



The Discovery School Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) – PARENTS

8th March 2021 reopening

Please ensure that you read this as it has been updated with new information.

Will The Discovery School be open on the 8th March 2021?

Yes! We will be reopening on the 8th March for all year groups.

Will it be safe for my child to return to school?

The Discovery School will do all it can to ensure our school is as safe as possible for your children. The government advises that the risk of an outbreak of CoVID-19 is very low in schools. The government has announced that schools are safe places and therefore have instructed all parents to send their children back to school.

Wellbeing

My child is feeling anxious about returning to school. How can I help them?

- Talk to your child(ren) prior to coming back to school and explain to them that it will look a little different.
- Talk to your child(ren) about hand washing, sneezing into tissues and coughing into elbows.
- At the end of the school day, talk about their day - they may well need help in understanding why the school feels different.
- Reassure them that the school is doing everything that it can to keep them safe.

Our school website also has links to associations which may help to answer some of your child(ren)'s questions as well as support their wellbeing.

www.discovery.kent.sch.uk/curriculum/social-emotional-and-mental-health-and-wellbeing/

Please also refer to Mrs Pullen's letter which she sent out on the 1st March.

How will the school help my child(ren) settle back into school life?

When your children first return to school, there will be a strong focus on the children's wellbeing. This will help to support their transition back into school life. However, if you are concerned about your child's wellbeing and return to school, then please make contact with the class teacher before Monday 8th March.

I'm feeling anxious about my child returning to school.

Please be reassured that we have tried to minimise as many risks as possible by following the government guidance to ensure that all children are kept safe.

Hygiene and sanitation

How will the children know what to do to keep them safe in school?

The children will be following specific guidelines for hygiene. They will be taught about key themes such as:

- Catch it, bin it, kill it
- Thorough hand washing
- Coughing into elbow creases
- Not touching their faces

How often will the children wash their hands?

The children will be supervised washing their hands and using sanitiser throughout the school day, including on arrival to school, between activities, and before and after lunchtimes and break times.

Will equipment be regularly washed?

Yes. Children will be provided with their own stationery materials so that cross-contamination risks are reduced. Surfaces, chairs and door handles will be cleaned daily. Specific learning equipment, such as PE resources, will be allocated to year groups to use. These will be cleaned regularly after use.

What other things has the school done to ensure good levels of hygiene and cleaning?

Hand sanitising dispensers are located outside of every classroom and in communal areas. Signage is prominently displayed throughout the school and sufficient supplies of cleaning materials have been purchased. We are also paying overtime to our cleaning team to ensure sufficient time is given for thorough cleaning each day.

Social Distancing in School

Will the children be social distancing?

The DfE has recognised that strict social distancing will not always be possible, especially with primary-aged pupils. All schools, in particular primary schools, are encouraged to take a realistic and pragmatic approach in this regard.

How will The Discovery School encourage social distancing?

- Children will be predominantly facing forward in class
- Children in Years 1 – 6 will be kept in separate class bubbles during the school day
- Whenever possible, children in EYFS will be kept in class bubbles, although with very young children this is more challenging due to the curriculum.
- Staggered drop off, pick up and break and lunch times for all children
- Introducing simple class rules which encourage children to not touch each other
- No large gatherings eg. no whole school assemblies

How will the school maintain distancing inside the classrooms?

The Department for Education (DfE) has accepted that pupils will need to be sat close to each other in most classrooms. The government has advised that where possible, children should be forward facing in the classroom to ensure that transmission rates are kept low. The Discovery School plans to stick to this guidance wherever possible.

How will children be grouped?

Children will be grouped in class bubbles, rather than year group bubble as previously used. This is to ensure that children's contact with other children is kept to a minimum and therefore reducing the opportunities for sharing germs. This also means, should there be a case of Covid in one class, then the other classes in the year group will not have to close.

Why are the children not mixing with other groups?

The Government has been clear that children must operate in self-contained 'bubbles' to reduce the risk of transmitting the Coronavirus to each other.

How will parents be encouraged to social distance?

The government has been clear throughout this lockdown that schools were closed not because of transmission within school buildings but because of community transmission. This was due to the numbers of adults congregating together at or near school sites and not social distancing or wearing masks. Therefore it is **imperative** that parents should:

- Not congregate in groups at the school gate or within the school grounds
- Wear a face mask or covering, unless medically exempt, whilst on school grounds
- Socially distance wherever possible, this includes children whilst walking home

The school day

What time will school start in the mornings?

Drop off times and zones have not changed since before Christmas. Please see the attached drop off and pick up times arrangements. Please note that the drop off zone will not be open to cars during these times. When dropping off your children, please do not congregate at the school gates. Please walk your child down to their allotted zone.

What time will school end each day?

Again, these times and zones have not changed. Please see the attached drop off and pick up times arrangements. Departure times will continue to be staggered to ensure that parents do not all arrive at the same time. It is important that parents do not arrive early and that you leave the school site promptly. When collecting your children, please do not congregate at the school gates. Please walk down to collect your child from their allotted zone. This will assist in keeping the wider school community safe.

