20/05/2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

**Re-opening of Early Years Provision**

This has been a very difficult letter to write. However, I am aware that just as my staff and I are worried and have countless questions, you as parents have even more. I would therefore like to share our plans regarding the re-opening of our Nursery on the 1st June.

**This is a summary of the current situation:**

• The government have told us we must begin to re-open to Nursery aged children prioritising three and four year olds

• We have carried out a full risk assessment and planning exercise for the re-opening of the school and Nursery (in line with government and local authority guidance and support), approved by the school’s governing board

• Some staff are self-isolating or shielding because they, or members of their family, are critically vulnerable - meaning we do not have a full complement of staff

• Parents are anxious to know if and when their children can return to school and Nursery, what the Nursery day will look like, who their children will be mixing with and how they will be kept safe

• 1st June is now less than two weeks away, so time is of the essence.

All of the above present a complicated situation, and one which has required and will continue to require careful planning for. I am very proud to say that the staff and governors have already willingly engaged in meetings to discuss how we manage the re-opening, and are approaching the planning process with professionalism and an unprecedented commitment to keeping our children, their families and our colleagues safe and protected. This is what we do. All decisions will be based on the following principles and in this order of priority:

1. **SAFETY/ SAFEGUARDING: Safety and protection of our children, staff and community**
2. **HAPPINESS/ WELLBEING: Mental health and wellbeing of our children, staff and community**
3. **LEARNING: Quality of education for all children**

It is important to note that the governing board , Head teacher and myself will keep our plan and implementation under constant review, and if at any time we conclude that the risks are too high and cannot be minimised, then we will take the decision to close the Nursery. We have a very thorough risk assessment and plan, but having not implemented such procedures before we cannot predict how it will work.

**Organisation:**

* There will be 2 groups of children: A new intake group and the key worker group. Each group will have 15 or fewer children
* Nursery will be open between the hours of 8.30am and 3.30pm only
* The Nursery will be open to these groups Monday through to Thursdays. Fridays will be for key worker children only. On Fridays, we will have additional time to deep clean rooms, equipment, corridors and other shared spaces. We will also be using Fridays to review and reflect upon our procedures and new routines and make adjustments where needed. It also helps us to manage staffing when our team is slightly smaller than usual.
* All parents are being ‘strongly encouraged’ by the government to send their Nursery aged children, in smaller groups and on a phased return - however, no parent will be penalised if they choose to keep their child at home. We realise that some parents may not be happy to send their children into Nursery.

**Beginning/end of day**

* Staggered starts and finishes:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Drop-off time** | **Pick-up time** | **Entry/Exit** |
| **Nursery- Key worker group** | 8.30am | 3.30am | Rear entrance  |
| **Nursery – New intake group** | 9.00am:  | 3.00pm | Rear entrance |

* Nursery children will be dropped at the back gate on Water street which will be supervised by a Senior member of staff
* Stagger the start times for children to reduce numbers of people on site:
* Only one family member allowed to drop off/collect
* Parents with siblings to choose 1 time for all siblings
* Parents should follow social-distancing guidelines when arriving and should leave children in the playground with a member of staff. Parents will not be allowed to stay in the playground talking to other parents. **No parents to be allowed in building or to gather at school gates**
* To reduce log jam, double gates at front of school to be opened with clear IN and OUT signs
* When entering the building, children and staff should wash hands before touching tables or doors.

**Other measures**

* Clean clothes should be warn everyday
* Regular planned in handwashing for all
* Staff will lead sessions to reinforce safety measures in child friendly way including reminders about handwashing. Also, reminders about ‘Catch it, bin it, kill it’. Posters will reinforce messages around school
* Plastic lunchboxes to be used for packed lunches (Rather than fabric ones). To be wiped before being stored.
* Furniture has been rearranged in Nursery to minimise physical contact wherever possible.
* Shared equipment will be cleaned daily
* There will be an increased cleaning regime throughout the day, particularly of hard surfaces
* We have planned so that groups do not mix with other groups, so groups will be separated at all points throughout the Nursery day
* Staff will wear PPE when attending to first aid or where pupils are unwell

**Curriculum**

* Our first priority will be personal, social and health education, including emotional/mental health and well-being. Reconnecting with Nursery staff, friends and new routines will be of paramount importance. Only then will we begin to look at where the children are in their learning and start looking at school readiness, particularly using the outdoors (No forest school I’m afraid). We will not be attempting to deliver the full curriculum usually on offer at Little Pips Nursery, but we will balance the days so the children do not get tired, overwhelmed or demotivated.

It is important to be honest and open here: whilst we will do everything we can to encourage the children to minimise physical contact and wash their hands regularly, they are young children and so they will certainly touch each other, play with each other, share things and forget to keep their distance. We have to be realistic. We will of course do our best, but we cannot guarantee they will not come into contact with others, or where others have touched, during the school day.

**What do you need to do?**

* It is your job as parents to assess the risk for your children and make your own decisions about whether they will come into school.
* If you are sending your child to school on the 1st June, talk to your child and discuss what might be different and what they are looking forward to/worried about. Talk to them about how they can keep safe at Nursery.
* If you are not sending your child into Nursery, please give the school one week’s notice if you change your mind as planning has been based on the current known numbers
* If you had been undecided about sending your child to school, please inform us of your decision by Friday 22nd May
* Send your child to Nursery with a packed lunch and morning snack in a plastic lunchbox and a named water bottle in a school bag (No additional bags or items please)

**Summary**

Hopefully this letter has given you all a better idea of how we intend to manage our re-opening. The key thing is to open safely, not quickly. As I have tried to make clear, please be aware that sharing these plans with you this early may mean they have to change if guidance changes. My aim is to be clear and honest about our plans, and give enough warning for families to make their own plans about how to manage the proposed changes to our session times. If you do send children into Nursery, we respectfully ask that families are rigorous about practicing social distancing and other government guidelines at home too; and remember, DO NOT send any child in if they, or anyone at home, are displaying symptoms. All Nurseries will be different when children return on the 1st June and beyond…

Thank you for your continued support.

Best Wishes

Hollie Westlake  Lorrainne Gill Anne Gillard

Nursery Manager  Deputy Nursery Manager Senior Nursery Nurse