**ANONYMISED**

**But with grateful thanks**

**Returning to school Action Plan**

Returning to schools being fully open after the Covid-19 lockdown is going to be hard. It is very hard to try and predict what it will look like or when or how it will happen. Regardless of whether it is as early as June, or possibly not until September or even later, we have to hope that we will have a proper chance to plan and not 48 hours notice from a press conference.

We must be aware that it will be a very different experience for every school and for the different people - children, staff and parents - within the school. We have some experience of returning to school that we can draw on. We experience this in miniature at the end of each summer holiday, but this return will be much more complex. We will need to be honest with ourselves and each other about how difficult this experience will be.

Whatever, the school setting there are going to be a number of key things to consider and include in our plans for the return to school for all.

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| **Considerations** | **Actions** | **By whom?** |
| **Staff wellbeing**   * School has remained open for Critical Workers and vulnerable pupils * A rota has been implemented * School staff have continued to work in schools, including during the school holidays, * All teachers have continued to work providing education and support from home whilst home schooling their own children. Staff will return tired and this will impact on their ability to lead, manage and respond to change. * Teachers of young families and children or family to care for they will have had a very stressful time whilst working their full hours so may need some emotional support. | * Ensure staff meetings are an opportunity to focus on wellbeing of staff and discuss any children of concern. * Staff meeting will not be used to address CPD for the first half term. Staff are not expected to mark books but feedback only verbally for the first few weeks allowing them to go home after the children have left. * Staff are only expected to spend the first few weeks back assessing the children’s academic, social and emotional needs through running open activities, talking, playing and enjoying the broad curriculum such as PE, Music, Art/ DT, topic and yoga/meditation/class liturgies * Limited planning for and, again, minimise workload for teachers. * All staff must be given time to talk with SLT regarding their own experiences at home and any support we can offer. * All staff are reminded of the counselling provided by LA we have in place for them should they want to use it. | SLT |
| **Return**   * Return to school will be greeted with a huge sigh of relief for the majority * Take time for us to adjust to the ‘new’ normal. * Recognise the need for time and allow for this by being kind to each other and ourselves. | * Staff meetings and assemblies. * All staff and children will be reminded that we will take our time to return to ‘normal’ and it will be done in a holistic way. * If we acknowledge the huge historical event we lived through and report that we can allow ourselves to blend back in to normal when all parties show they are ready. * This will be reviewed daily by SLT and weekly by all staff. * If wellbeing is cared for the children will hit the ground running when they are ready and make up the lost learning relatively quickly | Whole School |
| **Re-establishing routines**   * For many the re-establishment of routines will be difficult. * Not just be for school routines; basic daily life routines, * We know that this is difficult and a source of anxiety at the beginning of every term, but this will be on a larger scale. * Allow a period of adjustment and be aware of the impact of trying to re-establish these routines for staff, parents and children. * We will need to re-learn the rhythm of the school. | * Clear routine established being put in place swiftly so children feel a sense of comfort. * Some families may struggle and it is important for the school to acknowledge this and offer help where needed. * Children will be very tired (as will staff) by afternoon and so the timetable will need to account for this and organise for more open activities. * Children will have been eating at very odd times and may be hungrier – we can provide snacks for morning break in KS2 as we do in KS1 until their eating patterns return to normal. | Whole School |
| **Re-establishing expectations**   * Different people will have had very different experiences during the lockdown. * The majority of children will have been at home and each of them will have had their own experience. * It will take time to re-establish and re-learn the expectations of school behaviour and learning. * We know that much of learning is based on practice and we will all be out of practice with this. | * Assembly re-establishing the Golden Rules through our Mission Statement – linking this to the love shared during Covid-19 * Each class to re-establish classroom expectations * The key here is re-establishing behaviour expectations, how we speak to each other, how we treat each other and our attitude to being in school. The learning will happen when this is all established. * Daily walks around the school by the Head teacher to remind the children all is well, creating a safe environment, reminding them they are loved and cared for. With this they are reminded of respect for each other, love for each other and what that looks like again, thus re-creating the ethos and culture we had. This will move on to attitude to learning. | Head Teacher  Whole School |
