**Dear parents / carers:**

This is the third in a series of FAQs that I am answering since schools partially closed on March 23rd. The first two are available on our website this one is available under Parents Info. Below are the responses to over 50 questions ranging across a wide range of topics. I have done my best to answer them with the information available to me as at September 5th 2020. I would also stress we live in challenging and changing times so what I write now may well be subject to change. We learned how to work in new ways during lockdown and never closed. By the end of July any child who wanted to had a chance to come back into school. I do have to follow government, local authority, Department for Education, Public Health England, Health and Safety Executive, Westminster diocesan guidance and others. My aim is to keep everyone - children, staff, parents and the wider community healthy, happy and safe.

The good news is that as hoped for children have returned with glee and delight in being back where they should be, their school. I wrote many times since March that children are remarkably resilient and they truly are. I am aware that among adults there is still much anxiety and fear and this is to be expected and is a global phenomenon. The questions below are ones I have received recently and with modified answers to protect the identity of the parents concerned.

My ambition is to return to normality as soon as I am able. I will never use the expression ‘new normal’. We are trialling new ways of working and I will try and keep changes to a minimum but do ask for understanding in the first few weeks as staff have their own fears and concerns. Below you can see where we are currently. We will continue to send out regular texts, updates and a weekly newsletter. This Friday I will share with you what is going well and what needs adjusting. For example with almost no notice new parking restrictions are now in place. I am happy to try to answer any further questions at any future time. Will also be writing Friday about Pope Francis’ words of wisdom to the world last week.

I stress again jut how happy our children are to be back and I mean really happy. Please pray for even better days ahead.

Yours,

Sean Flood (Headteacher)

**Questions :**

1. I noted that there was a reference to **thermometer guns** being available, but that these would not be routinely used because it could scare the children.  Does this mean on arrival, the assumption will be that parents have done that check themselves, and not further checks will be done at school?

**We have two Non-contact Infrared Thermometers (NCITs) as the FDA calls them and can quickly check any child with a temperature. We are checking temperature on arrival for both staff and pupils. I will not call them temperature guns again. Temperature checks are completely safe. We have never closed since March and frequently have checked children's temperatures. Parents are expected to also do this.**

1. The same applies on the **subject of PPE**. There was mention of it being available, but no statement that it will be in use.  Could you clarify on that point please?

**PPE is available for all staff if they so wish to wear it such as visors and masks and other medical and protective equipment. Guidance does not state that PPE is compulsory in classrooms but staff are wearing visors and will wear masks/gloves as necessary.**

1. On **sanitisation stations** and handwashing protocols, could you confirm what the procedures are please?

**Hand sanitisers are available all over school and children use them when they enter the building and regularly during the day. Children are also regularly hand washing throughout the day.**

1. On several occasions, I’ve witnessed first hand where parents have dropped off kids and been explaining to the teachers how: their child had a mysterious rash that they were “probably” going to try and get a gp appointment for; they’d been sick all night but “seemed fine” that morning so they wanted to see how it went; had a nasty cold but really missed their friends. Those are actual conversations by parents of kids in XXXX’s class.  I get that parents have different circumstances and some have to go to the office so school is very convenient and necessary childcare, however, what is a common cold for one child is anything but for the child next to them who has respiratory vulnerabilities.  I’ve had to keep XXXX home several days and even had his paediatrician advise me to keep XXXX away from school just for his immune system to get a break.  Is there any strong direction being made around that whole “it’s just a cold” attitude when kids return in what cannot afford to be such a casual environment when it comes to colds?

**Parents will be required to keep children at home if they are sick and will be asked to collect them also if they become unwell at school.**

1. Presumably class sizes and numbers will remain the same.  What’s being done on the **social distancing** front? Any modifications at all?

**Class sizes are the same and there is no requirement for social distancing for primary age children. The major change however will be that classes remain in their own group as much as possible and do not mix with others while in school. I do not use the word ‘bubble’. This is the same at playtimes and lunch. Playgrounds will be zoned off for each class to use on a rotational basis.**

1. I’d also appreciate information on the fine – is that per day, per term?  And how does one challenge that etc.?

**There will be no fines for at least the first half-term as long as parents have a valid reason for absence and keep in regular contact.**

**Questions ;**

1. **Notification of absence**: If you could let me know what the protocols are for notifying the school, that would be great.  Do I need to call in each morning for example?

**1. Notification of absence ----- please just ring at the start of the week any time on Monday to keep us up to date.**

**A.Contact with class teacher?**

**1A. Please call the office to arrange a telephone appointment.**

**Assessments**: Are there any assessments coming up which XXX would need to take part in/complete?  Any information on dates etc. around that would be a huge help.

