

West Dartmoor Federation



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Dear Parents/Carers,

Partial re-opening of school plan

Following the government announcement that schools may begin to reopen for specific groups from June 1st, we have been working with our Trust and colleagues in other schools to decide how this could look in practise. Up until now, schools have been asked to **continue to provide childcare for children of key workers and vulnerable pupils** – those with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and/or a social worker. Please be assured that if your child has been attending school up to now and they still meet that criteria, they are most welcome to continue regardless of year group.

Now that our plan to reopen has been signed off by the Trust and our governing body, we have agreed that we will welcome back all eligible year groups on **Wednesday 3rd June**. Our current Key worker/vulnerable group will still be catered for on the Monday and Tuesday but if you can keep them at home we would be very grateful. We need this time to set up the school and make sure to the best of our ability that it is safe to open and welcome you back. We will then open on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. Friday will still be open for those who fit our key worker and vulnerable pupil group but no other.

Attendance is encouraged but is voluntary and no action will be taken (such as a penalty notice) if you choose not to send your child. The decision on whether or not you feel it is right to send your child back to school remains yours, and as a federation we respect that decision.

Thank you for returning the survey to let us know whether or not you require provision for your child. This was essential as we could not draw up any plans before we knew the numbers of children who would attend. I am sure you will understand that many of the staff across both settings have been shielding and isolating and will still need to do so. Therefore, we will keep Meavy open with Mrs Gawadzyn, Miss Williams, Mrs Millar, Mrs Coupland and Mrs Davey in attendance all week with Mrs Corness on a Friday. There are no other staff available so this gives us 5 groups or 'bubbles'. If you have not told us you require a place please **do not** turn up with your child as we have organised our groups to ensure safety for children and adults alike. If this is the case please email the school.

The government guidance is that each 'bubble' has no more than 15 children and 1 adult. The children are not allowed to mix with any other children from another 'bubble' and therefore cannot move from one to another. The same is true for staff. They stay all the time with that 'bubble' not mixing with any of the

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other children and keeping social distancing with the other staff on duty. We do have 16 in Y6 and I have communicated this to their parents/carers as they are the most able to social distance. We are not enforcing strict social distancing with FS or Y1 within their 'bubbles' as we do not feel that this is feasible. We would also be very concerned that to do this may well adversely affect our youngest children's mental health and possibly their view of education.

I will outline the group that your child will be in, your drop off and collection times and some of the expectations on you and your child. I will put a more detailed set of rules for coming back on the website in due course. These rules will all seem a little draconian and not expressed in the tone we normally use when talking to parents. However, it is essential that these rules are adhered to for the safety of you, the staff and most of all the children. In all of this planning, my biggest concern is to endeavour to keep the West Dartmoor family as safe as possible.

Which group will my child be in and what time will I be expected to drop off and collect my child?

Drop off

Group 1 – Key worker children Y2/3 08:45am via the main gate (total 13 children)

Group 2 – Key worker children Y4/5 08:45am via the car park gate (total 10 children)

Group 3 – Year 6 group 09:00am via car park gate into the hall (total of 16 children)

Group 4 – Year 1 group 09:15am via car park through the field (total of 15 children)

Group 5 – FS group 09:30am via the main gate (total of 10 children)

Collection

Group 5 – FS group 14:15pm via main gate

Group 4 – Year 1 group 14:30pm via car park

Group 3 – Year 6 group 14:45pm via car park

Group 2 – Key worker children 4/5 15:00pm via car park

Group 1 – Key worker children 2/3 15:00pm via main gate

If your child has been accessing our provision during partial school closures and are in years FS/1/6, they will join their year group for the days that they are in school rather than a key worker group. If you require your child to attend school on a Friday due to your key worker status, please contact the school as you have been doing to book them in advance.

If your child is in the year 2 3 4 5 key worker group, please email admin in advance to book your child in on the days that you will require.

Parents must adhere to the drop off and pick up times. If you are late, you will need to join the back of the queue. Children will not be allowed to enter the school before their time slot.

The approach to drop off areas will be marked out with a 2m queue (just like a supermarket) and there will be a drop off zone from where a member of staff will invite pupils in. In order to keep everybody safe, parents will not be able to accompany their child to their bubbles. Staff members will not be able to have

conversations with parents at drop off or collection as we need to get all the children into school as quickly and safely as possible.

If, when you get to drop off, your child doesn't want to come into school, with your help we will encourage them to separate from you, but will be unable to intervene. If this should happen we would advise that you take your child home and try again the next day. We obviously hope this situation doesn't arise but, we need to account for any possibility.

Only one parent or carer can accompany the child to school to minimise risk. Parents will not be invited to enter the building or playground but will drop off as described above.

