

BACK TO SCHOOL

A guide to a smooth and safe transition



DOWNSEND
PRE-PREP SCHOOL
— Epsom —





MESSAGE FROM THE HEADTEACHER

We face the reopening of the school for all children on 1st June with both excitement and trepidation. We cannot wait to see your children again and have planned extensively for both their safe return and that of the staff. The trepidation comes from the wait to fully enact our plans and to get into the routine of the new 'new normal'.

While making our plans we have balanced very carefully the safety and welfare of your child, the educational provision and also their social and emotional needs. The school the children return to will not be the one that they are used to and it is our job to manage their expectations and their feelings around the design of the school day.

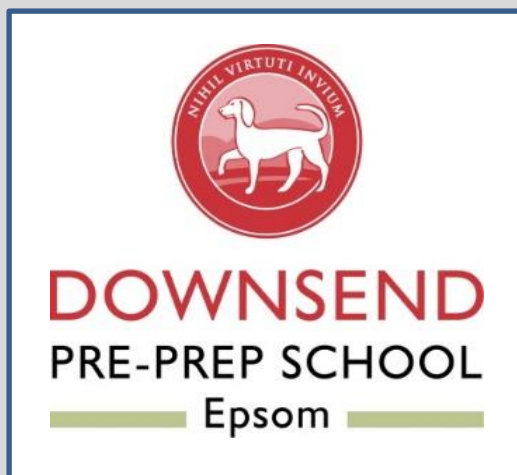
In this brochure, I hope you will find the information you need to understand how the school day will look for your child and the additional measures we are putting in place to keep your child safe and healthy. Of course, until the children are in and the plans are in action, we can't be 100% sure of their effectiveness, but as always, we will review, adapt and rapidly amend as needed to make necessary improvements. Please do contact me with any questions or feedback regarding our plans to help us shape and improve to provide the very best for our children and our staff.

The decision on whether to send your child back or not is a very challenging one for parents. Whatever you decide, we respect your decision. As parents, it is our job to make the best decisions we can for our children, now more than ever. For us, of course our main focus has to be for the children in school, but we will work as hard as we can to remain engaged and connected with any children still at home although this will remain a work in progress until things start to settle and we can see the picture more clearly of how to balance everything. Please bear with us.

In order for us to plan as well as we can for the children we will have in school, it will be vital that we have accurate numbers of those children who will be in school. We will survey you weekly for your confirmation regarding attendance for your child in the following week. This will enable us to change our groupings if needed in plenty of time. Of course, you are able to change your mind at anytime, but as stated later in this document, if you would like your child to attend having previously told us they wouldn't be, we would need at least 48 hours notice of this change. It will be very difficult for us to change groupings and arrangements first thing in the morning if more children than expected arrive in school. Last minute changes not previously planned for, discussed and shared run the risk of compromising the safety for all. We thank you in advance for your prompt reply to our surveys and for your support and understanding in this matter.

Back to where I started and away from the specifics of logistics and planning, we cannot wait to see our children back in school when you feel it is time. I have been working in school over the lockdown period and our buildings feel sad and lonely, empty of chatter and laughter. The half term ahead of us will pose a whole range of new challenges. The half term just gone also posed us with a huge range of challenges and I am incredibly proud of how well the whole school community has adapted, come together and made it such a success. I am in no doubt we will do exactly the same next half term with the same results

Headmistress
Mrs Vanessa Conlan



RE-OPENING APPROACH & TIMELINE

In developing the plan for our return to school we have followed government guidelines, listened to your views through our Parent Survey and built on learnings from other Cognita schools across the world.

We will be welcoming our full school community back as all of our year groups are identified as priority years so welcoming the children back through our doors in a safe, orderly and effective manner will be paramount to the successful and safe reopening.

The schedule for return is set out clearly below, clearly identifying our staggered start and finish times and details of where to drop and collect children from.

