



LEARN TOGETHER

'Let's learn to enjoy, achieve, respect and nurture together'

8th June 2020

Dear Parent / Carer

'Check In, Catch Up & Prepare' Sessions

Diolch yn fawr to all families who have completed the questionnaire online for us. We really appreciate your support with this and know that it must be difficult when information is thin on the ground. If you have not responded, I would be grateful if you can please do so by tomorrow morning (Tuesday). As in my original letter, if we do not hear back, we will assume that you do not require a place to enable us to proceed with our planning.

The planning to facilitate what WG propose, as I expect you can imagine, is very complex and requires rapid decision making about things that none of us have ever had to deal with. Our approach at Barker's Lane as with everything that we do, will have the wellbeing and safety of the children and our staff at the forefront.

If you have not already picked up from my communications, **I need to clearly state that this is not school opening back up as normal**. Very little is normal about the parameters within which we have to operate.

I also need to ask that **requests from critical workers for childcare need to be kept to the bare-minimum of what is essential** and that where possible, work shifts still need to be negotiated with employers and if you are working from home, your child should stay home. Many of our families have been doing this throughout for which we are extremely grateful. Diolch yn fawr.

Childcare is **not** to be booked because you would like your child to come into school to see what things are like. Although we empathise as parents you may be at the end of your tether with the difficult situation, feel your child needs some normality and are worried too, these are **not** reasons to book childcare. Those reasons are the purpose of the check in session.

Although we appreciate families may be under pressure from employers, we have a high proportion of key worker families at Barker's Lane and if all families requested full-time care, we would not be able to meet this in our school building within the strict guidelines for safe numbers of children.

Therefore, it is essential that only 'last-resort' care is booked. These bookings are required by 9am on Thursday 11th June for all care required through to 24th July. Please be aware, we may not have the capacity to take any late bookings.

We have been advised to use these few weeks **'to prepare pupils, staff and parents – mentally, emotionally and practically – for the new normal in September'**. From WG announcements, it is anticipated at the beginning of the Autumn Term that this will be a blended approach of some face to face contact in school to skill up and set your child up for some distance learning at home. However, we await the final guidance on this, which is due out later this week.

We will be taking a cautious approach over the next few weeks to maintain the safety of all. Although I am unable to provide full information, as we are yet to receive WG guidance, I can now share some further information with you about the 'check in sessions' and tweaks we will need to make to childcare provision.

As you might appreciate, the organisation for all of this is immense but to help you think and make some further considerations, I am able to share initial plans with you.

Check-in Sessions:

- These will be a **morning session** with a **small group size of up to 8 children maximum**. We are hoping that we can facilitate two sessions per child in the four-week period based on responses for check in and childcare that we have had so far.
- No more than 75 children will be on our school site at any one time.
- We are still planning whether this can be with your child's teacher or not and will share more at the beginning of next week.
- The sessions will have a focus in the main on health and wellbeing and age-appropriate study skills, and will not be the usual curriculum.
- Although we will do our best, we may not be able to accommodate all siblings on the same day due to the scale of this and restrictions that we have.
- We will be implementing a staggered start time and finish time to reduce numbers of children and adults in the area surrounding the school at any one time.
- You will be able to choose whether your child wears their own clothes or items of uniform to the session. Clothing **and footwear** needs to be suitable for outdoor, physical activity.

We aim to provide the dates and times of your child's sessions by Wednesday 17th June to give as much time as possible for you to plan for these.