During the recent weeks we have been able to offer provision from 0:800am-16:00pm for specific key workers. As our very limited number of staff members are not going to get a break during the day at all, we cannot continue to offer this facility. However, we are very aware that this may cause extreme hardships for our NHS front line staff so are open to you speaking to us about shift patterns and, we will do our very best to help find a solution.

Preparations for re-opening:

Since the announcement was made we have received guidance on almost a daily basis. From this we have been making provisional plans to ensure it as safe as possible for all children, staff and parents on site. We will be testing our arrangements and completing preparations on 1st/2nd of June ready to welcome you back on 3rd June. There will be many changes to the classrooms and spaces your children will be able to access, including the possibility of a member of staff unknown to your child as we have had to ensure sufficient staffing for all classrooms in use.

The rooms may seem alien to your child. The classroom furniture and layout may have been changed to promote social distancing;

- We have had to remove a large amount of resources; such as soft furnishing, soft toys, toys with small parts, dressing up and sensory play activities, from the classrooms in order that the items that remain are able to be sanitised daily.
- There will be a staggered timetable to the outside space for learning and play times/lunchtimes for all bubbles.
- The way we move around the school will be different, including how we use and the frequency of 'loo' visits.
- Children may find themselves in different learning groups as we have had to ensure there is a maximum of 15 per 'bubble'.
- We won't be using the hall, library or previously shared spaces.
- Children will not be able to bring any toys or personal items into school including stationery and reading books. The resources the children will need during the day will be provided in a personal zip wallet and will need to remain in school. Children will not share these resources with anyone else.
- Where possible doors will be propped open during the day and the windows will be open to encourage ventilation and prevent handles being used which would then need to be sanitised.

What will my child be doing each day at school?

The children will complete some of the same learning that is being set for the children who are remaining at home. However, we are going to be focussing on children's mental health and well-being above all else. It will have been a very difficult period for all our children and, with the school being so different, will need

Careful explaining and lots of emotional support. They have all gone through an incredible period of change and may have experienced loss on a number of different levels. This shouldn't be ignored. The staff will be organising lessons which will rebuild any lost confidence and help children feel safe and welcome in school. This is called a 'recovery curriculum'. Where possible, the children will do this outside. There will be plenty of opportunities for children to discuss their feelings, reflect on their experiences, play, rebuild friendships and have 'break out' or 'chill out' spaces for times when they may feel overwhelmed. We will continue to use our school values to support children's learning.

We will include breaks, toilet visits and handwashing slots (at least 6 and especially on arrival and before eating) throughout the day.

How can I communicate with the school?

There will be no access to the office. There will be a box at the drop off zone for you to put dinner money, forms, etc. in during drop off/pick up time. We ask that you email or call school if you need to talk to a member of staff and an appointment will be made for the member of staff to either call or email you depending when they are on duty. Parents will need to be mindful that teaching staff will not be able to be as responsive to parent emails as they will be full time with the children in their "bubble".

What does my child need to bring in to school?

Please only bring the following;

- Packed lunch (unless they are having a school one) and a snack for break time but in a disposable bag not a lunch box. This will be disposed of after lunch.
- A drink bottle which needs to be pre-filled, cleaned daily and sanitised at home
- A coat
- A sun hat
- Sun cream (we advise applying sun cream before coming in too)

That's all. Please do not bring in any toys or other items at all especially ensure there are no cuddly toys please.

Does my child need to wear school uniform?

No, please don't send your child in wearing school uniform. Many children will have outgrown items of uniform in the past 9 weeks and we know how hard it may be to source new. Also, we'd like the children to wear clean clothes each day. Please send your child in clothes and footwear that are suitable for the weather and for being outside.

What can I do to prepare my child for the potential return to school?

Things are going to be very different for children and possibly will remain so for quite some time. There are many resources available to help children cope and, as I have said, the staff will concentrate on making the children feel safe and welcome. This will be the main focus of our initial work in all groups. If you can prepare your child for the changes here that would be really great. Talk to them about school looking and feeling different to the way it was the last time they were in. Please talk to your child about the importance of handwashing for 20 seconds. This is one of the most important factors in the fight against Covid 19. Remind the children that we will be doing our very best to keep 2m away from each other. Practice what this distance looks like.

We have created a power point that will be sent to parents and put on the class pages of our website that you may like to share with your children.

Sharing social stories can be really helpful for young children and help to express the situation in a clear factual way, reducing emotional responses. You will find a link to a social stories on the class pages of our our website.

It will be important to encourage your child to talk about their experiences in 'lockdown' and that this period is now changing.

Despite these unprecedented times and the massive logistical exercise in preparing for the children's return, we have missed them all and look forward to welcoming them back. It may not all go according to plan and we will continue to be reflective and adapt where necessary. We will appreciate you continued support and patience but please remember everything is geared up to keeping us, you and most importantly of all our children safe and healthy.

Your sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "G. Hamilton". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'G'.

Gavin Hamilton
Executive Headteacher