



Wellsway Multi Academy Trust

Widening the opening of our primary schools after half term

Initial advice for parents/carers

Frequently Asked Questions

The following FAQs have been put together to advise parents and carers on what to expect and to help them to prepare their child for increased contact with their school after half term.

Will my child be able to go back to school after half term?

The government has asked schools to prepare to re-open for children in specific year groups. These are reception, year 1 and year 6. Schools that have their own nursery are also being asked to re-open. In our trust the only school that this applies to is Cheddar Grove Primary School as it does not apply to privately run nursery schools. Each WMAT primary school is planning to widen its provision for these year groups this but the provision offered will vary depending on the particular circumstances of the school, such as the availability of teaching spaces and staff.

The government is making its final decision on whether to open schools on May 28th, based on the advice of its scientists, so we will not be confirming our plans until this has been received. Following this announcement, we will let you know the details of what we are planning to do at each school. Any wider opening of a WMAT primary school will not happen until 8th June at the earliest.

Will all children in these year groups get a full time place?

Each WMAT school is carrying out a detailed risk assessment and this will determine how they will re-open and how many children they can accommodate at any one time. The circumstances in each school will vary according to their building and staff availability. Each school will accommodate as many children as it can safely whilst maintaining its existing commitments and the safety of everyone in school.

If your child returns to school, he/she will be expected to attend every session being provided for them. If they are unwell you should contact the school and follow the normal procedures in their school. The law relating to school attendance has been temporarily changed so there will be no fines for non-attendance.

What happens if I do not want to take up the school place?

Whilst you are strongly encouraged to send your child back into school, you do not have to accept the place. If you do not accept the place it will be offered to a pupil in another priority year group. If you change your mind then you must contact your school, giving at least one week's notice to allow your child's school to make the changes needed to accommodate extra children if that is possible.



What will happen to the existing provision for key worker and vulnerable children?

The government has asked schools to continue to prioritise this provision, which is so important for our country and the welfare of vulnerable children. We will continue to provide this service, from 9am – 3pm, five days a week. Key worker parents will be given a choice whether to send their child back to school with their year group or to keep them in the key worker provision. Children will not be able to move between these groups.

How will children be kept safe?

The safety of children and staff is our over-riding priority. Schools are following National Guidance produced by the Department for Education and Public Health England. We will operate social distancing (where possible), keep children in small groups throughout the day, increase cleaning schedules and ask children to follow more stringent hygiene routines. We may also stagger the start and finish of the school day to reduce the number of adults arriving and departing at the same time.

Is it possible to manage the youngest children to follow social distancing rules?

The Government accepts this is very difficult. Young children naturally want to play and work together. Initially, and for as long as is necessary, children will only be able to interact with a small group of other children. We will do our best given the space and resources we have available to manage children. Any equipment or toys that cannot be easily cleaned will be removed for example.

Will teachers and staff have to use PPE?

If social distancing can be managed then staff will not generally use PPE. If a child becomes unwell and is displaying symptoms of COVID-19, staff will isolate that child from others and use PPE to protect themselves. In some circumstances, for example when carrying out cleaning duties or looking after a child who needs personal care or has specific additional needs, staff may use PPE.

How can parents/carers support their child and school in preparing for increased contact with their school?

Talk to your child in a positive way about school, seeing friends and teachers again. Social distancing and hygiene will be important so start to encourage your child to wash their hands thoroughly for 20 seconds and support them in maintaining social distance.

Look at ways they could walk or cycle to school, avoiding public transport and because being outdoors is safer. Practice the journey together.

Once you get the detailed instructions from your child's school, in the week beginning 1st June, read through them carefully with them. They will include important instructions such as where they should enter and exit the building to avoid contact with children in different groups.

It will be helpful that you explain they will be in a different group to March and may have a different class teacher. This is because class sizes will be much smaller (10-15 children) and children will spend all their time in the same group with the same adults to minimise contact.

If your child has special needs, staff at school will talk to you directly if necessary to discuss your child's needs.

