



Part of PACE Academy Trust  
**New Valley Primary School**

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27<sup>th</sup> May 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

Since the government announced its aim of a phased reopening of schools for some year groups from 1<sup>st</sup> June, we have been working hard to decide how and when we would be able to invite more children back to New Valley. We are all missing your children greatly, and are looking forward to when school can get back to something like normal, but you will understand that the safety and wellbeing of children and staff is absolutely the top priority.

After very careful risk assessment and planning, in school and with our partners in PACE Academy Trust, we are delighted to begin inviting some children back to school from next week. I am writing now to outline our initial plan for this, and to summarise the measures we will be taking to reduce the risks to your children and our staff. We will review all elements of our plan very regularly on an ongoing basis, including paying close attention to any new guidance, to make what we offer as safe and effective as possible. Therefore, while we are planning extremely carefully, please be aware that arrangements could change.

Currently, the timetable for returning to school is as follows:

- **Year 6 return from Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> June, with the school day finishing by 2pm (12.30 on Fridays)**
- **Year 1 return from Monday 8<sup>th</sup> June, with the school day finishing by 2pm (12.30 on Fridays)**
- **Reception to return Monday 15<sup>th</sup> June, with the school day finishing by 1pm (12.30 on Fridays)**

The childcare provision for vulnerable children (those with an attached social worker) and children of key workers will continue to operate each day, as it has done since late March. If your child is in Reception, Year 1 or Year 6, you will need to think about whether you want them to remain in this childcare group, or return to their own class for a shorter day, as unfortunately they cannot do both.

The school day for years 6, 1 and reception is necessarily shorter for a combination of reasons:

- to help children manage a school day that will be quite different to what they have been used to;
- to ensure there are enough staff to teach smaller groups;
- to give staff the time they will need to plan for their groups, and to provide high-quality distance learning for children not in school.

Through our risk assessment, we have identified various additional measures to make New Valley as safe a place as possible for children and staff.

- **Class/group size will be carefully managed.** Two-metre social distancing from adults and other children will be encouraged at all times. Because this will be difficult for children to adhere to, and particularly so for the



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youngest children, they will be split further into smaller 'bubbles' to reduce the number of people with whom they come into contact:

- No more than 10 in a class in year 6;
- Children in reception and Y1 organised into bubbles of 5 children.

Groups and bubbles will be together for the whole day, with no direct mixing with children from other groups at less than 2m apart; they will be taught by the same adults at all times. While some children may not be with their own teachers for most of the time, they will be able to feel part of their wider group and will sometimes have input from their own class teacher, for example when bubbles join together to sit two metres apart for a 'class' story.

- **Movement around the school will be closely controlled**, including set routes to the outside area for particular groups, and 'zoning' to prevent groups coming into contact.
- Groups and bubbles will **have breaks and eat lunch away from others**, either outside (weather permitting) or in their own classroom space inside. Play will be strictly supervised and structured by the attached adults: there will be no free play.
- There will be **strict rules about drop-off and collection times**, and about where, when and how parents and carers can be in the school grounds or at the gates.
- **Very regular hand-washing** will be taught, encouraged and closely monitored.
- **Classrooms will be redesigned to maximise space** and to remove equipment and resources that could encourage spread of the virus.
- There will be **a strict regime of enhanced cleaning**, including at various points during the day as well as at the end.
- Children should come to school in **clean, practical clothes every day**: they should wear New Valley PE kit or school uniform.
- There will be **strict rules about the administration of first aid or medicines**, and particularly in the instance of a suspected case of COVID-19.

This is a summary of just some of the major adaptations that will be made; each group of families and children will receive more detailed and specific arrangements (including precise start and finish times, details of rooms and routes into school, and rules about behaviour) before their return, but there is too much detail to put in one letter.

You can find government guidance for parents on the phased re-opening of schools by following this link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers/reopening-schools-and-other-educational-settings-from-1-june>

New Valley is a very special place. We are proud of our children, and proud of the warmth, care and love that we give them. School will look quite different, at least for a while, and children will have to get used to a 'new normal'. But we are determined that the warmth, care and love that I mentioned will not change, even if it may look different. We understand that parents and carers may be anxious, both about children returning, and about what they are returning to. There will be no pressure from us (initially at least!) to send your children back to school until



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you and they feel ready, but we are doing everything we can to make their return as safe and as enjoyable as possible. We hope to see as many of you and them as possible over the next few weeks.

We have received no guidance yet about the return of years 2-5. In the meantime, children who don't yet return to school (in any year group) will still be able to access distance learning. A team of staff have been working hard to consider how we can maintain the quality of work we send out, and to source materials that can replace instances where staff have spent additional time making video clips or writing precise worksheets. Feedback will necessarily take a different form, but all teachers are keen to maintain their video calls, and we hope to be able to do this. We will give you more information about distance learning in the coming days and weeks.

I understand that there is a lot to take in here, and we will continue to update you with more information about various aspects of school, including what the focus of the curriculum will be for those returning. In the meantime, we are so pleased and excited to have the chance to welcome back at least some of your children. To ensure that we can prepare properly, we will need plenty of notice of your intention for your child to return; we will not be able to admit any children unless we have given you clear individual permission and instructions. If your child is in Year 6, Year 1 or Reception, you will shortly receive a separate link to a survey. Please respond to this by the following deadlines:

**Year 6: respond by this 12.00 noon this Friday (29<sup>th</sup> May) to indicate whether they will return on Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> June**

**Year 1: respond by 12.00 noon next Wednesday (3<sup>rd</sup> June) to indicate whether they will return on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> June**

**Reception: respond by 12.00 noon next Friday (5<sup>th</sup> June) to indicate whether they will return on Monday 15<sup>th</sup> June**

We look forward to seeing at least some of you soon. And remember that whenever your children return, New Valley is still very much their (and your) school.

Yours

Pete Steward  
Headteacher



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