Key worker Essential Childcare:

- Childcare will be relocated from two classrooms to the school hall.
- Children will continue to be cared for in a fully mixed age group of children from Nursery to Year 6.
- There is no change to timings, this will be maintained as 8.45am – 3.00pm. Please only book the time that you require though, late drops off and early pick-ups have been well managed by parents and school staff throughout and have reduced numbers arriving / leaving at any one time.
- Before and after school club is closed until the start of the Summer Holiday.
- Different staff each day cover childcare as they will be on a rota, covering on days when they are not involved in 'check in' with their class.
- All children will continue to require a healthy snack and a packed lunch each day. **Your child must be able to peel / open snack and anything within the lunch box themselves**, therefore this may need some practise with your child if you have not used the childcare before.
- Children wear their own clean clothes each day. Clothing **and footwear** needs to be suitable for outdoor, physical activity.
- All children also require:
 - a full bottle of clean water every day
 - a shower proof coat each day
 - a small pencil case with stationary, if your child has one should be brought with them. Although only your own child uses this, ideally, this should be something you can wipe clean or wash each night. *Please do not go out and buy this, only send in if your child has one.*
 - a book that your child is reading or enjoys, if they have one should also be brought to school. Digital reading devices are permitted as long as they are fully charged. There is no access for own devices to the internet.

In all check in and childcare sessions, the children will be washing their hands regularly. We will also be doing our very best to maintain and encourage social distancing. However we are unable to guarantee this.

I have seen many posts over the last month or so on social media relating to schools in England where school letters have been criticised because of their content and labelled unwelcoming.

I would like to be clear, that we are all looking forward to seeing your children at Barker's Lane, we miss them very much. Please do not interpret any of the items I have outlined above as negative. They are all to protect the health, wellbeing and safety of your child, other children, parents and our staff.

To help us with this, next week we will be asking you to share experiences and views, to enable us to plan, support and prepare your child in the best way that we can. It would be helpful if you could start having some age-appropriate discussions (if you have not already), with your child about the following:

- *Positive experiences that your child / family have had during this time*

- *Negative experiences that your child / family have had / coped with*
- *Things school have provided / done that has been helpful to your child's wellbeing and learning*
- *Things that have been most difficult about this lock-down period / not being in school*
- *Practical support that school could give to help your child further as we approach this next phase*

We will let you know how we would like to collect these views. **Please do not email school or message information about this on Seesaw just yet.**

Like some of you, I have read articles in the media and posts about teachers and school staff over the last couple of months – wondering amongst other things whether teachers have been enjoying themselves sunbathing and doing nothing but still being paid whilst at home! As anyone who has been working from home will know, it is what I can only describe as ‘a nightmare’ and I can assure you although some of us may have a tan when we return to school – we’ve had our lap tops almost glued to us when we have been sitting in the garden!

Putting humour aside, I can’t thank you as families at Barker’s Lane enough for all that you have done to support distance learning since March. Contrary to the horrible media exposure for school staff across the country, from our school parents, the many messages of support we have received have been touching and overwhelming. We do recognise that as parents, like our staff you have been placed in very difficult situations, trying to do many things. Although the immediate future for schooling is very different, I can assure you that our staff will be doing their very best for your children, to reassure them and support them to ensure education is still a lovely experience for them.

To support with this, as promised I would be grateful for some further information / views from you **by 10am on Wednesday morning** if possible to feed into our recovery planning, regarding transition to new classes, what you hope your child gets out of a check in session and any concerns. If you would like to contribute views to the plan, please click on the link <https://forms.gle/i33x1NzdfiW1aw29> and submit by 10am on Wednesday. Although we can not promise to incorporate all suggestions, I can promise that they all will be looked at, discussed and considered in the wider context of the plan.

Finally I also want to thank our school staff who have adapted their way of working and teaching almost overnight, using digital technology that some of them were not confident with alongside juggling home working and childcare like many of you. They now face the unknown again, having a short time to consider how better to support learning longer term, ensuring the best possible experiences for your child during this next phase. Knowing the team that we have here, I also know that they will do this because they are dedicated, they care and want the best for what is most precious to you - your children.

The resilience shown from our whole school community is a true credit to every one of us – children, parents, school staff and governors. We talk to the children about being proud of themselves all of the time, however we also should take our own advice and step back to reflect on how much we have all achieved.

Stay safe and look after yourselves. Sending much love to the children.

Very best wishes



Mrs Edwards