



OXFORD DIOCESAN  
BOARD OF EDUCATION

# NORTH LEIGH C E PRIMARY SCHOOL



## HEADTEACHER

Deborah Seccull BA Hons PGCE NPQH

Park Road  
North Leigh  
WITNEY

Oxon OX29 6SS

Tel: 01993 881525/01993 886828

e-mail: [office.3128@north-leigh.oxon.sch.uk](mailto:office.3128@north-leigh.oxon.sch.uk)

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Dear Parents and Carers

### Planning for phased reopening of school from 1 June

As you will be aware, the Government has asked schools to plan for a phased reopening of schools from 1 June (at the earliest), prioritizing children of critical workers and those in Reception, Year 1 and Year 6. I am now writing to you to explain North Leigh's cautious and measured response to this.

Governors and staff at North Leigh are committed to extending current provision in line with Government proposals but need to balance our desire to see more children attending school against the risks that this entails and what we must do to mitigate them. As such we have undertaken a thorough and detailed risk assessment, as well as discussing and reflecting on:

- Our desire to work in the best interests of the wellbeing and safety of ALL our children and families (including those who are not prioritized for return) and our staff
- Planning and Guidance provided by the DfE - with particular reference to:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preparing-for-the-wider-opening-of-schools-from-1-june/planning-guide-for-primary-schools>
- Our school buildings, facilities and the physical layout of our site
- The number of staff available to work.

Based on these deliberations and following extensive consultation with ODST, we have concluded that though it will not be possible to open the school in exactly the way that Government has proposed, we will be able to offer part time provision for children in Holly, Maple and Ash classes as well as maintaining the provision currently on offer to children of critical workers.

This will involve each year group being split into two separate 'bubbles' each containing no more than 15 children and each taught by staff who will only work with those children.

Each 'bubble' will attend school for two days a week, either Monday and Tuesday or Thursday and Friday.

In line with Government guidance, there will be no wrap-around provision (breakfast or after school club) available for these children as we would not be able to keep the children attending in the same 'bubbles' they are in during the day.



Our Values: Respect Honesty Perseverance Creativity Community



Closure of school on Wednesdays to all but children of critical workers will allow: deep cleaning of accommodation between attendance of opposite 'bubbles'; maintenance of effective home learning provision for children still at home (including feedback and enhancements to writing provision); contact time between class teachers and their original cohorts; leadership time for the support of vulnerable children and their families and time for effective communication between staff.

We believe that this strategy offers the following benefits:

- Children are able to come back to their own classroom environments with adults they are more familiar with (though this will not be their class teacher in every case)
- Class teachers are better able to plan for their own cohort to ensure that all children in each class receive the same curriculum
- We are able to ensure effective distancing (ie no possible cross contamination between bubbles) and greater opportunities to deep clean areas of school
- We have more time to devote to contacting and supporting those children still not in attendance
- We have more time to devote to enhancing the home learning offer to ensure children still at home are able to access quality resources and feedback and support from their own teacher.

The alternative option considered was to prioritize opening full time to younger year groups at the expense of Year 6 who we then could not accommodate at all. As well as removing many of the above advantages this strategy also posed the following concerns:

- Social distancing between bubbles would be more difficult as there are more pressures on toilet and handwashing facilities and greater likelihoods that bubbles will 'meet' when moving around school
- Classroom accommodation and toilet facilities for Year 1 would not be age appropriate
- We would not be supporting Year 6 in their transition to secondary school, nor meeting their social emotional and mental health needs with regards to leaving primary school
- Staff, who of necessity, are teaching unfamiliar year groups would have limited support from those who are experienced to devise, share and support planning with them
- The current home learning offer would be impacted negatively for the five classes who were not able to attend.

In being transparent about these deliberations, I hope that you can see that we have seriously considered all options open to us and very much tried to ensure a balance between Government expectations of provision and what we can offer, whilst mitigating, as far as is possible, the risks to reopening. We appreciate that some of you will be disappointed that your children cannot yet return to classes full time.

Even with this plan, which has been agreed by ODST Trustees, there will still need to be many changes to routines in order to implement protective measures in school, though we do believe that this model provides the best opportunity for children to still enjoy their school experience when they return, even though it may 'feel different'. We will, of course also continue to monitor provision, and consider further guidance and proposals from central Government over the coming days and weeks.

We will be writing to parents of children in Holly, Maple and Ash classes tomorrow to outline in much greater detail the arrangements that are being made in school in order to enable children to return and hope to follow this with opportunities for parents to attend 'virtual' forum meetings so we can address specific concerns and

give further clarification. We hope in this way that you can then make a fully informed decision about sending your child back into school.

Provision for critical workers will continue as currently - though these children will, of necessity, have to remain within a 'critical worker bubble' and cannot switch into class bubbles for part of the week. Limitations in space and staffing will also mean that we can only offer this provision on days when parents are at work and cannot keep their children at home or make alternative, safe childcare arrangements. Should demand for provision for children of critical workers increase, we will seek to find additional staffing but this may take some time and I would ask that you are patient in this regard.

We appreciate that this will be an anxious and unsettling time for many of you and others will be frustrated that their children are still not able to come to school and our aim, as always, is to try and support all our families. However, we also recognize that we will not be able to meet all your needs and ask for your patience at those times when we do not have an immediate answer to your enquiries or a solution to your problems.

Given the ODST directive that schools have INSET days on 1 and 2 June, we plan to welcome children back from Thursday 4 June. Key worker provision will continue throughout half-term and on INSET days and be open on 3 June.

We would also like to take this opportunity to thank those of you who have taken the time this week to let us know you have been thinking of us at this challenging time.

Yours faithfully

**Deborah Seccull**  
Headteacher

**Sophie Warner**  
Chair of Governors