

# PILGRIMS SCHOOL

# NEWS UPDATE

23 May 2020



## Dear parents

Preparations continue for the potential wider opening of the school. Thank you for responding so quickly to our recent communication asking you to confirm your child's attendance at school, should our planned phased-return be possible from Monday 1 June. As you can appreciate, it is important that we have an accurate picture of how many children are returning to school as numbers within each year group have had to be limited. Therefore, parents will receive formal confirmation of their child's place prior to returning to school. This restriction on class/room sizes has been imposed by Government guidance, Health & Safety requirements and our Covid-19 Risk Assessment.

With particular reference to our Covid-19 Risk Assessment, this was presented to the school's Health & Safety Committee for scrutiny and discussion on Wednesday last week. An Action Plan, based on the outcomes and recommendations from this meeting, was then put in place. An 'extraordinary' School Committee meeting was held on Friday morning to further analyse and approve the recommendations from the Health & Safety Committee. The resulting Covid-19 Risk Assessment now needs to be ratified by The Harpur Trust Board of Trustees and a meeting is scheduled to take place early next week, ahead of the expected Government announcement on Thursday 28 May.

As soon as the school receives confirmation from both the Government and The Board of Trustees, we will be able to formally confirm the outcome with parents as to whether the school will reopen or not. We expect to be able to communicate this on Friday 29 May, prior to the first stage of our phased return on Monday 1 June. I am sure you will understand the need for this full and thorough ratification process in order to ensure the safe running of the school.

So that we are fully prepared, should the outcome be to open the school (as we hope it is) and due to the limited period of time we have available, we feel it is important for us to move ahead with finalising and communicating our plans with parents. Therefore, during the half-term break next week we will continue to prepare for the school's phased-return. This will include staff training, the reorganisation of classrooms, setting up of extended areas and outdoor classrooms on the field, sorting and allocation of resources/toys, markings to support the safe 'flow' around school and additional signage/markings to assist parents when dropping-off/picking-up.

I would like to reassure parents that our plans do not include the use of 'hazard tape' anywhere in school – so please do not be concerned that Pilgrims will look like an 'accident scene'. We have some very creative plans in place to ensure the school continues to look like, and feel like Pilgrims, especially for the children and staff who are returning. And to support the children's transition back to school, we will be creating some short videos to show you exactly what we mean. These videos should help you to visualise the drop-off/pick-up routes, as well as see the set-up of your child's class/room environment and how it may have changed. These videos will be produced and scheduled for distribution, dependent upon your child's phased-return date; we will begin with Reception and Year 1 parents, then Pre School, then Little Pilgrims and hopefully followed shortly afterwards by Year 2 parents.

For those children who are not coming back to school, in whichever year group, the Home Learning provision will continue and will be planned in line with that delivered in school. Main school children at home will also continue to 'see' their teacher during 'Teacher Time', although this may be timetabled in a slightly different way as currently. Story time and activity videos will be shared for those children in Little Pilgrims and Pre School via their closed Facebook groups. More details will be communicated to parents, prior to any changes taking place.

During the summer half-term break, the school will continue to be open for our Key Worker families from Little Pilgrims, Pre School and main school. It is important for Key Worker families to be aware that provision will continue for their child throughout the 'phased-return' period, if needed, up until the date their child's year group returns. At this point their child will join their new 'bubble' and their Key Worker provision will cease. If you are an identified Key Worker family and have not, as yet, used the provision but require it at some point in the near future, please contact the main school office ([enquiries@pilgrims-school.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@pilgrims-school.org.uk)) with more details so they can include your child on the register.

As we look, in general terms, at the wider reopening of the school, the children's transition will play an increasingly important part. Therefore, as we get close to welcoming the first of our 'phased-return' children to Pilgrims, can I ask parents to consider carefully how they communicate this to their children, particularly as we have yet to receive official approval. The last thing we would want to do is to disappoint anyone if, for whatever reason, our planned phased-return does not happen. Please be reassured that, at whatever stage/time your child comes back to school, whether it's during the summer term, or not until the autumn term, we will plan this very carefully.

I hope you are able to enjoy the rest of the Bank Holiday weekend and please look out for further News Updates next week.

