



Wednesday 3rd June 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

Important information – Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) Community

ALL PARENTS SHOULD READ THIS PLEASE

Following publication yesterday of 'The Public Health England Review' into disparities around the risk of coronavirus to BAME communities and, Matt Hancock's announcement in the House of Commons yesterday afternoon, that members of the BAME community are identified as being at a "major risk factor," I am writing to inform you that we are currently reviewing our risk assessments for our school's staffing team and also will be seeking further advice with regards to BAME. As a result of this, some of our other Trust schools have had to delay their re-opening.

At Barrow Hedges, we are able to re-open for our Nursery, Reception and Year 1 pupils tomorrow, Thursday 4th June, as planned. However, we have had no option but to make some alterations to our staffing for some of the bubbles and therefore staffing is now different to that published in some of the parent handbooks sent at the weekend. If your child is in the following groups the adults they will see are now:

Bubble 3 – Mrs Bennett and Mrs Paul

Bubble 4 – Miss Holmes and Mrs Covey

Bubble 6 – Mrs Mole and Miss Cheetham

As revised risk assessments need to be completed, we are unable to confirm at present whether our original plans can be implemented.

As you will be aware, once adults and children are assigned to bubbles, they cannot be moved and so one key consideration we are having to make is whether we will in fact be able to staff our Year 6 bubbles from 15th June, or whether the impact of the BAME risk assessments will result in us having less staff able to return to working in school. If this is the case then we will have no option but to deploy those adults currently assigned to Year 6 bubbles to other bubbles. Please note that staffing is not just about the numbers required to lead bubbles, but also about other employees who have required responsibilities.

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Harbury Road Carshalton Surrey SM5 4LA

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I very much appreciate that the prospect of this will be extremely disappointing and frustrating for Year 6 parents, but I feel that I need to share this possibility with you today to give you as much time as possible to consider alternative childcare arrangements should this be necessary for your family.

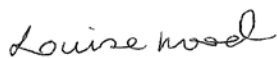
Please be assured that we absolutely want to welcome back our Year 6s and recognise how important this is for children's transition to secondary school, and of course, to be able to complete their time with us at Barrow Hedges. We are all so desperately sad about this situation. However, as explained in previous letters, we have to follow government guidance and as extract on the third page of this letter shows, we have been instructed to prioritise the younger year groups.

I will do my utmost to run with existing plans to re-open for Year 6 but as I am sure you will understand, health and safety of all our staff, pupils and wider community is always our first priority.

I will, of course, keep you updated on this situation but I know you will understand that we are dealing with updates and new information at the same time as it is shared with the public. This, of course, makes an already difficult situation even harder to manage.

Thank you for your ongoing support and understanding.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Louise wood".

Mrs Louise Wood

Headteacher

5.1 Is it necessary to prioritise children?

The first aim of the partial school closure measures was to reduce the overall population of children moving around local areas, in order to further reduce the number of social interactions, and thus flatten the upward curve of the coronavirus outbreak.

However, the second aim was to continue to care for children whose parents are critical to the coronavirus response, so that they can continue to work where alternative childcare arrangements cannot be made, and for children who are vulnerable.

Now that we have made progress in reducing the transmission of coronavirus we are encouraging all eligible children to attend – it is no longer necessary for parents of eligible children to keep them at home if they can. These priority groups remain eligible to attend as schools open to more students.

In the first phases of wider opening, we will prioritise younger children, for several reasons. Firstly, because there is moderately high scientific confidence in evidence suggesting younger children are less likely to become unwell if infected with coronavirus; and secondly because evidence shows the particularly detrimental impact which time spent out of education can have upon them.

The three year groups within mainstream primary have been prioritised because they are key transition years – children in Reception and year 1 are at the very beginning of their school career and are mastering the essential basics, including counting and the fundamentals of reading and writing, and learning to socialise with their peers. We know that attending early education lays the foundation for lifelong learning and supports children's social and emotional development. Year 6 children are finishing Key Stage 2 and are preparing for the transition to secondary school, and will benefit immensely from time with their friends and teachers to ensure they are ready.

From 1 June, as more children return to schools, we appreciate that each setting's circumstances will be slightly different. Any setting that cannot achieve the small groups recommended as part of the [protective measures guidance](#) should discuss options with their local authority or trust. If necessary, settings have the flexibility to focus first on continuing to provide places for priority groups and then, to support children's early learning, settings should prioritise groups of children as follows:

- early years settings - 3 and 4 year olds followed by younger age groups
- infant schools - nursery (where applicable) and Reception
- primary schools - nursery (where applicable), Reception and year 1