



South Gloucestershire Council
Longwell Green Primary School
 Ellacombe Road, Longwell Green, Bristol, BS30 9BA
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 Tel: 01454 866460

Headteacher: Mr D Brown

.....putting Every Child Matters into Action

4th September 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

Staggered starts and finishes and a solution!

Thank you for putting up with and supporting the staggered start and finish. I know on the first day or two it was a bit odd, but as people got more slick at it, people were arriving just before the time they need to be there, which means things moved more quickly. With the best planning in the world, we are always going to need to revise, and we have done this with all of our Covid actions as we have learned and developed.

A separate point - please again; avoid blocking the pavements and car park as this makes it difficult for buggies and those with multiple small children, thank you.

Why we are doing it this way?

We can't have 420 children all coming through our single main gates at the same time. We also can't have that number of parents coming through those gates at the same time.

We have to stagger this in some way.

Whichever way we do stagger will be helpful for some and not for others.

By staggering, we are aware that we are asking people to wait, which is not ideal, but for the reasons above, we need to.

Can't we use more doors?

In reality, we really only have 2 useful entrances to get children from the road onto the school grounds; the main gates and the ramp into the hall. Imagine there is an invisible boundary running along the front of the school from the car park, past the office window to the green gates. We need to get every child through this point, while keeping bubbles socially distanced. We can't have everyone arriving at once.

We can't use the main office doors as well because this means groups are either crossing in the hall or the corridor, there is nowhere for them to go once they go through the door (in lockdown, there were fewer children so we could time this not to happen but we can't now due to numbers).

So we have to get 420 pupils through two entrances while keeping them socially distanced in their bubbles. We know some schools have multiple entrances, which makes life easier for them; it is frustrating we do not, but we have to work with what we have!

Presently, the **maximum time between the two ends of the drop off** (if you have 2x children with one at the earliest and then then latest drop off) is 30 minutes - 8.45 to 9.15 and 3.05 to 3.35. We would like to make this shorter.

Improvements

Now we have had 4 days of getting everyone used to coming back into school, we would like to reduce this to 15 minutes between the start and end drop off time.

There are issues with this model. If everyone arrives within a smaller time window, there could be more people around at the same time, which could increase the lack of social distancing and increase crowds, however it reduces wait time and moves people through more quickly. You can help with this by socially distancing, arriving on time and leaving promptly.





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To make this model work:

- 1/ We rely on everyone arriving on time (not early or late) and going straight in. Currently many people are doing this, but not everyone.
- 2/ We think this will give people enough time to take one child to one entrance and one to another if that is what they need.
- 3/ Most of all we need to make sure that bubbles do not cross – see below.

What about other options?

We have listened to all feedback, and much of it has been positive (thank you) and others have suggested alternative models to help (thank you again). In planning what we are currently doing, we did explore as many options as we could.

For example:

- 1/ We tried really hard to **match siblings' times slots** up, but the combinations across the school were too vast and would be too many bubbles moving through and using shared spaces at the same time.
- 2/ We explored **surnames drop off** at the same time, but this means within a single class your child would have to wait up to 30 minutes from the first child to arrive and the last (surname A to surname Z). A lesson can't start until the class are there (that is not fair on the last children) and so your child would lose valuable learning time at the start AND end of the day in the most vital time to accelerate learning to make up for lost Covid time. This surname model also means we would have children from multiple or even every bubble (class) in the corridor at the same time if they share surname initial letters; this is the most likely model to cross contaminate between multiple bubbles. If we had a single Covid case with this scenario, there is a potential that many class bubbles would have encountered the infection - then we potentially would have to close multiple classes rather than one, which would be terrible for the community and we are trying to avoid this!
- 3/ We explored using **external drop off using the playground doors**, with families coming through the main gates and rotating around the Reception to leave through the car park. Unfortunately, we do not have external doors for all classrooms, which is an issue. To get people in using this method would mean classes passing in the corridor and using the same shared spaces for prolonged periods of time.

If we follow the playground door model, classes who don't have external classroom doors to come in from the playground would end up mixing the bubbles of children. We would have a combination of the class who do not have a classroom external door as well as those who came into the classroom all putting their coats on their pegs and using the toilets etc. at the same time which would lead to cross-contamination.

Even more challenging for distancing is everyone needing to come through the main gates (all 420 children and families) either at the same time (so no social distancing) or staggered (then you'll still have people waiting).

After this, all adults on site would need to funnel through the most tight access point of our school to get out; beside the Reception classes.

Having 420 children all coming through one gate is an issue, but more seriously than that is having the entire school community walk past Reception classrooms as throws up safeguarding issues for the youngest children, as you can understand.





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Why are we staggering?

We need the pupils to arrive and be in their classroom before others come past or use the same space (toilets, shared cloakrooms, corridors etc.) Children are new to their classes, so they are spending a little longer in the corridors getting used to their peg, where the toilets are etc. and we really need the corridors clear before we have the next group in.

Reduced waiting time – hopefully reduced crowds

From Wednesday 9th September, we are going to trial a more speedy drop off and pick up system. We will share the fine details of this on Monday, but in summary all classes will arrive between 8.45 and 9.00 and leave between 3.05 and 3.20. Your time slots will adjust slightly as we have proven as the week has progressed that this is now possible – thank you all for being prompt to enable this.

How can you help?

- 1/ Arrive on time, not early or late.
- 2/ Leave promptly after dropping off your children.
- 3/ Maintain social distancing while you wait, using other areas outside of school.

The biggest concern from parents has been the lack of social distancing from adults and you can help to make this better.

Thank you to everyone who is doing so already.

Thank you for supporting everything as much as you are. I know it is annoying, it is for us too as we just want everyone back in and things back to normal as I am sure you do. However, we need to keep your children safe, limit any potential spread if we have a case and reduce the need for a wide reaching school closure if there is a case. The only way to do this is to keep bubbles apart within school grounds, which in the long run is for your child and your family's safety (as well as ours).

Thank you for your understanding, your support and help in this matter, as well as everything that we as a school and community are working through to make the new normal work.

Once again, it has been a great week for the pupils; they have all been safe, worked hard, had fun and learned a lot already. This is what it is all about and we are very proud of each child.

Kind regards,

Mr D Brown.
 Headteacher