**Assessments --- Formal assessments are not a priority for the first few weeks so do not worry about this especially for the younger children. There will be formal assessments later but we want to settle everyone in first. Initial assessments are being carried out before the end of September to identify gaps and arrange interventions.**

1. **Class dojo & other reward systems:** Will the kids continue to be able to access some of the gamified elements of learning e.g. dojo points for work completed etc so they’re not too far behind or penalised because of their vulnerabilities.

**Class dojo -- this will be continuing as we settle back. No child should ever be penalised because of vulnerabilities.**

**Questions and responses:**

1. Lunch  Lunch - Are you able to confirm what the pack lunch consist of for each pupil?

----- **Packed lunches change every day. There is a choice every day. During lockdown the lunches were extensive and sandwiches usually ham, cheese or tuna, salad, fruits, yoghurts, drinks, snacks and more. Lunch changes but children seemed happy and well fed since we partially closed on March 23rd. Children get to choose each day, not on a weekly basis.**

When does the school forsee hot meals returning and will this be prepared in the school kitchen or by an external company?

**---- We are hopefully  trialling hot lunches starting this Friday 11th and hope to resume very shortly after this. If all goes well then next week.**

**All meals are cooked and prepared in our own kitchens by our catering company Wilson Jones and are of a really high standard in a 5 star rated hygiene kitchen.**

2. Water bottles - Are children permitted to bring in their own water bottle to school, regardless of their year group?

---- **No not yet. We will review this but are following guidance. It is not necessary for children to bring in their own water bottles as these are provided for children in school.**

3. Are scooters and bicycles allowed to be left in school.

**---- Yes and a large number of pupils bring them every day but must wheel them in and out themselves.**

4. Is the school teaching the normal curriculum ?

**---- Yes we are teaching the full national curriculum but modified in areas such as music and PE.**

If not, what are the subjects not being taught?

**--- All are being taught.**

Also what does the school plan to deliver for the full curriculum?

**---- Full curriculum is in place with adjustments for some subjects. Also no assemblies, masses, signing or large gatherings of children together indoors.**

5.  Will the teaching / topics / the curriculum covered for each term be shared with parents as the school has provided previously?

**--- Yes as before. These will however be posted online rather than paper copies.**

6. If any gaps has been identified will this be shared with parents?

**---- Yes, if they are of concern** **as we always do.**

When will these assessments be carried out by teachers?

**--- During this half-term. My priority for the first few weeks is to settle the children in and make sure there is a calm and happy atmosphere. Assessments will follow maybe a week or so later than usual.**

7. How will parent evening be conducted this term / year? Video call, phone call or by appointment in person?

**---- Mainly by online call or phone call following government guidelines just now.**

8.The extra funding for schools which has been spoken about by government (catch up support). How will that be used by the school to help those children who have fell behind?

**---- I have heard about this funding but have not seen or received anything in the budget yet.**

When will these extra lessons be carried out and by whom?

**----- They will be carried out during the school day Mondays to Fridays.**

(additional resources or existing staff)?

**---- A mixture of staff depending on what we receive is my current thinking.**

**One of the current priorities is to support disadvantaged pupils so I would envisage they will receive the most support.**

9. Reading books: Will books be sent home to read on a weekly basis?

**--- We hope so and are working on how to make this safe and secure for everyone. Yes, this will take place once a week and will need to be returned on the correct day to allow time for quarantine.**

10.  Homework: Will the purple book be sent home for homework to be completed?

**----Yes again we are working on ways to make this safe for children and staff alike. Yes, again this will have to be returned on a specific day to allow time for quarantine. Books will not be marked if they are not returned on time.**

11. How will Physical Education and sports be provided at school?

**---- In class groups and as close to normal as possible. No contact type sports and again modifications to games to allow time for cleaning equipment and as much outdoors as possible.**

As I write this I note that children are allowed to wear tracksuit bottoms, could the PE kit be looked at again to include the tracksuit bottoms permanently for the colder weather and possibility a tracksuit top?

**---- We can look at this as I said as time moves on and circumstances and guidance changes.**

12. This academic year XXX is due to have the phonic screening assessment, Will more details be provided about this?

**---- Yes this will be the same as normal with no changes apart from no parents workshops.**

Also how can we as parents support with this to assist with having our child at the line?