| **Differences in learning**   * Across schools there will be a huge range in what learning children have engaged in while not in school. * There will be children who have spent every day, including the holidays, engaged in formal learning activities and completed every piece of work set by the school. * Equally, there will be children who have not engaged in any focused learning activity for the entire time they were not in school. * Most children will come somewhere in between. * We will need to respond to what children have learnt, not what we expected them to have learnt. * We will need to understand what children have learnt and what they have forgotten. * Even more, those who have been a carer for a sick relative or dealt with grief for someone they couldn’t see. This learning and possible trauma is not on the curriculum but will be key to who our children are. | * Assessing learning: - Informally * Value and celebrate what children have learnt. * Allow ‘Show and tell’ opportunities across the school * We can then assess them academically as well as socially and emotionally. * Key to this is celebration and recognition, will be to remember that much of what children may have learnt will be very different to ‘school learning’ and certainly not on the curriculum. We will need to take time to find out who has learnt to bake a cake, build a wall, become an expert on the Roman Army or the life of an Amazonian dolphin. * Adults’ responses will be key to how children are able to reintegrate into school and the people that they will become. | Whole School |
| **Exclusion**   * Divide between children’s access to learning during the lock down * Successful accessing of learning from home depends on many factors. * As children become older, they may become more independent in their learning. * The majority of children, learning will depend on the role of parent as ‘teacher’. * This depends on parental skills, interest and commitment. It is further impacted by the parents’ work commitments, educational and language levels. * Further there are issues of space to learn, as well as access to physical and online resources. | * Some children may feel they have missed out. * We must acknowledge that this may not have been their fault that they did not manage to carry out much ‘learning’. * Whilst we will celebrate the ‘learning’ online we will also look at what children are doing to entertain themselves, how they have shown resilience, patience and kindness at home so as not to discriminate against the children who have not been able to do much work online. | Whole School |
| **Difference between those who have been on site and those who have not**   * There will be significant differences for children who have and have not been on the school site during the lock down. * It would be wrong to assume that those who have been in school are OK. * We need to remember that some of these children are our most vulnerable families. * They will be very comfortable with no social distancing, attending school and not worried about ‘catching’ something more than the children who have stayed home for months constantly being reminded they cannot go outside. * The children will have had very different messages and experiences, but not necessarily academically different. | * We will ensure we use their experience to highlight to children that it is safe in school as long as we wash our hands, keep some distance and use a tissue to sneeze or cough. * Use the lockdown schooling as a way to celebrate their achievements with going to school and keeping safe. * They can model to the other children how they kept safe and still managed to have a great time playing and learning. | Whole School |
| * **Safeguarding** * **Domestic Abuse** * We will need to be really vigilant about children who have experienced abuse during the lock down. * There has been a significant rise in domestic abuse during the lock down. * Many children 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 had identified as vulnerable. * **Online abuse** * We need to be aware of the threats and possible abuse that children may have experienced online during this time. * There are increased risks from adults and the exposure to harmful images and threats. * **Online bullying** * Further, 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. | * The first half term will be dedicated to creating a safe environment for all children and allow them many regular opportunities to talk about their experiences. * We will need to ensure that children have safe spaces to talk about their experiences during the lockdown. * We will need to ensure that all children have access to trusted adults who will listen them and are ready and trained to respond to them effectively. This will be 1:1, small group sessions and whole class. * All staff to receive a reminder safeguarding briefing on how to respond to disclosures on return to school. * We need to remember that 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 vigilant of this and able to respond appropriately and immediately. We are not to assume poor behaviour is due to being back in school but could be the child trying to communicate a frustration. | Whole School  DSL and DDSL |
| **Bereavement**   * It is essential that we are clear with children who has died and who has not returned to our setting for some other reason- house moves, job changes, parents deciding to continue with home education, etc. * This will need to be discussed, or children and social media will build up rumours and stories that will be neither helpful or healthy. * Even for those who have not experienced a death in their family or community, any illness will become a greater source of anxiety as the link between illness and death will have been reinforced in a way that was not common experience in twenty first century Britain. This will lead to more anxiety and may make many children (and adults) more risk adverse. | * As a school family we are transparent about any changes that have occurred. * This can be within class setting where necessary or during Key Stage liturgies. * We have had some children move to other schools over the period and we want to share with the children how we wish them luck and can send a card to the child if they wish, allowing them to say goodbye. * The school will take time to look at how many people recovered from the illness due to the skills and care of the NHS, the money that was raised to support them, the encouragement given by the nation (clapping) and find a way to let them know how thankful we are. * The children can come up with ways to share the message to NHS but also the great success of this number to the community and be a voice of celebration. * Staff will refer to the Ed Psych/Inclusion Leader where a child has experienced bereavement or have fear and ELSA) will support them too. | Whole School |
