



Coventry Grove Wheatley,  
Doncaster, DN2 4PY  
Telephone: 01302 349275  
Email: [office@astrea-kingfisher.org](mailto:office@astrea-kingfisher.org)  
Principal: Catherine Skinn  
Deputy Principal: Alison Parsons

Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> July 2020

### **September Opening**

Dear Families,

As you may be aware, the government has announced that primary schools will open fully, to all children, in September. We have been busy considering the directives and guidance issued by the Department for Education (DfE) with regards to how we, at Kingfisher Primary, will be operating in the autumn term, to enable children to return to school as safely as is possible.

Since the end of March, school attendance has not been compulsory and schools and families across the country have made decisions based on their local situation. Each school and family has degrees of freedom over school opening and attendance.

The government is now directing schools to open and making school attendance mandatory, from the start of the autumn term. The attitudes of people to the easing of the countrywide lockdown varies from person to person. Probably most people will be glad to resume some kind of normality, to see relatives and friends they have not been able to see for a while, to go to places which have, for several months, been shut down, and do activities which have not been possible during lockdown. Some people, however, will be anxious about mixing with new groups of people that they have felt safely isolated from. There will be anxiety and stress and some people will question how safe the easing of lockdown really is.

The simple fact is, life has always come with risks. The fact that this is a new disease, however, makes the answers less certain, as to the degree of risk associated with taking particular actions. At Kingfisher, we are taking advice again, from a wide range of sources, in order to make the school environment as safe as we possibly can. This is all we have ever been able to do.

The government has decided that bubbles should be class sized. They have given guidance about many aspects of health and safety including room layout. Previous guidelines about social distancing between children has changed.

There is not one single safe way to reduce the risk of infection. The task faced, as a country and as a school, is to put into place a variety of constraints to reduce that risk. Different people will have different opinions on what combination of measures is best. At a national level, this is well illustrated in differences between



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England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, with regard to how they have chosen different ways to control the virus and different ways to ease lockdown conditions.

On a school level, we will focus on appropriate cleaning measures, continued regular hand-washing, and the creation of “bubbles and segments”. Staggered starts and ends to the school day will also be put in place. (More detail about this can be found in the Guidance Document enclosed with this letter). There will be staggered breaktimes and dinnertimes. Lunches will be eaten in the hall and the dining room with children from the same year group. There will be no assemblies.

Breakfast Club and After School Clubs, before and after school will be open. Although there will be a booking system for Breakfast Club to enable us to plan for the seating of the children, this will also see reduced numbers that we can accommodate. There will be many changes, but we will still be Kingfisher Primary.

We are in the final stages of organising support staff to maximise the impact on children’s learning and their well-being. I am sure all children will be looking forward to being back in school, in their new classes, even though school life will be different from how it was in March.

Obviously, things can change and we have to be prepared to alter our plans again, should the need arise. The government has indicated that restrictions in the light of further outbreaks will be more locally imposed, rather than nationally, as witnessed in the case of Leicester.

As we approach the end of an extraordinary school year at Kingfisher, we wish our Year 6 children all the best, as they prepare to start secondary school in the autumn term. We look forward in September to welcoming our new nursery and reception children to the school for the first time (a letter regarding phased starts has been sent to Reception parents).

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for all your support during the year, but especially in the last few months which have seen very different ways of working and additional pressures. Thank you for your positivity during the weekly phone calls which staff have had with you and for your flexibility.

I wish you good health and positive well-being.

Yours sincerely

Catherine Skinn  
Principal



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