**---- We have detailed guidance that will be sent out. This test is 10 months away so there is lots of time. The pass mark will remain the same I believe. We are an outstanding beacon school for our phonics work as noted by the DfE.**

13. What remote education will be provided if a local lockdown or a classroom needs to self-isolate?

**--- I hope this does not happen. We now have Google classrooms available. Remote learning does not really work for very young children everyone agrees with this. We are also looking at filming lessons to put online which allow younger children to dip in and out of home learning.**

14. Will it be done in the same way homeschooling was delivered?

**----- Yes and no. Packs will be provided and work posted every Friday as before. We provided extensive high quality weekly learning during lockdown and are always looking at best practice in this area.**

15. What strength is the alcohol in the hand sanitisers.?

**------77%**

**Questions:**

1. I will like to know if the staff who is checking the temperature had medical training to carried this kind of check?

**Yes extensive and all up to date higher level first aid and paediatric first aid among other qualifications.**

2. What kind of thermometer will be used?

**One that is approved for use in schools, care homes and hospital and H & S approved. It is a Non-contact Infrared Thermometer NCIT and is NOT a laser gun.**

**An expensive one too. It only measures reflected heat using Infrared. We also have wrist and body thermometers.**

3. If the school thinks this kind of measure needs to be in the place, I wish to check my XXXX temperature at the gate with the staff present using a digital thermometer, not a laser one as there have been no studies what the long-term effects could potentially be on an under the developed brain.

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**A false report in July 2020 has been posted on Facebook in July 2020. This consisted of 2 people talking on an Indonesian website who do not know what they are referring to and has been dismissed as misleading and false below by the Indonesian Ministry of Health.**

**Quote:**

**“Scientifically, various experts have said that this statement is incorrect because the thermal gun only measures [temperature] with infrared radiation that is reflected at all times by all objects around us. It does not use laser light, radioactive beams such as x-ray, only infrared,” he said.**

**“Various references say this brain-damaging reference is a false statement and this will endanger everyone and is counterproductive to prevent transmission from occurring.”**

 4. I do not wish for my child (or any other child for that matter) to be conditioned and desensitised to having a gun-shaped object of any description pointed at their heads.

**We will arrange wrist checks but these will take longer. We have been using these for a long time now as routine without any issues or concerns being raised.**

**Updates to previous questions:**

1. Might the school be able to work with/partner with the parish and offer in-house first communion classes for year 3, whereby lessening exposure to others outside the school community.

**Happy to discuss with Fr. Derek as we work closely together at all times.**

2. What are the school's plans regarding children who need learning support? How are you planning to provide SLT, for example, and ensure these children are not left behind?

**We have bought in lots extra SLT (Speech and Language Therapy) time and are in discussion with Hackney as to how this will be provided. They are planning as well. We are still awaiting details of extra catch up funding promised by the government**

3. If school does re-open, will there be the provision of breakfast club, after school club, sports, arts clubs, etc.?

**Not immediately but hopefully will continue shortly. Our current providers of after school care have left. So a rapidly changing picture**. **We are not allowed to mix large groups right now but have ideas for some limited provision shortly and hope normal service can be resumed asap.**

**Health & Safety Concerns:**

4. What health and safety procedures will be in place i.e. temperature checking on arrival?

**See question 1 page 1. We have two Non-contact Infrared Thermometers (NCITs) that we do use. We have used these from the first day back at school and will continue to do so until further notice. We have all the best PPE equipment and medical supplies available. Our Health and Safety Risk Assessment and Policy for Covid 19 is on our website.**

5. What does cleaning/'deep-cleaning' at OLSJ mean? Could you explain?

**As one of the first schools to be hit by Covid19 we did one of the early deep cleans. It basically involves fumigation and smoke type bombs. As soon as school is open and children return the very same second it is no longer effective.**

**In our case we have bought in extra cleaning time and now have five cleaners on rota including one in the morning and one going around during most of the day. That is a lot for a school our size.**

6. If a family needs to self-isolate, will the child be marked down/penalised for being absent - i.e. count against their attendance record. Also will the school support those families with home learning?

**No penalties for reported absence with a valid reason in the first half-term. Basic message is keep in contact and keep us informed. We will continue to support all we can.**

**Other questions:**

7. How will we purchase any uniform items, if needed?

**Order forms are online and you can arrange collection. Uniforms have all been ordered and the system is working well.**

8. Will school days be longer to make up missed education?

**There may be moves for extra tuition for secondary pupils. Anything else unlikely as it involves changes in the law and contracts apart from heads and deputies. Teachers have to be available for 1,265 hours per year and 195 days. Heads and deputies 365 and 8,544 hours of the year. This is all covered by employment law and School Teachers Pay and Conditions (STPC 2020.)**

9. If a vaccine is approved and rolled out, will vaccination be mandatory to attend the school and will a vaccination certificate be required (staff included) and will you consider enforcing exclusion for unvaccinated children/staff members?

**I do not know at present.**

10. While we already have term dates for 2020/2021; is there any idea if/how those dates will change?

**They have not changed and we are now working to the same dates as on the website first home page under Term Dates.**