When we initially reopen there will be no early birds or extended day care as the arrangements for these do not work within the wider measures we are taking to minimise contact. We will review this regularly to see if it needs to remain the case.

| Years | Date of return | School day | Drop off | Pick up |
|------------------|-----------------------------|-------------|-------------|------------------------------|
| First Steps | Monday 1 st June | 8.30 – 3.05 | 8.30-8.40 | 11.40-11.50 3.05-3.15 |
| Rising Reception | Monday 1 st June | 8.45 – 3.20 | 8.45-8.50 | 11.55 – 12.05 3.20 – 3.30 |
| Reception | Monday 1 st June | 8.55 – 3.35 | 8.55 – 9.05 | 3.35-3.45 |
| Year 1 | Monday 1 st June | 9.10 – 3.50 | 9.10 – 9.15 | 3.50 |

A COMBINED TRANSITION TO TEACHING & LEARNING

As a school we are committed to balancing the needs of both the students in our physical classrooms and also those who are not yet returning to school

To do this we will:

- Provide online resources and support for those children who have actively decided not to return to school for the time being despite being in the 'returning' year groups. Please note though that this will be on a 'best endeavours' basis. Our teachers will now be in school and spread across smaller physical classrooms (micro-classes or bubbles) so their capacity to also provide online teaching will be very limited.
- Provide opportunities within the week for children at home to connect with children and teachers in school through Google Hangouts Meets at scheduled times.
- Try and continue to provide 1:1 reading for children in Reception and Year 1 if they are not in school although if it is possible this will not start until w/b 8th June. We will keep parents updated.



NEW GUIDANCE DURING THE SCHOOL DAY

We will all have to adapt our behaviour during the school day to ensure everyone's safety.

SOCIAL DISTANCING IN THE CLASSROOM

We are following the government advice.

We know young children will not stay apart whilst playing, especially after not seeing each other for such a long time. To mitigate the risk we are following the advice that children are split into 'micro-classes'.

Government guidance stipulates a maximum size of 15 per class. We have set a maximum of 10 in Reception and Year 1 and 8 in First Steps and Rising Reception. This means that children will be assigned a class/space and will stay within it for the whole day, including at lunch and breaks. The teacher will also stay with them.

We are using all the available space and staff we have to achieve this government stipulation so your child may unfortunately not be in their usual classroom or with their usual teacher.

BREAK TIMES

We will zone the play space to avoid groups mixing so that we do not need to limit the amount of time children can spend outside.

MOVING AROUND SCHOOL

We will be operating a one way system to

manage the flow of people around the building.

We have added signage to help everyone maintain social distancing and will remind children of the expectations at the start of every day (more frequently when we first return).

PERSONAL HYGIENE

We will continue to ensure children regularly wash hands just as we did pre-lockdown. We will wash hands before/after movement around the building and between activities.

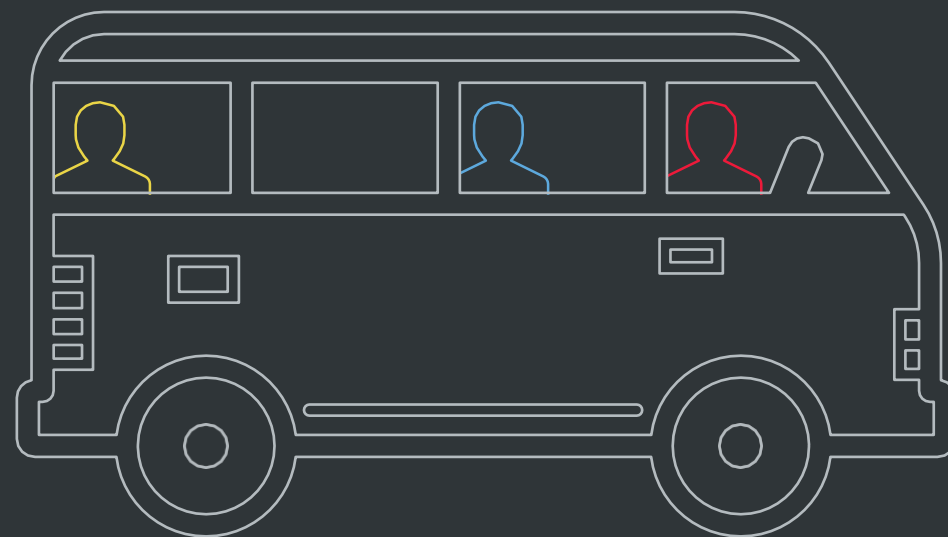
Extra supplies of soap and paper towels have been purchased.

You can help by reminding your children of the need to regularly wash their hands for 20 seconds by singing happy birthday twice.

NOTE - If your child has sensitive skin and our soap adversely affects their skin, personal soap/hand sanitiser may be requested to be provided.