Where can I park my car considerately?

You are able to park along the roads outside of the school, but please do not obstruct driveways, grass verges and access points. There is additional parking available to parents of The Discovery School in the carpark of the Cricket Pavilion.

Will my child be attending school for the whole week?

The government has made it clear to schools that all children are expected to attend school full time from the 8th March.

Can I come onto the school site with my child?

The government has advised that parents, carers and unnecessary visitors should not come onto the school site and should wait at the school gates. However, we do not feel this is appropriate for our school and this could cause a bottle-neck at the pedestrian gates. Therefore, we will be implementing the following steps to maintain social distancing as far as possible:

Entry to the school site will be clearly sign posted (please see the attached map for this). Parents and carers should walk with their child(ren) in a one-way direction using the clearly marked footpaths. In accordance with government guidance and to minimise crowding, only **one adult per family** will be permitted at drop off and collection time. Parents, carers and non-essential visitors will not be permitted to come past the KS2 or EYFS gates. It is also essential that adults leave the school site promptly and do not congregate at any gates.

Where do I take my child in the mornings?

Please see the attached drop off and pick up times arrangements. There will be adults posted to direct you to the correct zones.

Where do I collect my child from at the end of the day?

Children will be dismissed from school on a staggered basis. An adult will walk with the children to their designated collection spot, where the children can be collected. Please see the attached drop off and pick up times arrangements.

My child in Year 5 or 6 walks home by him/herself. Is this still permitted?

Yes. Children in Years 5 and 6 can walk home, however they must only do this once written consent has been received by the school. If you have already provided consent since September, then you do not need to provide this again.

Can I use the 'drop-off' zone or park on the school site?

No – the school site will be closed to vehicles at drop off and pick up times. This is to enable a wider pedestrian space during drop off and collection time. Parents and children will be safe to walk in the road though the school site, enabling a space big enough for social distancing.

How do I access the disabled parking bays?

If you need to use the disabled parking bays in order to bring your child(ren) to school, please contact the school office if you have not already been allocated a specific time to drop off and pick up your child(ren).

Can my child bring their bike or scooters to school?

Yes. Children must ensure that they push their bikes and scooters onto and off the school site.

Can I come to the school office?

The government has advised that parents, carers and non-essential visitors should not come into the school building. Therefore, we ask you not to do this unless you have an emergency. Wherever possible, please telephone or e-mail the school office instead.

How can I speak to the member of staff responsible for my child?

You should telephone the school office and they will ensure that a message is passed to the relevant member of staff who will then return your call as soon as possible.

Can I speak to my child's teacher when I pick up my child at the end of the day?

Unfortunately, no. This is because the teachers will be supervising the dismissal of all pupils. Parents and children need to exit the school site promptly and before the next scheduled pick up time. This will allow us to ensure that social distancing is maintained throughout pick up times. If you need to speak to your child's teacher, then please telephone the school office and he or she will return your call.

Lunchtimes and break arrangements

Will my child be able to get a hot school dinner?

Yes – the catering company will be providing school dinners as normal.

Will the children mix with other year groups at lunchtimes?

No – the children will have a staggered lunchtime and will have a designated section of the playground to play in with their class bubble. Play equipment will be carefully selected and cleaned to ensure that social distancing and hygiene can be maintained as much as possible.

Will the children mix with other year groups at break times?

No – the children will have a staggered break times and will have a designated section of the playground to play in with their class bubble.

Can the children bring a snack to school to eat at break time?

Yes – a healthy snack can be brought from home. The children also need to bring in a **named** water bottle from home as the water fountains have been taken out of use.

Will my child be able to purchase milk to drink in school?

Yes. If you would like to purchase milk for your child, you need to order it online at www.coolmilk.com

If your child is under five, he or she will automatically receive a free carton of milk, so it is very important that you update us immediately of any allergies that we need to be aware of. If your child is entitled to a Free School Meal (not a Universal Infant Free School Meal), then they will receive a free carton of milk if you request it via the school office office@discovery.kent.sch.uk

Please also remember that your child will still need to bring a water bottle to school each day.

Breakfast and After School Club

Will Breakfast and After School club be running from the 8th March?

Yes – Children who attend will need to social distance and will be allocated to a consistent smaller year group of children. This means that the availability of some activities may be limited.

What will be the operating hours?

- Breakfast Club – 7:30 to your child's school start time (Monday to Friday)
- After School Club – 3:15 to 6:00 (Monday to Friday)

Children should be collected from the After-school Club by ringing the bell at the entrance to the school.

How do I book?

You can book in the usual way using School Gateway. **It is essential that you book at least 48 hours in advance in order for us to organise and deploy staff in a way that is consistent with government guidance.**

My Child's scheduled pick-up time is before 3.15 p.m. but I would like him or her to attend After School Club at 3.15 p.m. – what will my child do until After School Club starts?