Mrs J Webster  
Headteacher

### MESSAGES FROM OUR YEAR GROUP LEADERS ...

Well it has been quite a half term! We continue to be extremely impressed with everything the children are doing at home, from the youngest in Little Pilgrims, all the way through to Year 2. Their ingenuity, creativity and resilience in coping with a different type of learning has been inspiring. Thank you to the grown-ups too, for all your input, feedback and support over the last few weeks. We are now planning for the new half-term, whether your child is returning to Pilgrims or remaining at home. In the meantime, we wish you all a happy half term break and are keeping our fingers crossed for some lovely weather so the children can enjoy their outside spaces.

#### Specific Messages:

**Year 1:** For the children who have completed a stage on Numbots you are now able to print your own end of stage certificates. These can be accessed via the badges area on the app. Well done and keep practising!

**Year 2:** As you are aware, the children's Home Learning will continue after half term. This will continue in the same format but the phonics planning will be changing slightly. Part of the Year 2 curriculum is to consolidate alphabetical order and extend the children's understanding of suffixes and we will be working on these skills. Therefore, on a Monday and Tuesday the children will have a generic phonics lesson, spellings will continue to be differentiated so on a Wednesday and Thursday your child will need to click on the link for their spelling group. After they have completed their spelling test on a Wednesday there will also be a generic task for all the children to complete.

## E-Safety

As part of our ongoing review as to how we keep the children safe online we have disabled the chat facility for the children within Microsoft Teams. If you need to contact your class teacher please use their usual school e-mail address or telephone the school directly.

## Mrs Morales' Wellbeing Blog

Given that it's Mental Health Awareness Week with a focus on kindness, I thought I would take this opportunity to talk about the importance of wellness and kindness.



There are clear links between compassion and kindness and the benefits to our wellbeing and happiness. Kindness can also help reduce stress and improve our emotional wellbeing. 'It is better to give than receive' may be a cliché, however I think you will agree that this resonates with many of us. I feel an immense sense of happiness in providing my friends and family with not only material gifts but the gifts of quality time and acts of kindness.

Studies have found that acts of kindness are linked to increased feelings of wellbeing. Helping others can also improve our support networks and encourage us to be more active. This in turn, can improve our self-esteem. There is some evidence to suggest that when we help others, it can promote changes in the brain that are linked with happiness. There is also some evidence that being aware of personal acts of kindness, as well as the things we are grateful for, can increase feelings of happiness, optimism and satisfaction. [Mental Health Foundation](#)

As a global society we are collectively navigating these uncertain times and we consistently hear how important it is to stay at home. Although you may not realise it, this alone is a quiet act of kindness and shows great levels of compassion to our most vulnerable. There are many ways to show kindness as we battle this Covid-19 pandemic; volunteering, reaching out to loved ones, donating and keeping our vulnerable safe. On the topic of both mental health and kindness it seems appropriate to discuss a practice that directly impacts these two topics, meditation.

There is a common misconception that meditation will only benefit oneself. It can however, have a positive impact on the people around us. To put it simply, meditation is proven to make us more grounded, positive and happier individuals. As a result, this enables us to become more aware, considerate and kinder to those around us. This ripple effect impacts our loved ones as well as the wider community. More so than ever, we need the world to become a happier and calmer place. The importance of teaching children kindness and wellness is every bit as valuable as any other subject we may teach in school. There is an assumption that kindness will just evolve within us but that is not always the case. We should be talking about our minds in the same way as our bodies.

"The more we practise being kind, both to ourselves and to others the more ripples of kindness we send out into the world". (Headspace)

The Headspace App offers a wide selection of short meditation sessions for children covering many themes of which include kindness. See the website for further details.

<https://www.headspace.com/meditation/kids>

#bekind

**Jacqueline Morales, Pastoral and SEND Coordinator**

**Instructions on how to join one of our Closed Facebook Groups**

Once in Facebook, search for Pilgrims Pre Preparatory School Bedford and click +Join. You will then be asked a security question before approved to join. Once you are a member of the whole school page, you can then search the other individual groups as below.

Little Pilgrims

Pilgrims Pre School

Pilgrims Pre Prep Reception

Pilgrims Pre Prep Year 1

Pilgrims Pre Prep Year 2

You will then have to wait for final approval from us, before you can access/view/comment/post on the page(s).