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Wednesday 24th February 2021

Full reopening

Dear Parents and Carers

I am very excited to be announcing what you already know: That we will be fully opening again from Monday 8th March.

In order to facilitate testing of staff and students, in line with Government requirements, there will be a phased return for our home school bubbles.

Thursday 4th March

Staff from the home teams of **Ducklings, Bluebells and Sapphires** will be coming into school for testing and to prepare for return of pupils. There will be no formal Teams that day for home schoolers. Teachers will arrange something else (probably about reading as it is World Book Day!).

Friday 5th March

Staff from the home teams of **Shrek, Simmonds and Periwinkles** will be coming into school for testing and to prepare for return of pupils. There will be no formal Teams that day. Teachers will arrange something else.

Monday 8th March

Return to school for **Primary and Sapphire** pupils. This means that all pupils in these bubbles will return to their normal classes from this day.

Periwinkles and Simmonds will continue with their current arrangement (whether online or at school i.e. the current school cohort will attend school as normal and the home learners will stay at home and learn online on this day).

Tuesday 9th March

Return to school for **Periwinkles and Simmonds** students.

ALL classes will return to normal i.e. all students to attend school.

Current School Cohort Attendance

Please note that from today until the return to school for all pupils, the pupils currently attending school will continue to attend the days they are currently attending. There will be no change until the day their bubble returns, when they will return to their normal class.

Testing

According to Government guidelines, asymptomatic testing will be offered to all staff and secondary students. The school will send more details about this for those who are coming in. We will also make a video which you can show your child, to prepare them.

Please note that testing is only by self-swabbing, so staff will not be doing it, but they will be nearby to support and guide. Testing is by consent, it is not a requirement, and so if a young person does not want to do the testing, then school staff will not insist. They will be offered the chance to try again on a later date.

We are hoping to be able to send home testing kits once these become available, but every individual is required to do 3 successful tests at school before they are given a home kit. This is through the Government schemes, so there could be changes to protocols.

All staff are offered testing, and again this is by choice. Many of our staff have been vaccinated.

Face coverings

You will know that the Government decreed that all Secondary students are to wear face coverings in classrooms. For pupils with additional needs it is up to the discretion of the school to balance the risk of this requirement. Like other special schools, we feel that the impact on learning and wellbeing would be unreasonably impacted if we insisted on this. Students and staff do have the option to wear masks in class if they wish, as long as it does not interfere with learning. Students will continue to wear face coverings on Transport and in communal areas at school.

Due to our students' challenges with verbal communication, understanding and sensory needs, we are retaining our current safety measures, as during the Autumn term: i.e. strict bubble adherence, ventilation, front facing desks, social distancing where possible, and hand hygiene. We have the advantage at Gosden of being able to control risk much more carefully than in a large Secondary school, and I ask that again all families maintain the high level of vigilance and care that they did in the Autumn term. As you know, we managed to prevent transmission within the school, due to our community effort.

Learning

You will receive details from the school and from teachers to support the return to school. As ever we will be prioritising the emotional journey of the children and young people returning to Gosden, and will be focusing on reconnecting and catching up learning.

We have monitored learning and progress closely this term and overall the school cohort have made excellent progress in their learning. Well done! That is testament to a true Gosden community effort. I'm sure that you all loved being home teachers, and I am very happy to signpost you to a PGCE if you'd like to pursue a teaching career. I also recognise that there are gaps in pupils' learning, so we will be assessing every individual and working to make up that lost learning. In our Outstanding Gosden way of course, because we love learning.

Congratulations

I sincerely hope that this is the end of lockdowns and I can congratulate you all on surviving and even thriving in many cases. Whichever of these you managed, we are just delighted to be welcoming your children back. I suspect that you are even more pleased than me to be getting your days back. We have seen how well we can work together, home and school, so we all need to make sure the relationship continues, for the good of our children, and also for the strength that community brings.

We will be sending more information next week, but please contact the teachers or school if you have specific questions.

Yours sincerely

Cindy O'Sullivan
Head Teacher