



February 24th 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

We are delighted to confirm that following the Government's announcement on Monday all our schools will fully open from March 8th. We have decided to welcome all children at once to get everyone started together, we have decided that the sooner we can switch over from remote learning for all children the better.

This represents a step back towards normality for us all and all our children can be reunited with their friends, be with their teachers and school staff and be able to learn, play and socialise in school again.

They have been through a tough time. We will be doing everything we can in schools to support our children in returning to face-to-face learning, with their mental health and wellbeing at the heart of what we do. Our core values as educators will be incredibly important as always and we know that we can look forward to your support in making sure the process of restarting goes as smoothly as possible.

We are still not completely out of the woods - despite lower levels of Covid in our communities and schools from where they were in December, they are still higher than they were when we started back in September. We must ensure that we don't see levels starting to rise again.

We will be watching the local and national data carefully and make all decisions about the road back to normality as we go along based on this data.

Thank you for all the support you have given us over the past year and for understanding the very real challenges we faced in December particularly with cases in school and in our communities escalating. I'm glad to be able tell you that all the staff and children who did test positive are either completely recovered or well on the way to complete recovery

www.kingsmead.hackney.sch.uk

www.gayhurst.hackney.sch.uk

www.mandeville.hackney.sch.uk

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which is excellent news. We have had no new cases reported in our school community in the last month. This is brilliant news.

Testing

As you are aware, since January we have been testing all staff and children who have been coming onto the school site. This has helped us pick up a number of cases and therefore by isolating quickly we were able to stop the spread within school.

School staff will continue to be tested twice a week and we very much hope that families will be able to test their children regularly going forward. We do not have the capacity to test every child in school once everyone returns but will continue to rely on families being vigilant and testing their children if they have been in contact with a case or if they are symptomatic. Remember primary children are largely asymptomatic so many of the cases we identified previously were otherwise unaware that they were carrying the virus.

Once we are fully re-open we have decided that if there are positive cases, as well as sending home that bubble of children and staff as we did in the Autumn term, we will also request that parents of the bubble test their children. We will do this because we have strong evidence that the spread at Gayhurst in particular was due to siblings connected to bubbles being still in school and the trail of positive cases was largely down to this. We want to keep as many children in school as possible going forward so ask that you help us to do this. We will be able to provide testing in school for families who can't access tests outside school for any reason.

Throughout the pandemic we have followed the guidance from Government and will continue to do so. We will review all risk assessments in light of the new guidance and adhere to the systems of control for prevention of transmission and response in the event of symptoms or positive cases in school. These systems are now established in schools and minimise the risk when our community all adhere to them.

What will reopening look like?

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We will resume our service from March 8th **exactly as it was from September to December** which does mean the staggered start and finish times, bubbles, restrictions on what children can bring in and out of school, no parents or visitors on site unless with express permission of headteacher, staggered lunchtimes and playtimes and other limitations which you will be aware of.

We will **not be opening any before school or after school provision** to children until we have seen how the main re-entry to school goes and have had time to monitor the effects of large numbers of us coming together in the buildings again

The concerns about cross bubble integration remain and would make extended school provision very difficult and we are prioritising school day teaching delivery over everything else.

If a child tested positive in extended day provision, that could result in several class bubbles being affected and that is something none of us want as it would mean more time spent at home and not at school.

We will be looking at outside sports provision before and after school to start after the Spring Break if all goes well. We are also looking into holiday provision of activities with sports and performing and visual arts camps, more on this later.

Your own school will plan the details of return to school for your child and your Associate Headteacher will be in contact soon to share these with you.

We very much look forward to welcoming all our children back to our schools.

With all best wishes

Louise, Marc, Karen and Evelyn.

LEAP Federation Headteachers