



## Newsletter

05.062020

**Our values this week have been Partnership and Safety**—these children have been put forward by their class teams:

**Sini** in Year 2 has been staying safe during lockdown and working in partnership at the same time. She has been learning to play chess with her Dad, in India, via video call and watching movies (very socially distanced!) together and discussing their favourite parts. I'm so proud of Sini, her positive outlook and her hard-working attitude during this period. Well done Sini.

**Frankie** has been safely taking his daily exercise and visits the same family of ducks every day, which has been lovely to hear about. He has shown partnership by helping his mum by playing with his little sister and doing his home learning independently. Well done Frankie!

**Aaliyah and Farha** in Year 5 for showing great partnership and team effort. They have been supporting each other when questions seem challenging showing resilience and resolution. We would also like to appreciate the fantastic work and effort **Shane** has put into his work, since returning from half term refreshed and enthused to learn! Well done Aaliyah, Farha and Shane

**Ariane Farey** in Y6 never, ever, fails to deliver and we can definitely see how she has progressed in her reading and writing, especially given the circumstances. She always responds to feedback.

**Zane Beyer** in Y6 has also made considerable progress since joining the class during lockdown and also always responds to feedback.



Dear Parents and Carers,

This week I would like to share with you the progress that we are making towards inviting more children back to school.

### Activities to date

Following the government's announcement in half term, where they suggested their 5 tests to enable the easing of lockdown were met, we continued to undertake our detailed and rigorous Risk Assessment process.

On Monday of this week, the Full Governing Body reviewed the Risk Assessment and also considered whether they felt sufficiently confident that the government's 5 tests had been met to enable the safe return of more children into school.

Also this week, the Risk Assessment has been scrutinised by our representatives for each of the two main unions represented on the staff and the Local Authority's Health and Safety team.

### Outcome for children in government's priority year groups

The outcome of each of these activities, is that on Monday next week, we are inviting those children who had confirmed their intent to return by the deadline, into Nursery, Reception and Year 1. We have chosen to delay the return of children in Year 6 until the start of the following week, on the 15th June. Our provision for Key Worker children and Vulnerable children will continue, as will the provision for children to continue with their learning remotely, through Microsoft teams for the majority of year groups.

### What has guided our decisions

The principles that have guided and shaped our decisions, rooted in our school values, are:

1. The **safety** and well being of your children and our staff are our fundamental priority. As such, we need to proceed steadily and with caution, keeping our planning under careful and continuous review and reserving the right to halt plans if we feel at any stage that things are not working effectively to minimise the risks associated with Covid-19.
2. We have a **responsibility** to provide a service to families who need us during this time. This may be because parents need to return to work. It may also be because families feel that their children would benefit from returning into an education setting rather than continue their learning from home.
3. If children are returning into the classroom, that given what we have all experienced for the last 2 months, it is **fair** to them if there is a familiar adult in the class that they are returning to.
4. Out of **respect** for each other we must recognise that each of us, and our experience of this crisis, will be different which in turn will mean that our readiness to return to a school setting will vary.
5. That the **safe** implementation of our Risk Assessment depends on everyone in our school community, working in **partnership** together and taking our social **responsibility** towards each other, very seriously indeed.

Furthermore, we recognise that Home Learning is not a perfect solution for any child, but it is least effective for the youngest children.

### The model of return for different year groups

As you are aware from previous communication, when children return to school, they will have to be in class sizes that are a fraction of the normal class size, because of the need to socially distance the children and staff. As such, the size of the classroom determines how many children we can safely have in there.

Additionally, as you would expect, given the nature of this virus and the regulations that accompany staff's safe return to work because of it, we have a significant number of staff for whom it is not advisable for them to return currently. This includes three of our class teachers.

As such, the model we are working to for the moment is:

1. Children who wish to return in Early Years and Key Stage 1, when their year group are invited to return, will be offered a full time place;
2. Children who wish to return in Key Stage 2, when their year group are invited to return, will be offered a part time place.

*Continued overleaf*

NUT FREE SCHOOL



THANK YOU

It is most likely, that the part time places will be either Monday and Tuesday or Thursday and Friday, allowing for a deep clean to take place on the Wednesday between each group making use of the classroom space. The Key Stage 2 children who choose to return to school and therefore have a part time place, will access the home learning provided through Teams for the rest of the week.

The children in school and the children at home will be following the same curriculum. The teachers facilitating each model will be working closely together and broadly speaking, will be using the same resources.

We understand that having a part time return to school, may not feel ideal, but please understand, we are doing the best we can, guided by the principles listed, with the limitations we have, due to the very serious nature of this virus. The Key Worker provision will continue and so where parents absolutely have to have full time child care, we will endeavour to support.

