



The Discovery School Frequently Asked Questions – PARENTS

July 2020

September reopening

Will The Discovery School be open in September 2020?

Yes! We will be reopening in September 2020 from the 3rd September for all year groups. Children starting school in EYFS will be following their own transition arrangements. These will be sent out separately to parents.

Will the school be open in the summer holidays for Key Workers?

No. The government have recognised that all school staff have worked exceptionally hard since 20th March, including during the holidays, so schools will be closed to allow staff to rest and prepare for September.

Where can I find out about holiday provision for my child (ren)?

As well as private providers, the local authorities have been charged with providing holiday provision. More details can be found by following this link:

https://local.kent.gov.uk/kb5/kent/directory/results.action?childcarechannel=4&sortorder=1&sorttype=field&sortfield=review_average&sr=20&nh

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. <https://www.discovery.kent.sch.uk/curriculum/child-wellbeing-and-mental-health/>

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

The school has designed a “reconnecting curriculum” which will have a strong focus on the children’s wellbeing. This will help to support their transition back into school life, re-engage with their learning and reconnect socially and emotionally with their peers.

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. During our reopening in term 6, we successfully brought back over 300 children following similar government advice and have kept everyone 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 breaktimes.

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?

- Lining up in the mornings and dismissal at the end of the day children will be lining up in gaps of 1m+
- Children will be facing forward in class
- Year groups will be kept separate during the school day
- Staggered drop off, pick up and lunch times
- Introducing simple class rules which encourage children to not touch each other

How has the school adapted the school building?

Signage will also be put up inside and outside of the school building demarcating 2 metre spacing.

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 their classes. Each year group will also form a bubble and will be kept separate from other year group bubbles in line with DfE guidance.

Why are the children not mixing with other groups?

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

The school day

What time will school start in the mornings?

This will depend upon your child's designated arrival time. 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.

What time will school end each day?

Again, this will depend upon your child's designated departure time. Please see the attached drop off and pick up times arrangements. Departure times will be staggered in 15-minute intervals from 2.30 p.m. to 3.30 p.m.

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 in September for 5 days a week.

I have children attending school in different year groups. Will they have the same designated arrival and departure time?

Yes. Please see the attached drop off and pick up times arrangements.

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 will line up at a 2m distance from each other. 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. You **must** do this again for the new academic year, even if previous permission has been given.

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, you have been allocated a specific time to drop off and pick up your child(ren).

Can my child bring their bike or scooters to school?

Not for the first few weeks of term. This is because the bike and scooter racks are potential congregation points and may block access, making social distancing more difficult. We will review this on a weekly basis and will write to you when children are able to bring in their bikes and scooters into school.

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 school dinner?

Yes – the catering company will be providing school dinners, although this will initially be limited to a packed lunch only. For those children who receive a free dinner, they will receive a free packed lunch. This includes those children who receive a free school dinner under the Universal Infant Free School Meal Scheme. Children are also welcome to bring a packed lunch from home.

Where will my child eat their school lunch?

All lunches will be eaten in the child's designated classroom. The tables will be thoroughly cleaned prior to lunchtime and before afternoon lessons begin.

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 year group. 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 year group.

Can the children bring a snack to school to eat at breaktime?

Yes – a healthy snack can be brought from home. Unfortunately, the infant free fruit and vegetable scheme is currently suspended and there has been no information about when it will be reinstated. Therefore, we advise that your child brings in a healthy snack (fruit or vegetable based). We will notify you when we have further information. 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?

Not initially. We are hopeful that the school milk scheme will be re-introduced after a few weeks of the school re-opening in September. We will write to you again about this when we have more information.

What should my child bring to school each day?

Can my child bring a school bag to school?

Yes! – The government guidance has changed since term 6 and children are now allowed to bring in school bags, PE bags and fabric lunch boxes.

Will my child have homework or a home reading book?

Yes. Your child will 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. Chairs will also be allocated to each child and named with a label so that the risk of cross contamination is reduced.

What about sun-cream?

It is 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.

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 in September. We will use this information to ensure that teaching is matched to each child's individual needs.

What will my children learn in the first few weeks back?

Initially, we will be focussing on reading, writing, mathematics and science in the first term. We will also be focusing on the children's well-being, with regular opportunities to access physical activities and Personal Social Health Emotional (PSHE) education. All of the children will receive topic based lessons in the afternoon, which will incorporate the wider curriculum.

Will my child be following the previous year's curriculum? E.g. My child is moving into Year 4, but will they be following the Year 3 curriculum in September?

No. The children will be following the curriculum for their new year group. However, where necessary, teachers will be revisiting prior learning for those children who require it.

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

Yes! There will be a parent consultation towards the end of term 1.

Will there be the annual "meet the teacher" at the beginning of September?

Unfortunately, due to social distancing and government protective measures that will still be in place in September, we will not be able to hold these events in school. However, teachers will be providing essential information, via a PowerPoint on the school website. We will let you know when these are available.

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. We do yet know when the exact start date for these lessons. We will update when we are able to.

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.

Will whole-school assembly take place?

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

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 in September for 5 days a week.

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?

The government's advice is that children should not wear a face-mask in school as this could present more risk than wearing one. 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. 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/>

Breakfast and After School Club

Will Breakfast and After School club be running from September?

Yes – Children who attend will need to social distance and will be allocated to a consistent smaller 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.**

Will other school clubs be running e.g. football club

Not for the first few weeks of term. We will write to you again when we are able to start running these again.

Frequently Asked Questions – Update 22nd July 2020

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 3.15 p.m. (regardless of the scheduled pick-up time for children not attending After School Club). At 3.15p.m 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.

My child will be in Edison Class, but the Drop-off and Pick-up Time schedule says he or she should enter school via the KS2 gate – why is this?

Thank you to the parent that pointed this out to us – we agree that the best place for Edison Class to enter school is through the EYFS gate. **Therefore, if your child is in Edison Class from September 2020, he or she should come into school between 8:45 a.m. and 9:00 a.m. via the EYFS gate.**

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

Yes. We have now had it confirmed that Cool Milk will be providing school milk again from September 2020. 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.