SCHOOL SERVICES



Transport

- As per government advice we urge you to avoid public transport, if possible. If not possible please follow guidelines around face coverings and carry hand sanitiser with you or wear gloves.
- Please follow drop off and pick up times carefully. They are designed to avoid crowding.
- We have introduced the following system to limit social contact during these times:
 - ✓ All parents to drop off and collect from the front doors
 - ✓ Only one parent at drop off and pick up please
 - ✓ Parents to remain socially distanced at drop off and pick up times
 - ✓ Staggered collection times

Catering:

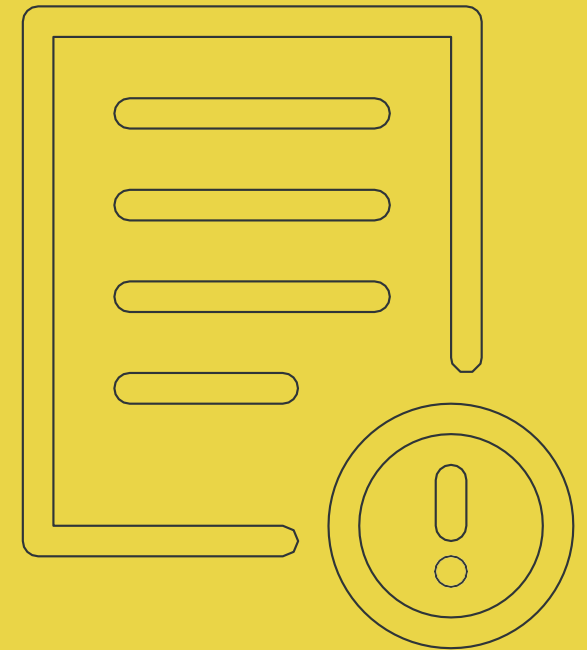
- Unfortunately our catering provider is unable to produce a financial offering we are satisfied with for a hot lunch from 1 June so it leaves us with no alternative but to ask you to provide a packed lunch for your child. If the position changes we will of course inform you.
- Lunch will be consumed in classrooms to maintain the 'bubble'
- Please consider the allergies of other children – we are a nut and sesame seed free school.
- Parents are requested to provide a morning snack and a water bottle in a named container. The water bottle will return home each day. We will be unable to provide a snack for those that forget as food will not be kept on site.

Extra Curricular:

- There will be no before or after school care offered at this time
- There will be no extra curricular clubs or events
- Swimming will not be taking place
- Extra curricular activity is an important part of the educational experience and we hope to return to a normal schedule as soon as government guidance allows
- Specialist teaching will continue, although not all lessons will be face to face to ensure contact between different people is minimised for the children. Most lessons will continue to be delivered through Seesaw into the classroom with the children.

PARENT GUIDE AT A GLANCE

1. Talk to your child about the new measures in this guide
2. Take note of any changes to the timings of the school day for your child
3. Please provide a packed lunch for your child until further notice
4. If you have decided not to send your child back, please confirm this. If you subsequently change your mind, please give us at least 48 hours notice.
5. All children must have their temperature checked before coming to school.



FAQS



WILL THE SCHOOL FEES DISCOUNT BE REMOVED?

No. Although we did communicate previously that once schools re-open we would revert to normal fees we have decided to waive this for the remainder of the summer term. The exceptional circumstances, the economic situation, and the value we place on our relationship with you – our parent community – means we have decided the existing discount continues for this academic year. The fee freeze for next year remains too.

WHAT IS YOUR POLICY ON VISITORS?

Visitors will not be allowed into our school at this time. As parents you are always welcome to contact us and arrange a (socially distanced) face to face meeting.

WHY PENCIL CASES FOR RECEPTION AND YEAR 1 ONLY?

Our older children will be able to manage the use of pencil cases as we would like them to be used – to minimise contact between children. We see this an additional opportunity to minimise risk in these year groups. Due to the age of the children, their use in the younger years will not be fully understood and may make things more of a challenge.

HOW ARE YOU RECORDING ABSENCE OF PUPILS WHEN SCHOOL RE-OPENS?

If you choose not to send your child back to school for the time being, for those in the 'returning' year groups, this will be recorded as an 'Authorised Absence'.

WHAT IF I CHOOSE NOT TO SEND MY CHILD BACK TO SCHOOL?

We understand that some parents and children may be wary about physically returning to school and we respect that decision. We will do our best to deliver a suitable level of online provision for these children. This has to be on a 'best endeavours' basis as we look to balance a lower number of staff across an increased number of classes as a result of limiting the number of students in each class.

