

West Dartmoor Federation



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Dear Parents,

With the government guidance published and having now had the risk assessment produced for all Devon schools, we can inform you of our planned reopening of the school from September. We realise this has been eagerly awaited but would like to remind you that we are treading a very fine line between the various guidance documents to be able to tell you our intentions without promising things we cannot control. Obviously, even now these plans could be subject to change by both the government and, of course, the virus!

The government guidance is that we keep to the rules established for the partial opening on 1st June and these will be in place until we are advised differently. We have decided to have 2 'bubbles' for the school:

- 'Bubble 1' = Vixen Tor and Hound Tor
- 'Bubble 2' = Sheepstor.

The children are not allowed to mix with children from the other 'bubble' and therefore cannot move from one to another. The same is true for most staff. They stay all the time with their 'bubble' not mixing with any of the other children and keeping social distancing with the other staff on duty. However, where we have staff covering such as Mrs Norris or District Sports, they can work across the groups provided they follow strict rules.

We are not enforcing 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. However, the older children will be expected to observe the 2m (not 1m) social distancing rule wherever possible. Parents dropping off or picking up will also be expected to adhere to the 2m distancing especially while on school grounds.

I will outline your drop off and collection times and some of the expectations on you and your child. There are rules which will be enforced to keep everyone as safe as we can and these rules come from our risk assessments. 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.

Timings for school day:

Bubble 1 = drop off at 0845 entering through the main gate, dropping children at the small wooden gate and exiting via the car park. Pick up at 1500 at the wooden gate and exiting via the car park.

Bubble 2 = drop off at 0900 entering through the main gate and the children enter via the clocktower, parents to exit via the car park. Pick up at 1515 exiting through main gate once Bubble 1 have all dispersed.

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. You will be expected to adhere to the 2m distancing markers along the pathway. You won't be able to access the building. If you need to speak to us you will be required to make an appointment by phone or email. No one can 'pop' into reception. All communication to be via email or phone please. We ask that only one parent drops off and collects to follow guidelines and if it is essential younger children accompany you, they must be kept by your side and not allowed to run around the site. We also ask that parents do not stop to chat around the gate as this can prevent us from enabling social distancing.

Children will now be expected to wear the correct school uniform. Children in Vixen Tor will not be able to wear their slippers for the initial phase and we will keep you posted on that. As I am sure you will possibly be buying new for September as children must have grown can I remind you not to let your children wear trainers or shoes that light up please?! Uniforms do not need to be cleaned any more often than usual, nor do they need to be cleaned using methods which are different from normal.

Currently we are trying to organise some form of breakfast and after school provision and will let you know as soon as we can what that will look like. This will be by the end of term but we have to arrange staffing and also how children can be safely transported from one site to the other. We will be attempting to put something in place but it may not be exactly as usual.

Preparations for re-opening:

We have been making plans to ensure it as safe as possible for all children, staff and parents to return to the school setting. We will be testing our arrangements and completing preparations ready to welcome you back on 3rd September (FS starting on Monday 7th September). These 2 days will give us the best opportunity to ensure our arrangements work! There will be many changes to the classrooms and spaces your children will be able to access. The rooms may seem alien to your child as well. 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, 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 year groups; the way we move around the school will be different, including how we use and the frequency of 'loo' visits. We won't be using the hall, library or previously shared spaces in large groups so things like our daily act of worship (assembly) will be within a bubble rather than whole school. Children will not be able to bring any toys or personal items into school but can bring their pencil case and a reading book. Please can you make sure the pencil case contains only the necessary items please. Internal doors will be propped open during the day and the windows maybe open to encourage ventilation and prevent handles being used which would then need to be sanitised.

Great news for Lady Modiford's is that we are having all the toilets refurbished during the summer closure so they will be much more pleasant to use for the children.

What will my child be doing each day at school?

The teachers will need to carefully find out what children have been able to learn over these difficult times. This will be done very gently enabling staff to decide which areas will need to be revisited since Easter to plug any gaps in learning which would cause problems later. 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. The staff will be organising lots 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. We will include breaks, toilet visits and handwashing slots (at least 6 and especially on arrival and before eating) throughout the day. We have found that having a break when we feel the children need one has worked even better than having a specific time every morning so we will be keeping this system going.

For at least the first half of term there will not be any extra-curricular clubs. This will be re-evaluated once conditions change.

How can I communicate with the school?

There will be no access to the office so 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. Even the usual quick message will need to be phoned in or emailed please as staff will not have the time to chat to you as we usually do when you drop off or pick up. They will need to get the bubble in safely. As this is not our usual way of doing things we hope you will understand that we are not being rude simply we are following our best efforts at keeping people safe.

What does my child need to bring in to school?

- Packed lunch (unless they are having a school one) and a fruit-based snack for break time in a lunch box.
- A drink bottle which needs to be cleaned daily and sanitised
- A small pencil case with the basic essentials only to be left in school please!
- A reading book – system will be in place for those on reading schemes.
- PE kit needs to be worn into school on the day of the lesson which we will let you know, so there will be no need to change in and out of kit.
- A *small* bag to carry these items in
- As usual NO jewellery please apart from a watch if your child is able to tell the time.
- Please remember long hair **MUST** be tied back at all times as per normal school rules.

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

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. There are social stories and PowerPoint presentations on the website which could help you with this. 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.

Minimise contact with individuals who are unwell by ensuring that those who have coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms, or who have someone in their household who does, do not attend your setting

Ensuring that pupils, students, staff and other adults do not come into the setting if they have coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms, or have tested positive in the last 7 days, and ensuring anyone developing those symptoms during the day is sent home, are essential actions to reduce the risk in settings and further drive down transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19). All settings must follow this process and ensure all staff are aware of it.

If anyone in the setting becomes unwell with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature, or has a loss of, or change in, their normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia), they must be sent home. They must be advised to follow 'Stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection', which sets out that they must self-isolate for at least 7 days and should arrange to have a test to see if they have coronavirus (COVID-19). Other members of their household (including any siblings) should self-isolate for 14 days from when the symptomatic person first had symptoms.

If a child is awaiting collection, they should be moved, if possible, to a room where they can be isolated behind a closed door, depending on the age and needs of the child, with appropriate adult supervision if required. Ideally, a window should be opened for ventilation. If it is not possible to isolate them, move them to an area which is at least 2 metres away from other people.

Please remember if your child is unwell with any illness such as tummy bug, cold/flu or any other symptoms that you would normally not send them to school with please do not send them in!

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 appreciate your 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. We will keep the website updated and you can find a 'frequently asked questions' document there. Here is a link to the government guidance on all other aspects of Covid: <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus/education-and-childcare>

kind regards