



Abel Smith School

Parent Information Evening

Autumn Term School Opening Arrangements

1

What are the plans to bring the school back up to a full complement of staff?
It sounds as though not every class has a dedicated TA? Please can you update us on plans to cover the roles on a temporary basis - would the school ask whether there are parents who could help?

- With the exception of one position in EYFS the school has a full complement of staff.
- Every class will have a teaching assistant at different times of the day depending on the needs of the class and the timetable.
- Whilst it is desirable to have a teaching assistant in every class, the school is unfortunately not in a position to do this any longer due to budgetary constraints.
- Parents will not be asked to help in school in the current climate.

2

Can you send strict and clear guidance for parents to isolate, if their child has covid-19 symptoms?

- School will send a letter to parents about the government guidelines that are freely available in the public domain.
- We will also detail what will happen in the event of a confirmed case.
- Remember: In many cases we can only act if we are kept informed. Please keep the school informed of absences including reasons. If your child or anyone within your household has any of the Covid-19 symptoms you must arrange a test immediately and self-isolate until the test result is received.
- We are not medical professionals. We will contact the parents and ask them to collect their child from school as soon as possible. We have a duty of care to everyone in school – staff and children. Guidance is being reviewed and updated all the time but we will endeavour to keep you up to date when things change.
- Whilst we wait for you to collect your child we will isolate the child with an appropriate adult who will be wearing PPE.

3

Can you please tell me more about the 'Flexible Start', how it works and the school's expectations? Can the Dell please be informed of the revised start times for appropriate classes.

- Flexible starts have been around for a number of years. This is not new.
- Flexible starts have a number of benefits:
 - It provides those parents that need to drop their children off earlier, a chance to do so.
 - It gives children a chance to finish work or respond to teachers marking or comments.
 - Allows a teacher to provide a period of time for selected groups of children to have focused conversations.
 - In this current period of time providing flexibility on arrival times, leaves parents to make their own choices about a sensible arrival time at school.
 - The Dell have been informed about these start times and we continue to liaise with them.

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Will extracurricular activities e.g. boxing/circuits, tennis, football, choir etc. be running from September?

- At this moment in time, after school clubs in their traditional format will not take place.
- Traditionally, these clubs run based on the number of children attending and are made up of children from every class in the school. We have organised our teaching in classes and phased bubbles which minimises contact.
- We will be organising after school sports clubs based in phases for KS2 in the Autumn term. These sessions will be free of charge and are open to all in KS2. Further details will be sent out.

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Concerns about the changes to start and finish times

- The government states that school's should meet for at least 190 days during any school year. The school continues to fulfill the 190 days with these new start and finish times.
- KS2 Children Pre Covid-19 – Received 26 hrs 40 minutes per week at school.
- The new school day will deliver 26 hrs and 30 minutes with a soft start or 25 hrs and 15 minutes with the new official start time. This is 1 hour and 5 minutes less than the time Pre-Covid-19 times. Please note that if you utilise the soft start your child will only lose 10 minutes in comparison to Pre-Covid-19.
- KS1 Children Pre Covid -19 – Received 26 hrs 40 minutes per week at school.
- The new school day will deliver 25 hrs 20 minutes with a soft start and 23 hrs 40 minutes with the new official start time. This is 1 hour and 20 minutes less than the time Pre-Covid -19 times.
- Even though the start & finish times at school have changed we are still providing more educational time than is required by the guidance. The guidance for KS2 is 23 hours and 30 minutes and KS1 21 hours per week.
- With these new times the children will spend more time with their own teacher.

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Concerns about the changes to start and finish times - continued

- The change to the timetable enables the school to provide teachers planning time in one session and alleviates timetabling pressures during the week.
- The reason we have chosen a Friday afternoon is because at the end of the week children often suffer from fatigue and a Friday afternoon is often not a productive learning time.
- We envisage that children will be even more tired following an extended period at home and the new time table is taking into consideration your children's health, well being and emotional health.

