

## MEREVALLEY FEDERATION

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*Executive Headteacher: Mrs Soheila Mathison*  
*Chair of Governing Board: Mr Niel Vlok*

Dear Parents and Carers,

Following the release of the guidance from the Department of Education (DfE) on Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2020, we have been working on our plan for the wider opening of Emerson Valley School from September 2020. I am now in a position to clarify our plans for reopening school to all year groups. I apologise for the length of this letter, however as a school we need to provide you with as much information as we can before the end of the summer term to ensure that school staff, parents and children are prepared to return to school on the first day of the autumn term, which is Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2020. **We expect all children to be in full school uniform when we return for the new academic year.**

In September, we are expecting all children to return to school. We are very much looking forward to seeing our school community back together again, with the addition of our new Year 3 starters. Please help us to make the start to this new academic year run as smoothly as possible by reading our plans fully, sharing them with your child and ensuring that you and them adhere to the new rules in place.

Please find below a summary of our plans.

### The school day

#### Staggered start and end times

In line with the DfE guidance, we have staggered the start and end of the school day to alleviate some of the congestion that we ordinarily experience at these times. We have liaised with Howe Park and Merebrook Infant Schools to make these times manageable for those families with children at more than one school.

Times for drop off are based on your child's **surname** as follows:

<u>Start time for surnames A-L</u>	<u>Finish time for surnames A-L</u>	<u>Start time for surnames M-Z</u>	<u>Finish time for surnames M-Z</u>
8:40am	3:00pm	9:00am	3:20pm

If within your family children have different surnames, please follow the times for one group, e.g. the A-L group.

**We will not be operating the Walking Bus, until further notice.**

#### Morning drop off

Both school gates will be open for children to enter the school. This includes the main gates at the front of the school on Hodder Lane, and the back gate at the top of the school playground on Holton Hill. Staff will be available to greet children in the mornings at these gates. We would like to encourage parents of children in Years 4, 5 and 6 to say goodbye to their children at these gates and allow them to enter the school site on their own at this point. Staff will be waiting to receive the children once they have arrived at their year group. We understand that parents of children in Year 3 may wish to escort the children on site initially, but we encourage you to drop your children at the gate once you are happy that they know the morning routine.

### End of the day collection

Please collect your child promptly at the allocated time, but do not arrive more than 5 minutes before your child's collection time. This will help reduce the number of parents and carers on the school site at any one time. School staff will be present at all entrance and exit points to the school and children in years 5 and 6 are encouraged to meet their parents off the school site at the end of the school day at an agreed place slightly away from the school in order to reduce the number of people walking on and off site at any one time. Parents of our younger children are asked to wait behind the designated line in front of the year 3 and 4 cloakrooms when collecting their child. Please do not congregate in this area once your child has been released; leave the school site as soon as possible.

### Face masks/coverings

As per the Government guidance, the children are able to wear facemasks to school and after school. However, when they enter the school site, they will be expected to take these off and leave them in their bags. We will teach the children how to take these off safely without touching their face.

### Our Bubbles

In line with the change in Department for Education (DfE) guidance, we are now able to operate larger bubbles within school. The guidance tells us specifically that **'Schools should assess their circumstances and if class-sized groups are not compatible with offering a full range of subjects or managing the practical logistics within and around school, they can look to implement year group sized 'bubbles'. Whatever the size of the group, they should be kept apart from other groups where possible and older children should be encouraged to keep their distance within groups'**.

As a school, we have opted to operate YEAR GROUP bubbles. This means that, during the school day, your child will only mix with other children from their year group. Teaching staff, which includes Teachers and Teaching Assistants, will only work in one year group bubble.

### During lessons

For all lessons, your child will work alongside children from their class. They will be taught by their Class Teacher or another member of staff from their year group bubble in their classroom.

### PE

Your child will have outdoor PE only, which is obviously weather permitting. Please find a timetable below of each Year groups' PE days. **On PE days, your child needs to come to school wearing their PE kit.** Please ensure that they bring with them another pair of shoes or trainers so that their footwear can be changed when the lesson has finished if they are muddy.

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Year 4	Year 3	Year 3	Year 6	Year 6
Year 5	Year 5	Year 4		

### Social times

At break and lunchtimes, children will be able to socialise within their designated outdoor area with other children from their class, and also children from the 3 other classes in their year group.

### Lunch

Our school lunches are provided by an external provider. For the first half of the Autumn term, we have asked them not to provide hot meals to our school as this would mean all children accessing the hall for their meals. Lunch can continue to be ordered online, but this will be in the form of a packed lunch. Children can also continue to bring a packed lunch from home. Children will eat their lunch in the classroom, at their desk, and then spend the remainder of the time outside where possible.

### Music lessons

Children will continue to be taught Music in school, but this cannot happen in the music room as it means all children would need to access the same learning space. The DfE guidance states that singing is not allowed and the sharing of equipment needs to be minimised, therefore instruments will not initially be used. Our curriculum will be adjusted to ensure that music continues to be taught, but in a way that is manageable and in line with the guidance.

Any peripatetic music lessons would normally be delivered by external staff. For the autumn term, we will not be in a position to offer individual or small group peripatetic music lessons.



## Before and After School Clubs

### Wrap around care

We are planning to reopen our breakfast and after school club from **Monday 21<sup>st</sup> September 2020**. This is the area of our provision that we need additional time to plan for as it creates additional challenges due to the provision needing to be accessed by children from all year groups. Once we have a formal plan for this, we will communicate this information to parents by the end of the first full week of term

### Additional clubs

We do not have any plans to operate any after school clubs for the autumn term. If safe to do so, we will look to put in place a programme of activities for all year groups from the start of the Spring term 2021.

### Communication

Whilst our school office will be open from 8.00am-3.30pm every day that the school is open, we encourage parents and carers to communicate with school staff via telephone or email where possible (see details on our letter head). If for any reasons you need to drop something into school or collect something, for example medication, please observe social distancing. Parents and carers are only permitted to enter the main school foyer area. At this time, we cannot authorise parents or carers to enter any other areas of the school, including classrooms and cloakrooms, unless authorised by a member of the Senior Leadership Team. This will only be in exceptional circumstances. If you need to pass a message to your child's Class Teacher, please speak to a member of staff at the gate when dropping off or collecting your child, or leave a message with the school office and a telephone appointment can be made.

### If your child is displaying symptoms of Covid-19

If your child displays symptoms of Covid-19, it is important that they must not come in to school and you book them a test. Please inform us if your child won't be at school and then if they have a test the result. If your child displays these symptoms while they are at school, we will ask you to collect them and give you the same advice.

### If there is a positive test for a child or staff member with Covid-19

If any of our children or staff test positive for Covid-19, we will first contact Milton Keynes Council and Public Health England who will prescribe actions for us to take. This may include closing a bubble or in some cases, the wider school for a period of self-isolation. If this is the case, we will keep you informed and will maintain your children's education through Google Classroom. If you don't have access to an internet enabled device, we will still offer the printed packs.

We recognise that at this stage we are very much still in the midst of a global pandemic but feel that we have taken every possible step to mitigate the risks for all children and staff when planning this wider reopening of our school. We will continue with our enhanced cleaning regime and will also continue to promote robust hand and respiratory hygiene amongst our children. Our full risk assessment will be available on the school website before the end of term and is subject to change in line with any changes made by the DfE and the Local Authority.

You can see the Government guidance for parents and carers here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/what-parents-and-carers-need-to-know-about-early-years-providers-schools-and-colleges-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak/what-parents-and-carers-need-to-know-about-early-years-providers-schools-and-colleges-in-the-autumn-term>