Any child who wishes to attend After School Club will be kept in his or her classroom with the class teacher until the end of their school day. Your child will be collected from the classroom by the After School Club staff. Please remember that you must book your child into After School Club at least 48 hours in advance.

What should my child bring to school each day?

Can my child bring a school bag to school?

Yes!

Will my child have homework or a home reading book?

Yes. Your child will continue to be allocated their own book/s to read for the week. All reading scheme books should be returned to school on a Friday. These books will then be stored and cleaned in school for 72 hours. Over the weekend children will be able to access electronic books on either Reading Plus, Big Cat or Bug Club.

Children in KS2 who may be reading a chapter book can be kept until the book is finished. Chapter books will be kept within the class bubble and will be kept aside for 72 hours before being returned to the class book corner. KS2 children will also have access to Bug Club and Reading Plus too.

Should my child bring a pencil case to school?

No. The school will provide each child with a clear plastic wallet containing sterilised equipment and stationery for use in school. This will be individually named and kept on the child's desk.

What about sun-cream?

As we approach the warmer weather, it will be very important that the children have sun-cream applied before coming to school. Children may also bring a named bottle of sun-cream to school which must be kept in their bag. If a further application of sun-cream is required during the school day, then the children will have to do this themselves in order to maintain social distancing. Teachers will oversee application but cannot directly apply it. If your child cannot apply sun-cream independently, then he or she should also bring a light, long-sleeved jacket to school to wear at lunchtimes. If a child has neither, they will be asked to sit outside in some shade within their designated area.

Should my child wear school uniform?

Yes. All children must wear their full school uniform to school, including ties. We feel that wearing their school uniform will help with the transition back into 'normal school'. Uniforms do not need to be cleaned any more often than usual, nor do they need to be cleaned using methods which are different from normal.

Some of my child's uniform no longer fits and I cannot purchase a replacement whilst the shops are closed. What should I do?

Whilst non-essential shops remain closed, we appreciate that it may be difficult to obtain new uniform if your child has outgrown any items. We understand that your children may not be able to wear all of the expected uniform and may need to wear a suitable substitute item, including shoes.

Learning

How will the school help my child to catch up when the school fully reopens to all children?

We will be assessing all of the children when they return to school next week. We will use this information to ensure that teaching is matched to each child's individual needs.

Will there be an opportunity to discuss my child's progress with their teacher?

Yes! There will be a parent consultation in term 5. This may need to be a virtual meeting rather than face to face.

Will my child always have the same adults in the classroom?

The government has advised that teachers can now move between classrooms as long as they are maintaining a 2-metre distance from the children wherever possible. Therefore, if a teacher is absent it will be perfectly acceptable for another member of staff or a supply teacher to cover the class. Supply teachers have been issued with their own guidance from the government and will be expected to follow our safety protective measures.

Will music peripatetic teachers be able to come into school to resume lessons?

Yes. Peripatetic music teachers will be expected to follow strict safety protective measures. Lessons will start from the 15th March.

Will my child have P.E.?

Yes – whenever possible this will take place outside. You will be advised in due course which days your child will have a scheduled PE lesson. Children will need to wear their PE kit to school on their PE days.

Will whole-school assembly take place?

No – it would be impossible to maintain social distancing during assembly. Instead, assemblies will take place virtually.

My child has special educational needs or complex medical needs and I'm not sure if I should send him/her back to school?

Please contact Mrs Alcala or Mrs Pullen and they will be happy to talk through any concerns you may have.

Attendance

Do I have to send my child to school?

Yes. The government has made it clear to schools that all children are expected to attend school from the 8th March.

Can my child return to school part time?

No. Please see above.

Will I be fined for not sending my child to school?

Yes – if you chose to keep your child at home without an authorised reason. Please refer to our Attendance Policy on the school web-site.

Will I be contacted by the school if I don't send my child in?

As normal, when a child is absent without notifying the school by phone or email, then you will receive a telephone call to ascertain why your child is absent.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Should my child wear PPE or a face mask at school?

Unlike secondary schools, the government's advice is that primary aged children should not wear a face-mask in school. Therefore, children will not require any PPE.

Will staff be wearing PPE or face masks?

If a child exhibits any symptoms of CoVID-19, then school staff must wear PPE and the child must be isolated away from other children until he/she can be collected. Additionally, staff may wear a visor or face covering where social distancing cannot be maintained. Other than this, no staff will be wearing PPE except for those undertaking personal care of specific pupils.

Any child with any of the listed of symptoms of CoVID-19 must not attend school.
<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

What if my child becomes unwell at school?

Please see above. Please ensure that your emergency contact details are up-to-date. We must be able to contact someone who can collect your child straight away if they become unwell at school.

What if my child displays symptoms of CoVID-19 at home?

They must self-isolate in accordance with current government guidance.

What if someone in my family displays symptoms of CoVID-19?

Your child must self-isolate in accordance with current government guidance.

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/what-to-do-if-you-or-someone-you-live-with-has-coronavirus-symptoms/>