • Within EYFS ~ Focus more on the prime areas of learning, including communication and language, personal, social and emotional development. Address gaps in language, early reading and mathematics, particularly ensuring children's acquisition of phonic knowledge and extending

	<p><i>their vocabulary. Involvement in Nuffield Early Language Intervention (NELI) project. Ensure equal opportunities for outdoor education.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within KS1 and 2 ~ Prioritise identifying gaps and re-establishing good progress in the essentials (phonics and reading, increasing vocabulary, writing and mathematics), identifying opportunities across the curriculum so they read widely and developing knowledge and vocabulary. Ensure the curriculum offer remains broad, so that the majority of pupils are taught a full range of subjects over the year, including sciences, humanities, music and the arts, physical education and sport, religious education and, at KS2 languages.' (p52,53) • Curriculum ~ For the 3 weeks from 08/03, Topic remains the driver with a very creative focus (arts driven). Planning still to be submitted to demonstrate objectives showing social and emotional development • Maths and English ~ Focus in the mornings on basic skills eg fact families, practical activities, it isn't about 'bombarding children with work and catch up' • Circle times to take place regularly, physical activity 'wake up shake up' type daily • Creative Arts Week ~ not this year; 3 weeks upon children's return to focus on creative elements • Push positives and house points on children's return • Reports ~ to include remote learning, well-being, social and emotional, progress gradings
<p>Events to be considered for the Summer Term (with reference to 'Schools coronavirus (COVID-19) operational guidance' February 2021)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assemblies • Birkwood's Got Talent • Governor and SLT Away Day ~ Thursday, 1st July • Flamingo Land trip ~ 25th June • Year 6 to see The Lion King in London • Sports Day • Pentathlon • Parents' Evenings ~ 4 nights week commencing 22/03 (Summer Term format to be reviewed) • Year 6 Sleepover • School Council visit to the Houses of Parliament • Julie's Leaving Garden Party • Sports Presentation Assembly • End of Year Disco • Year 6 Leavers' Assembly • End of Year Celebration Assembly 	<p>As at 24/02/21:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to minimise contacts and mixing between people (p15) • 'You should avoid large gatherings such as assemblies and collective worship with more than one group.' (p18) • 'We advised against all educational visits at this time. This advice will be kept under review.' (p50) • '... you should work to resume all your before and after-school educational activities.' (p51)

Remember our motto is:
'Inspire, Cherish and Achieve together.'