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Catch up of the time lost

- During the summer holidays we have met and discussed catch up plans for each year group. These will be implemented during the Autumn term.
- We have developed a new curriculum and timetable which maximises learning time and focusses on core subjects and skills.
- We still have a responsibility to deliver a broad and balanced curriculum.
- We are using a mixture of formative and summative assessments to establish early base lines so that the children's current understanding and attainment gaps can be clearly identified and catered for. This will then allow us to refine our curriculum even further.
- The government has promised a sum of money to help support this work. But at this moment in time this has not been allocated. Aligning with this the school has signed up to the national tutoring scheme and awaiting further information. We are also utilising the skills of a qualified teacher to provide booster sessions.

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Wellbeing Support in school

- We have increased the morning break-time to 30 minutes each day.
- We have a dedicated member of staff who has responsibility for wellbeing in school.
- At the start of the Autumn term every class will have a wellbeing workshop with the BMX Champion Mike Mullen. This will focus on resilience, growth mind-set and coping with adversity.
- PSHE sessions – these are compulsory part of the school curriculum and wellbeing is part of this teaching. Our PSHE scheme has been updated to reflect the issues that may have been heightened by the current situation. We are planning to use this as part of a debrief for children to express their concerns about this current situation.
- Self regulation – the school is introducing Zones of Regulation which will give a shared vocabulary for all members of our school community to communicate and understand their emotions.
- We are continuing with 2 PE slots for each year group this term as we feel that sport / exercise is an important part of wellbeing.
- We will continue to build on this as the Autumn term progresses.

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Sports club during the Autumn term

- Y3 & Y4 Games and Fitness Club with Mrs Tilbury and the Boxing coach on a Thursday– which is subsidised by the Sports Premium.
- Y5 & Y6 session will be on a Tuesday after school – 3.15 to 4.15 pm
- This will be reviewed during the half term break in accordance with guidance from the Hertford & Ware Schools Sports Partnership.

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Communication

- The school will continue to communicate with Parents on a regular basis using the following systems:
 - ParentMail (Mass email and texting system)
 - Seesaw Parent Platform Y1 to Y6 (To be launched in the next couple of weeks)
 - Tapestry (EYFS)
 - School website (abelsmith.herts.sch.uk)
 - School Twitter feed (@AbelSmithSch)
 - Half termly newsletters

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Can we do anything else to help the teachers/school?

- Parents are the best people to know if their child is unwell. All that we ask is that you use your common sense. We have provided links below to the NHS website which sets out the symptoms of the common cold and Covid-19.
 - <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/common-cold/>
 - <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>
- We are not going to be checking the children's temperature as they come into school.
- We will contact you if your child becomes unwell in school and we would appreciate a prompt response to phone calls and collection of your child if we feel that this is necessary.

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Review of the timetable

- These plans will remain in place until the end of the Autumn term.
- Changes will only be made in line with government guidance when the school has had an appropriate time to ensure that they can be implemented safely and sustainably.
- Any changes will be communicated to parents as soon as we are able.
- We will review these plans during the Autumn half term and all stakeholders in the school will be encouraged to be involved.

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Questions from the evening - 1

- **Is the early finish on a Friday for the first term only?**
The early finish will be in place for the whole of the Autumn term – up until Christmas. It will be reviewed along with the other timetable changes during the Autumn half term holidays and all stakeholders in the school will be encouraged to take part and share their views and experiences. Any changes will be made in the Spring term and will be made in line with government guidance when the school has had an appropriate time to ensure that they can be safely and sustainably implemented.
- **What are formative and summative assessments?**
Formative assessment refers to a wide variety of tools that teachers use to carry out in lesson evaluations of pupils' understanding, learning needs and academic progress. These tend to be informal and flexible assessments.
While **summative assessment** is, as the word implies, an evaluation of the sum product of the lesson or topic – this could be for example, a final project. These tend to be more formal and structured assessments where work can be measured and compared.
- **Could tutoring sessions happen on a Friday afternoon?**
All teaching members of staff are entitled to 10% of their teaching time as PPA – Planning, Preparation and Assessment time. The early finish on a Friday will enable all members of staff to have this time together for planning etc.

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Questions from the evening - 2

- **The Dell**

Mr Hewitt is currently in consultation with The Dell. The school has asked The Dell to investigate if they can provide childcare on a Friday afternoon. As soon as we have any further updates on this we will let you know.