| **Sensory needs**   * Many children will be looking forward to the return to school but will find being around people difficult, frightening and overwhelming, particularly if we move rapidly from social distancing to a return to school. * We will need to be aware of this and support it. * For some children this will be exacerbated by a fear of people in general. Having experienced weeks, or even months, of social distancing, children will have received an implicit message that other people are dangerous. * Further, their experience of other people, beyond their immediate family, within their personal space will have been limited. * For many the hustle and bustle, movement and number of people in school will be difficult. We need to be aware that many will express their sensory issues and anxieties about the proximity of others physically. | * We will be aware of any sensory issues being highlighted and it is imperative that there is control in walking, gathering etc. * Calm and orderly, quiet where necessary but always quiet space available. * Many children will be used to quiet now and alone time and may crave it. * Staff will utilise areas of the school to create small calm spaces – hall, creation garden, gazebo, shared areas etc. * Children will be made aware this could be an issue and should speak with a member of staff if they feel they need some down time. * Many children have not been in a room with more than a few people for months and life has probably been very quiet, so the classroom will seem very noisy. * Staff must ensure the level of noise is kept low where possible, but where it is not then always reminding children where the quiet spaces are. * All staff to be vigilant, looking for signs of stress. Where this is identified please report immediately to a member of SLT | Whole school and Inclusion Leader |
| **Separation anxieties**   * The majority of children will have become use to being with their parents and immediate family for an extended period. * Even for those who are excited to regain their freedom and see their friends, this is a potential source of anxiety. * There will be children who struggle with this separation and experience anxiety while they are in school, particularly where their family includes key workers or those going back to work in crowded spaces. | * Many children separate from their families easily every day, but in normal circumstances some do not. * Staff know who those children are, however, now there may be many more who do not want to leave their family, because: * They can keep their family safe if they are with them * They can see that the family are ok if they stay home * They will miss them * They don’t want to be surrounded by lots of people * They don’t want the stress of formal learning again * Staff will constantly reassure the children that the family are safe, all working, shopping etc. just as we would when a child shows these anxieties. * Staff can call parent’s midday to check in and reassure the child they have spoken to family and all is well. * For children particularly distressed we can arrange for children/parent to talk in the middle of the day. | Whole School |
| **Special needs**   * The impact of all these issues will be even greater for those with special needs. * Their learning will have been impacted as will issues of being or not being in school, managing change, routines and anxieties. There will be particular issues with managing transitions into school and where there is a change of setting. | * Transition work to be sent in advance so parents can support the child with this transition * For most of our SEN children the biggest hurdle will be expectations of behaviour, establishing routine again and reassuring them that all is ok. * The class will need a visual timetable every morning to reassure the children how the day will look. * The class will need excellent behaviour management using positive reinforcement as many children will have forgotten how to behave (shouting out, talking over each other, poor language). * ELSA will be available to work with children struggling (All day if there is a need) * Children will not remember how to behave immediately and may take a couple of weeks to get those good habits back, so patience will be a virtue! * If necessary, create a reward chart with the behaviours we do want to see and at the end of the day discuss with the child how they think they did. The chart should be seen at all times. | Inclusion Leader  ELSA |
