



HANNAH BALL SCHOOL

Philip Road, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire, HP13 7JS

Tel: 01494 522476

E-mail: office@hannahball.bucks.sch.uk

Website: www.hannahball.bucks.sch.uk

Headteacher: Mr N Hingley

2nd September 2020

Dear all,

As we look forward to welcoming all our pupils back tomorrow morning, I thought it best to contact you with further information which outlines the measures we have put in place to make Hannah Ball School as safe as it can possibly be. We realise that many families will be anxious about their children's return to school, especially that some of our children haven't been in school for such a very long time.

Rest assured our first and foremost concern is keeping your children safe. The attached documents go through these safety measures in detail. There are also some documents of guidance from the government, which are also embedded in this letter.

The government, in their introduction to their full guidance, state:

Returning to school is vital for children's education and for their wellbeing. Time out of school is detrimental for children's cognitive and academic development, particularly for disadvantaged children. This impact can affect both current levels of learning and children's future ability to learn therefore we need to ensure all pupils can return to school sooner rather than later.

The risk to children themselves of becoming severely ill from coronavirus (COVID-19) is very low and there are negative health impacts of being out of school. We know that school is a vital point of contact for public health and safeguarding services that are critical to the wellbeing of children and families.

Lower academic achievement also translates into long-term economic costs due to having a less well-qualified workforce. This affects the standard of living that today's pupils will have over the course of their entire life. For many households school closures have also affected their ability to work. As the economy begins to recover, we need to remove this barrier so parents and carers can return to work.

The Government also included the following in its advice:

Given the improved position, the balance of risk is now overwhelmingly in favour of children returning to school. For the vast majority of children, the benefits of being back in school far outweigh the very low risk from coronavirus (COVID-19). This guidance explains the steps schools need to take to reduce the risks further. As a result, we can plan for all children to return and start to reverse the enormous costs of missed education. This will be an important move back towards normal life for many children and families.

The Government document giving advice on wider opening of schools for parents and carers can be viewed using this link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers>.

The strategies required by the Government to minimise risk to all children and adults have been laid out in a document from the Department for Education 'Actions for school during the coronavirus outbreak': <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak>

When I wrote to you previously, I stated:

Many parents will be concerned that their children will contract the disease and are unwilling to return their children to Hannah Ball until assurances are made by the school that their child will not contract COVID-19. It goes without saying that such an assurance is impossible to make – either as a school or as a parent. However, there is much the school can do to mitigate these concerns and many points will be detailed in a subsequent newsletter.

PPE has been referred to as a means of minimising transmission and indeed we have all been advised to wear face masks in public places, such as in supermarkets. Our school have been allocated a small amount of PPE for use in 'hot zones' – ie where it is believed COVID -19 may be present. All other areas will not require the use of PPE and this is consistent with the NHS approaches. We will continue to be guided by Public Health England on this issue. The school will take other measures to minimise the risk of transmission which include: All pupils will be required to bring a named and labelled water bottle (as the fountains will be turned off): The school will provide the basic stationary items, such as a pencil and pen etc, we will not, however, prevent parents from supplying their own stationary if that is what they want to do.

Many of you will have had very different experiences during the lockdown. Some of you are key workers and some of your children have been at school throughout. (Albeit a very different experience from normal) The majority of our children however have been at home, each having different experiences. It will therefore take time to get back into a school routine and to re-establish and re-learn the expectations of school behaviour and learning.

Work on our strategic plan is well under way for the next academic year and beyond and our response and actions will be detailed in this plan. Rest assured, although we are committed to accelerating progress, improving core skills and developing emotionally resilient children, we will do this by working together. At the heart of all we do at Hannah Ball is our children. Our number one priority is of course their safety, but what is unique about our school is the community we draw from, the way we celebrate our differences and are as one. We will need to spend time building these relationships again and getting to know each other and letting the children 're-find' their friendships. This will form the important first steps, the starting point of rebuilding. When we come together we will be stronger, but it will take time.

I want to reassure you once again that our staff are still the best placed to make the correct decisions for the school and community. As always, Hannah Ball School stands ready to support its community by accelerating pupils' progress, improving their core skills and developing resilient children.

Thank-you for your continuing support,

Mr. Hingley

There follows a list of '**Frequently Asked Questions**' (FAQ) that are summarised from the attached risk assessment.

