



# Ballaugh Primary School



**Headteacher**  
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Dear Parents

I truly hope that this update finds you all well and in good spirits.

Please excuse the length of this document but it is important that I share as much information with you as possible so that if your children qualify to return to school because of your employment group then you can make an informed decision, weighing up the risks (to their safety) versus the benefits.

You may have heard from the Chief Minister yesterday that ...

*“from Wednesday 17th June all those children currently taught in the hubs will be able to return to their normal school.”*

To provide you with clarity, I can confirm that for Ballaugh School, this will be the children that qualify to attend a hub school even though their family have found an alternative to placing them in a hub school.

The Chief Minister went on to say

*“We know that not every family is ready to send their children back to school. We have therefore decided that attendance will be on a voluntary basis until the new school year in September.”*

So, if you feel that the risks to your child’s safety do not outweigh the benefits you can keep your child at home with impunity. The advice is still that home is currently the safest place at the moment.

## Who can send their child in?

Families where the parents work in one of the following sectors;

Key workers (check here <https://covid19.gov.im/businesses/key-workers/>) construction workers, horticultural workers and trades people such as electricians and plumbers.

AND who cannot keep their child(ren) safe at home or with family member (guidance here <https://covid19.gov.im/general-information/childcare/>)

You may have heard from other sources that Years 2 and 6 will be returning also. This is not currently the case *“The exact process by which we reintroduce pupils back into school is still being worked on. It will be in a phased way. The Department will be working with parents and teachers to organise this.”* (Chief Minister 21/5/20)

The road-map for the introduction of other year groups is currently...

Key Workers	Key Year Groups
Trade / Horticulture / Construction	
	Years 2 and 6 (TBC)
Retail (TBC)	
	Year R (TBC)
Hospitality (1) (TBC)	
	Years 1 and 4 (TBC)

Lifestyle, Tourism and Hospitality (2) (TBC)	
	Years 3 and 5 (TBC)

I want to assure you that the phased re-opening of the school will be based on satisfying stringent criteria and following the best clinical, government and Health and Safety advice available.

I appreciate that there are several factors that will help you to weigh up the risks versus the benefits before making an informed decision (e.g. this is still several weeks away and the situation can change; the school still has to share with you the risk assessments which will be reviewed by the HSE during TT week; you don't know how the school will operate). To help you I have copied in below as much relevant information as I can at the moment. Further details will be shared as soon as they are clear.

### **What are we doing to get ready?**

We are working with members from all relevant agencies to maximise safety for the children and staff for when they do get to return.

We have received much useful information directly from Dr Ewart, the Director of Public Health, as well as the Health and Safety officers.

Before opening, our school will be inspected by members of the Governments Health and Safety Team and once they have signed off our risk assessments and plans I will share all of this paper work. In the meantime I will outline our plans.

These plans have been informed by the science, success and "best practice" of other nations (New Zealand, Denmark and Germany) as well as the routines and protocols that have worked very successfully in local hub schools.

It is important to note that when we reopen it will not be the usual school experience that both you and your child(ren) have come to expect. There will be significant changes.

When your child returns they will be placed into a class 'bubble' which will consist of an adult and up to approximately 10 children. These 'bubbles' will remain until we are told by the Government that social distancing is no longer required. Each bubble will have its own entrance to school, its own room within school, will have playtimes and lunch times as a 'bubble' and will not interact with children from other 'bubbles'. All of this is aimed to keep your child safe and reduce the risk of infection from one family to another.

Children will not be allowed to bring anything to or from school other than their lunch, a coat and a water bottle.

To give you a flavour of how we will have to operate I have listed some of the changes.

- Physical distancing will be imperative until we are told we can relax this measure.
- Children will make their way to the classroom immediately they arrive on site between 0845 and 0855.
- Parents may only come on to the school grounds, while modelling physical distancing, to "deliver" their child and they must not enter the building.
- All information for the school office must be shared by phone or email.
- Classrooms will have children sat at desks 2 meters apart.
- Children must wash their hands frequently, immediately on entering the building or when having touched communal objects such as taps. We have been told by Public Health that the single most important step we can take is to ensure a very high level of hygiene.
- Each child will be given their own set of equipment (pencils, ruler, rubber etc), which must not be shared.

- Children will not have the freedom of movement, both in the class and around school, that they are accustomed to.
- There will be one-way systems in operation around and in the school.
- Areas of the school will be out of bounds.
- There will be unisex, one-at-a-time toilets for each classroom.
- Initially, dinners will only be in the form of packed lunches brought in from home and eaten in the classroom.
- Communal playtime toys will not be available due to transmission concerns and physical distancing requirements. We are sourcing enough solo-use skipping ropes and small balls to facilitate one for each child to be kept with them.
- Children must come to school in fresh / clean clothes each day.

### **What will they be doing in lessons?**

Our main focus will be the pastoral care of the children and I am confident that the staff will do as much as they can to support the children's wellbeing. In short, our "normal" provision is not yet possible. It is likely that we will have a curriculum that continues to reflect the current online offer which we will keep reviewing and improving. We are conscious that a great deal of time and effort is being invested by many parents at home and we do not wish to create any further differences between the learning choices that are available both in the home and in the school.

In order for us to plan any further it is critical that we understand how many children may be returning and how many are likely to stay at home. Whilst we understand that not everybody will have made their mind up, and many may change their mind over the next three weeks it would really help us if we have indication of many children may return to school.

I will send out a link to a survey early next week after you have had time to digest and ponder all of this information.

Your child will benefit from the recent relaxation of social distancing measures to become accustomed to being near, but distanced, from other children prior to returning to school.

More information here

<https://covid19.gov.im/general-information/public-gatherings-and-events/>

Finally, I'm obliged to be clear that due to the need to follow physical distancing there is a maximum number of children that we can have in school. If we exceed this number then we will need to look again at our plans and this may include the need for children to only attend in shifts, on alternate days, or for only part of each day.

When our plans are finalised I will write again with more information but rest assured that we do look forward to seeing you and your children when it is the right time.

Take care,  
Graeme



**Courage Compassion Kindness Honesty Respect**

Dr G Cushnie  
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Ballaugh School