What is important to note is that at every stage, the final decision will be made given the feedback about the take up of places that we have from you. What has been particularly difficult this week, is where parents have come to us after the deadline given, expressing their need for a place. In these instances, we in school have felt considerable additional pressure in an already challenging situation because we like to be flexible and try to please everyone. Unfortunately though, in these circumstances that are anything but normal, we cannot be flexible and in turn this, as we have seen this week, can lead to disappointment.

Our appeal to you, as we work in partnership together, to do our very best for you and your children, is to please stick to the deadlines given and to respond when information is requested. If you do that, we can plan accordingly and everything will run a lot more smoothly and fairly for everyone.

#### **Next steps**

- On Monday next week, those children who have secured places in Nursery, Reception and Year 1 will return to school.
- Parents in Year 6 have until Tuesday 9 June to confirm whether their child wants to return to school.
- On Wednesday 10 June, we will write to parents in Year 6 to confirm the arrangements for those children who have secured a place, to return to school from 15th June.
- During the week beginning 15th June, children from Year 6 will return and we will review whether we can invite more children back into Nursery, Reception and Year 1.
- So long as the return of children to Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 runs smoothly and the national picture continues to improve, we will seek to invite more children two year groups at a time, back to school before the end of the year. I will keep you updated on this, through the newsletter, over the next couple of weeks. We recognise that timing is tight, however we hear those of you who have said to us, how much your children would appreciate even just one week in school, just to close the year down for the summer properly. I cannot commit at this stage, but I promise that we will do our best.

#### **Free School Meals update**

Please note that strict guidance from the DfE means that when children who are eligible for Free School Meals return to school, because they will have access to a school lunch on site, the family's Edenred voucher will cease. Please be aware of this so that the change does not surprise you when it happens.

For your information, I have attached a letter from the London Borough of Tower Hamlets' Mayor, John Biggs, that has been written to all residents.

As always, do come to me with any questions: [head@st-lukes.towerhamlets.sch.uk](mailto:head@st-lukes.towerhamlets.sch.uk)

With best wishes, Rebecca Abrahams

**The following sections of the newsletter are updates from the DfE for parents and carers as well as an update on the idea stores.**

#### **Department for Transport travelling advice for parents and pupils**

The Department for Transport has issued advice on how parents and pupils can travel to school safely as part of the #TravelSafely campaign. Resources have been developed to ensure that parents, pupils and staff have the information they need to stay safe on the public transport network. This includes information developed in collaboration with respected partners on how to cycle and walk safely, where possible.

Resources can be found here:

<https://extranet.dft.gov.uk/safer-transport-campaign/schools/>

### **Updated guidance on helping children aged 2 to 4 learn at home**

We have updated our guidance for parents and carers on helping children aged 2 to 4 learn at home during the coronavirus outbreak to include information on supporting a child's mental health and wellbeing.

The guidance can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/help-children-aged-2-to-4-to-learn-at-home-during-coronavirus-covid-19>

### **Testing now available to anyone with symptoms of coronavirus**

The government has announced that anyone with symptoms of coronavirus is now eligible to book a test, including children under the age of 5 years. Anyone experiencing a new, continuous cough; high temperature; or a loss of, or change, in their normal sense of smell or taste (anosmia) can book a test.

A coronavirus test can be booked here:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

Essential workers in England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland, can apply for priority testing through GOV.UK.

A coronavirus test can be booked here:

<https://www.gov.uk/apply-coronavirus-test-essential-workers>

### **What parents and carers need to know about schools, colleges and other education settings during the coronavirus outbreak**

**Updated 2 June 2020**

This guidance is for parents and carers about changes to schools and educational settings during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

You can access information, guidance and support for parents and carers of children who are learning at home.

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

The **Idea Stores** have revamped their online services including live story times and clubs. The **annual Summer Reading Challenge** will also still be going ahead - the Reading Agency will be adapting this event depending on the state of lockdown and it's usually launched in July.

## Your Idea Store or library may be closed, but you can still do all of your favourite things online!

**We've got:**

### Story Time Online

New videos at 10:30am, Monday - Saturday!

[www.ideastore.co.uk/storytime-online](http://www.ideastore.co.uk/storytime-online)

### Art Club Challenge

Take up our weekly challenge and get your pictures on the Idea Store website!

[www.ideastore.co.uk/children](http://www.ideastore.co.uk/children)

### Children's eBooks and audiobooks

Get the latest e-books and audiobooks for FREE with your Idea Store Card

[Discover the Children's eLibrary](#)

### Family Fun

Loads of fun activities from your favourite authors and publishers!

[www.ideastore.co.uk/children](http://www.ideastore.co.uk/children)

### Coming soon...

Silly Squad - the digital Summer Reading Challenge!