WHAT'S YOUR POLICY ON TEMPERTAURE CHECKING?

All children and staff must check their temperature before coming into school. Anyone with a temperature of 38 degrees or above must not come into school. We will check temperatures of any children in school who look hot using a non contact thermometer initially followed up by an in ear thermometer with a disposable cup, which is fully disinfected between uses, to confirm any suspected high temperatures.

WILL READING BOOKS BE COMING HOME?

Reading books will continue to come home but should be returned once fully completed at home (please do not return unfinished books daily). Reading record books will be kept in school rather than travelling between home and school each day but we would still like parents to read at home daily if possible. Please contact your teacher with any questions about reading.

WILL CHILDREN AND STAFF BE EXPECTED TO WEAR FACE COVERINGS ON SITE?

No. This is the government advice: *Wearing a face covering or face mask in schools or other education settings is not recommended.*

Face coverings are primarily worn to prevent the wearer from spreading the virus rather than catching it. Primary age children are likely to be distracted and discomforted by the wearing of such an item and cannot be expected to do so safely.

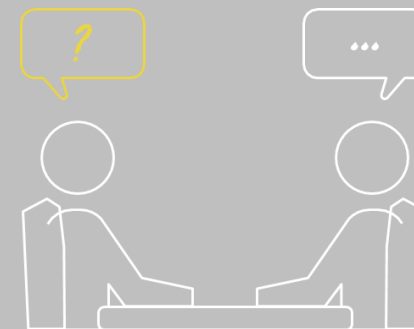
If a children or member of staff wishes to wear a face covering they will be allowed to do so. We request they follow guidance on the safe method of using and when removing it should be placed carefully into a sealed plastic bag.

WHAT WILL YOU DO IF SOMEONE IN SCHOOL DEMONSTRATES SYMPTOMS?

If anyone in school demonstrates symptoms, they will be taken to our isolation room and a parent called to collect them. We would recommend testing for anyone displaying symptoms.

For a confirmed case, the child/adult must self isolate for 7 days and everyone in their household must self isolate for 14 days. We would also need any class members and teachers in a class with a confirmed case to self isolate for 14 days. We would close down the space the class has worked in and deep clean it.

FAQS



WHAT IS YOUR CLEANING REGIME?

We are introducing an increased cleaning regime throughout the school day with a focus on bathrooms and high-touch areas. Our cleaning contractors will be on site and carrying out additional cleaning twice during the school day. All cleaners have been through our rigorous safeguarding checks.

In addition, during the day, teachers will wipe clean surfaces as they are used, i.e. stair rails

Toys and play equipment will be limited to class 'bubbles' so will not be shared between groups. This includes outside equipment which will be limited as necessary, i.e. the sand pit will be out of use. Any equipment used day to day will be cleaned using disinfect spray at the end of the day or rotated over a 72 hour period.

At the end of the day we will also repeat this and pay particular attention to the common areas of the school.

On a Friday evening we will do a weekly enhanced clean of all rooms in the school.

In the instance of a confirmed COVID-19 case we will do a deep clean which will include all surface areas and carpets. In all cases we will use coronavirus approved disinfectants/aerosols, and our cleaners have ordered sufficient stocks.

WILL YOUR CURRICULUM IN SCHOOL BE THE SAME AS USUAL?

Particularly for the first few days back but ongoing also, there will be a very high focus on Personal, Social and Emotional Development supporting the children to understand the recent changes, the current situation and their own thoughts, feelings and understanding.

For the Summer term, to support our teachers, we are going to modify our medium term planning. The educational content will remain the same but we are going to change our topics and themes to enable us to try and balance the delivery of in school learning and providing some asynchronous activities on Seesaw better. The changes are also to support teachers through shared planning and resourcing across Pre-Prep Epsom and Leatherhead in recognition that their day is going to be very different over the half term without the time they would usually have when children are with specialist teachers and during playtimes and breaktimes. In order to minimise contact, the same adult/s need to stay with the children all day.

WILL YOU STILL BE PROVIDING WRAPAROUND CARE?

When we first reopen, there will be no early birds or extended day care as we are unable to maintain our 'bubble' approach at these times, which we know is the best way to keep our children safe in school. As guidance develops and our overall provision is reviewed, we will review this provision also although it is possible there will be no wraparound care for the whole half term.