| **Transitions**  **June/July return**   * **If we are to return in the Summer term it will allow us to carry out more ‘normal’ transitions and prepare the children for the next part of their education.**   **September return**   * If we are not back until September, there will be particular issues with children who are transitioning from one school to another.   **Year 6**   * Normally, we spend much of the second half of the summer term preparing children for their moves from primary to secondary etc. But potentially there will be many children who have left a school without a chance to say ‘goodbye’.   **Year 1**   * Low Year R Cohort will need a lot of support transitioning to Year 1 from Year R. * Back to basics – establishing routines etc   **Years 2/3**   * The children moving to the other side of the school building * Children are often very nervous about just coming back to school but also having a new teacher and classroom.   **Year R**   * Children will not have had their transition visit and have no idea what to expect except they will know that children were not allowed in school due to sickness. This may cause more anxiety than previously. | June/July – this time will be spent focusing on wellbeing, safeguarding, routines, reassuring children and transition.  It will be essential to mark this transition.  Year 6 - invite children back to have a celebration mass of their time at St Paul’s as well as an ‘End of Year’ disco. This will ensure closure and to, say goodbye  We will work with the Secondary schools and LA to see if children can return to primary for the first 2/3 weeks of September to have closure and transition arrangements.  Year 1:   * Additional capacity has been put in place for the transition to year 3 (Lead Practitioner) for at least the first half term.   Years 2/3:   * Additional capacity has been put in place for the transition to year 3 (Lead Practitioner) for at least the first half term.   Year R   * Allow them to have transition (visit) days over the first few weeks and hold parent meetings as though it was July. This will also give parents time to buy all the necessary items such as uniforms and book bags etc. * Transition meetings with nursery/pre-school to be held in July online. * The children will now need a staggered and longer start in order to support all the other year groups. | Whole School |
| **Uniform**   * Most children will have grown over the time that they have been out of school and so their uniform may not fit. * Particularly if we go back to school on short notice, many parents will struggle to get new uniform for their children. * This may be exacerbated by financial issues faced by parents without work and issues related to production, import and sale of non-essential goods. * So, schools will need to consider relaxation of their uniform codes for a short period of time * Children will need to be welcomed back into school, not penalised for not having the right uniform. | * Welcome all children back, with or without uniform! * Where parents are struggling the school will provide them with 2 week to get the correct uniform. | Whole School |
| **Support for staff**   * As a school community we will need to support our staff, including those who have experienced loss and trauma. * Some will have been in school without a real break throughout the crisis, while others may have been working exclusively from home. * Others will not have been working at all. * We need to allow ourselves time to rebuild and reform our school communities. * We need to consider particularly the stress on SLT with what they have been faced with and their need for support - difficult decisions and had to respond to a barrage of government guidance which often has been less than clear. * There is a clear role for governors to support all their staff, particularly school leaders. | * Governors will need to focus on wellbeing of staff over the first half term particularly. * Data will not be accurate as it will be from Easter break and children will be being assessed carefully over the Autumn term. * The newest accurate data will not be available until December. * Many children will not have moved forward in their learning and therefore it may take up to 18 months to recover. * Staff will not be spending time on monitoring learning, writing reports based on subjects, or implementing any new initiatives over the Autumn term and therefore this information will not be available to Governors. * The focus will be on assessing children, supporting children and creating the correct healthy environment so that when children are ready to learn they will fly. * No members of staff have had any experience of the last few months and so are not well equipped to inform, advise or manage the situation without some form of doubt. Governors must accept there will be some ‘feeling our way’ based on what we know about how children learn, how we know our families and from DFE / Safeguarding/ Educational psychologist advice. * The Governors will need to ensure all their communication with staff is relating to children’s and adult’s wellbeing during Autumn term. * The return to school will undoubtedly offer the DSL and DDSL many new disclosures to deal with, stressed and emotional parents and this will take a lot of time as well as cause emotional upset for the staff. * Governors will need to nominate members to support the DSL/DDSL during this time so they can discuss what they are dealing with. * All staff are reminded of the counselling provided by LA we have in place for them should they want to use it. |  |
| **Relationships**   * Key to all of this is going to be re-building relationships. * We need to be aware that this will not happen overnight. * We need to give ourselves time and be kind. * We will also need to address that many children have just spent months in only the company of their parent/s and will struggle to separate for a while. * They have not played with friends or had to compromise. * This may cause tension as friends play games with rules. | * Ensure all playing is supervised and scaffolded, at every opportunities reminding children how we play together, compromise, share and work together just as we did before. * Always taking time to remind the children how we do things at St Paul’s 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. * Some children will have reverted back to more childish behaviour and we ask that staff are patient with this and remind the children how we speak at school without reprimand. |  |