Drop off and pick up

You have been given a time and a place to drop off and pick up your children. It is really important that you stick to these times as we are trying to limit the amount of people that are gathering.

Social distancing: Spots will be set out, much like those that you will find outside supermarkets, to encourage you to queue properly (ie socially distanced). Please encourage your children to do the same, until they are in the school building.

I have been given different drop off times for my children who are in different year groups.

We are aware of this and to make things as easy as possible, you will be able to drop off your children together at the 'earliest drop off time allocated to you' and you will be able to pick up your children at the 'latest pick up time allocated to you'.

Coming into school to meet a teacher

Our staff will be there to receive your children in the morning and to see them out of school at the end of the day, so if it is a quick message this can be done at this time (socially distanced of course!) If you do require a meeting, this will need to be pre-arranged, so that we can ensure everyone's safety.

Masks

If your child wears a mask to school, this will need to be disposed of in the entrance to their classroom. The children will not be wearing masks in school, as per government recommendations.

We would encourage you, as parents, to wear masks if you feel more comfortable, but you will not be coming into the school building, so it is not a requirement. However, if you enter the school building, you will be asked to wear a mask.

Hand sanitisers

Yes, you can send in your own if you prefer, and we have lots in school. We will be encouraging the children to wash their hands regularly in school too.

My child or someone in my family is showing symptoms of COVID-19.

You must not send your child in if they or a family member that lives with you is showing symptoms.

Government guidance sets out that '*they should self-isolate for at least 10 days and should arrange to have a test to see if they have coronavirus. If they have tested positive whilst not experiencing symptoms but develop symptoms during the isolation period, they should restart the 10 day isolation period from the day they develop symptoms*'. Tests are now widely available

What if my child becomes unwell at school?

If your child begins to display COVID – 19 symptoms in school, you will need to collect them immediately and follow the government's protocol (detailed above)

What if someone in my child's bubble becomes unwell?

The school will be advised by Public Health England on our next steps in that instance.

Remote learning

Remote learning will not be provided, unless your child is absent due to self-isolation. If your child's class, for instance because of a local lock down, has to self-isolate, work will be provided to complete at home.

Absence

Our usual absence procedures apply. You must contact the school each morning of your child's absence to inform us of the nature of the illness.

Please note that as from August 1st, and according to government recommendations, shielding is no longer a valid reason for absence and as such will be recorded as a unauthorised absence.

Appointments – If your child has an appointment our usual procedures are followed. Let us know the time and date of the appointment and what time you will need to pick up/drop off your child. Your child will then need to be picked up and/or dropped off at the main office.

PE

PE will continue as part of our curriculum. This may be a little different, with outdoors sport prioritised where possible. Our hall will be used if it is raining, and will be well-ventilated. If equipment is used, will be thoroughly cleaned between each use by different groups.

PE kit – Your child will be required to wear their PE kit to school on the days that they have PE lessons. Your child's class teacher will share your child's timetable in due course.

Equipment i.e. pencils

We will be able to provide equipment in school for individual pupils. You may of course, prefer to send your child in with their own equipment and that is absolutely fine if you want to do so.

Lunches

Lunches will be taken in the childrens' classrooms. Hot lunches (albeit a limited menu) and cold options can be ordered in the usual way. These are then delivered to your child's classroom. You may also send a packed lunch for your child which will be stored in the classroom.

Break times

Breaktime, or playtimes, will still go ahead, but the children will stay in bubbles. Reception children will stay with their classmates, but Year 1 and Year 2 will take their breaks together, as will Year 3 and Year 4, and the final grouping will be Year 5 and Year 6. This will mean that the number of children on the playground will be considerably reduced and will ensure minimal contact with other year groups.

Breakfast club

Will still run from 8.00 am starting from Thursday 3rd September.

Afterschool club

Will be run as normal, through Quackers. This will need to be booked in the usual way with the only difference being that the children will be collected at 3pm and only in groups of maximum of 3s.

School clubs

At the moment, these will not run, but we will inform you if and when there are any changes.

Swimming

We will not be undertaking swimming lessons until further notice. Again, we will inform our Y3 and Y4 parents when this changes.

Assemblies

For the moment, we will not be able to run whole school assemblies. We will continue to hold class assemblies, but we will also experiment with running virtual assemblies.

You will most likely have more questions than is practicably possible to answer here. Please don't hesitate to contact the school office if you need anything further.

Many thanks for your continued support, patience and understanding.

N. Hingley