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19th May 2020

Dear Parents/Carers

I hope this letter finds you well. As promised, following the recent survey, the Trust has provided additional information which will answer many of the FAQs raised so far. However, as many of you rightly noted, further information on how re-opening will look at Mendlesham will support you in your decision making.

Mendlesham is a small school, with some mixed age classes, which in some respects lends itself to splitting into smaller groups. However, we are mindful of the fact that two of the nominated groups – EYFS and year 1 are larger than 15 children. Therefore our plan is as follows:

Year 6 – maximum 15 children will be taught in their own classroom by Mr Singleton on the days described in the Trust document. This group will have their own allocated toilets and will enter the school via the double gates on the school field onto the playground, into the back of their classroom and leave this way too.

Year 1 – maximum 10 children will be taught in their own classroom by Miss Sutton. This group will have their own allocated toilets and will enter school via the pedestrian gate from the school field into the back of their classroom and leave this way too. If more than 10 year 1 children indicate they will attend, a second group will be taught by Miss Churchill in Hazel Classroom.

EYFS – this is our largest group. They will be split between the current EYFS classroom and the Small Hall (kindly provided by the Community Centre Charity), each group has their own toilet facilities. One group will be taught by Miss Vincent (current EYFS teacher) and supported by Miss Croft, the other by Mrs Owen (who will be teaching them as year 1s next year) and supported by Mrs Woodley (current EYFS TA). The small hall will be set up as a classroom using resources and furniture from school and will **not** be packed away at night as the space is being exclusively used by the school during the COVID emergency. One group will enter via the Small Hall main doors and the other via Willow Class gates. Parents will be notified which entrance to use by 3rd June.

Pick up and drop off times will be a window of time and slightly staggered for some groups to prevent difficulties with social distancing in the car park and when walking to school. There will be no queuing up to come in: children will walk straight into their classrooms, though **drop off must be at the gate** (or Small Hall door) as we **cannot have parents on site** for the time being. Social distancing markers will be placed outside gates/doors to support social distancing of the small groups of parents. Children will be released from the classes to EYFS/Y1 parents one at a time.

Key worker children (years 2,3, 4, 5) will still have access to 5 day a week care and will have their own learning area and their own toilet facilities in the main hall. Wrap around care will be available for all key worker children by arrangement, please contact us for details.

Break times – each group has been allocated their own time and place to play outside. Each group will also have their own box of play equipment which will be regularly washed down.

Lunch times – each group will eat their lunches (either their own or provided by the school kitchens) in their classrooms or outside in allocated spaces if the weather permits. All also have allocated spaces and times to play.

We have purchased new individual learning packs for each child in named pouches – including pencils, rubbers, pencil sharpeners, whiteboards, pens, colouring pencils and glue sticks. Pupils will also not be sharing texts books. Chestnut Class will have their own set of laptops (which are numbered) so that children do not share computers. Resources will not be shared between classrooms without being cleaned first. We ask that pupils do not bring in any equipment or unnecessary items from home – there will be no show and tell. Children in year 6 will need a PE kit and all children will need a named water bottle. No book bags are required – a system for changing books will be organised by each class. Classrooms will be furnished and organised to encourage social distancing.

Cleaning regime – there will be an increased focus on cleaning and hygiene throughout the school with regular disinfecting of desks, chair backs, door handles and toilet areas throughout the day – when the children play.

Hygiene – pupils will be asked to wash their hands more frequently than normal – in line with government advice. The catch it, bin it, kill it phrase will be reinforced in terms of tissues. We ask that pupils wear clean clothes to school as often as possible, so although uniform is preferable, we understand that flexibility is required here.

Curriculum – we will endeavour to get the children into a routine as soon as possible as we feel that this will be a comfort to many. We are however sensitive to the children's emotional needs given what they have been through and might have seen in the news. We are planning art projects, discussion time and lots of fun as well as threading their maths and English work and the wider curriculum in to prepare them for their next phase of their learning.

PE will take place at allocated times for each group, minimal equipment or cleaned equipment will be used.

Queuing – there will be no lining up at any point in the day. The small groups will be instructed to move from sitting to the outside and back by their designated staff. All resources needed will be within their learning space and each group has designated toilet facilities, so each group or “bubble” of children will remain separate from other groups.

We are looking forward to welcoming as many EYFS, year 1 and year 6 children back on 4th June as possible. However, we completely understand that the decision to attend rests with individual families. We also understand that some families may want to wait a while before considering returning their children. We only ask that if your child does not attend from the 4th June that you give us 48 hours notice of attending so that we can be sure our group set ups and resources are prepared for them.

I hope that we have answered as many questions as possible and given a flavour of how the “new normal” will be at our school for now. If you have any queries or questions, or would like to speak to a member of staff please email your class teacher or admin@mendleshamschool.org.uk and we will arrange a mutually convenient time to call you.

In the meantime, I hope that you can enjoy some of the good weather forecast and we look forward to seeing or hearing from you soon. Thank you all for your support to date.

Yours sincerely

Tessa Sait

(Headteacher)