WILL YOU ADMINISTER SUN CREAM?

We will be unable to administer sun cream in school at this time. Parents should administer an SPF50 sun cream before their child is dropped at school in the morning. This should last all day.

WHAT DO I DO AT DROP OFF AND PICK UP TIMES IF I HAVE MORE THAN ONE CHILD?

Please use the later drop off/pick up time to bring siblings in together, i.e. for a child in Reception and another one in Year 1, please drop off at the Reception time and pick up at the Year 1 time.

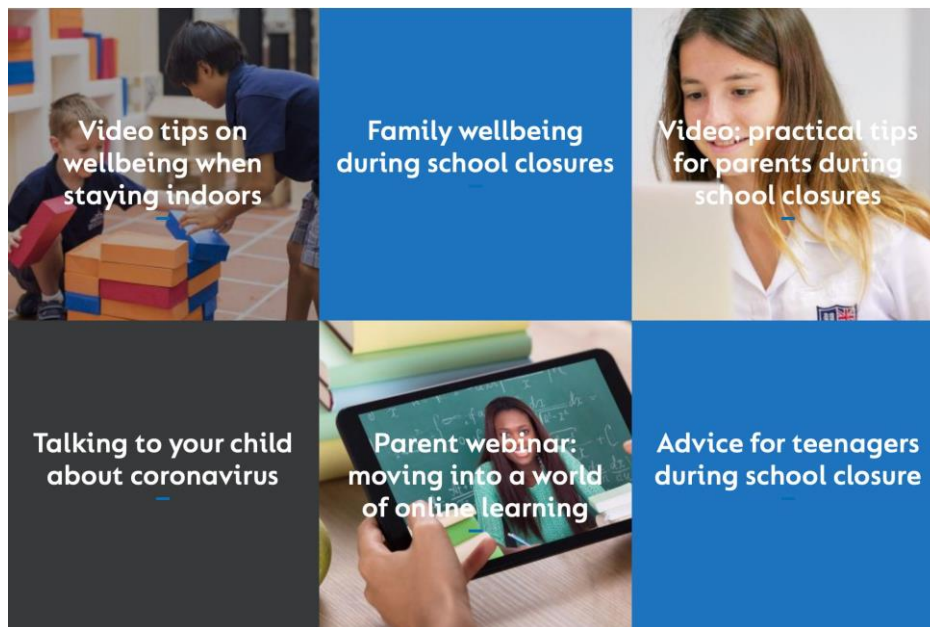
ARE THERE ANY FURTHER PRECAUTIONS YOU ARE TAKING?

- We will be keeping all doors open to minimise contact risk of touching door handles and door plates.
- Windows will be kept open to air classrooms.
- Hand sanitiser stations have been purchased so that there are stations by every door to get in and out of the buildings.
- Classroom furniture will be moved to allow greater space for children to move around and play and to minimise close contact as much as possible.
- Soft toys and dressing up clothes will be removed from classrooms for now.
- Signage will be used in toilets, classrooms and corridors to indicate how many children can be in certain areas and where they can be, i.e. using every other toilet/sink, where children can sit at tables, marking for social distancing when lining up etc

WELLBEING

The transition back to school will still be a challenge for all of us trying to adjust to a new way of 'being', coping with fear of the unknown and in some cases balancing a mix of online and face to face learning. The wellbeing of our children, parents and teaching staff is our highest priority and we are lucky to be part of Cognita who have been able to provide lots of resources to support our school communities since the start of the lockdown.

This includes live webinars with our education experts, podcasts, and a series of videos and resources on wellbeing in these strange times for both children and parents. Members of our parent community have even shared how they have coped with lockdown. This evolving set of content can all be found at www.cognita.com



POSITIVE FEEDBACK

It was great to hear some of your feedback about how the school responded during lockdown. **Here are a few of the comments that make us feel proud.**

"The work that both have completed has been marked so quickly and it's great to read, listen and view the feedback from their teachers. This is really impressive and is helping the boys in how constructive it is and how it can stretch them if they choose to."

"We just want to say how brilliant the online teaching has been. has really enjoyed seeing her teacher and all her friends!"

"What a wonderful job you are doing. All of the comments are so positive."

"I think Seesaw is amazing. I feel my children are thriving using this system."

"I have been impressed with the smooth running of both the set up each day and also the speed of feedback, especially in Reception as the children know that comments and voice recordings are coming in from the teachers that they love."