

URGENT: Let's keep The Coppice open! We must all do our bit.

It has been lovely to see the children returning to school today and overwhelmingly, the children have come in happy and have quickly settled, which is fantastic and better than we could have hoped for, with high attendance. I think this says a lot about how pleased they are to be back and how well you have prepared them for return. It was great to have them back to see the joy on so many faces.

Apologies in advance for this lengthy correspondence, but I would urge you to read it all.

I appreciate that, if there's a second wave, government has said that schools will be the last to close. HOWEVER, schools will part-close if infection arises in school. Logistically, the only way we could create 'bubbles' was by designating each year group as a separate 'bubble'. Accordingly, if an infection arises in a particular year group then that whole year group (affecting 90 children) could be closed. So we must all do our bit to reduce risk.

I appreciate that today was the first day back and so we had a lot of excitement bubbling. In addition, our new systems were untested. However, there were some things that raised concern. A significant number of parents totally ignored social distancing and were congregating, with very few wearing masks (despite our request for them to be worn). Some of our parents and carers are more vulnerable and need everybody's consideration - please wear a mask (just adults) to protect others whilst on site; by 'on site' I mean as soon as you step foot in our car park and beyond the Shawhurst Lane gate. We witnessed and had reports of parents hugging and kissing and socialising (not the best example to set for children, given these times). We are asking for your cooperation here.

Unfortunately, quite a few parents were 'hanging about' once they had dropped a child off, adding to the congestion. Without wanting to over-labour things, parents must adhere to expectations around social distancing if we are to stay fully open and the community is to avoid lockdown.

In addition, some parents were waiting with siblings close to the gates once one child had come in, again, causing congestion and restricting social distancing. As was mentioned in a previous letter, we appreciate that this creates problems for some parents but, if we want to manage a staggered entry (in the way government have stipulated), then it is unavoidable. All we would say is, if you need to wait, then you must move well away from the pinch-point areas (like the area in front of the gates). In addition, we expect parents to respect areas that have been sectioned off by cones.

As parents know, our car parks are out of bounds for parking for anybody apart from staff, official visitors and disabled blue badge holders. This rule needs to be more strictly enforced than ever, given our expectations around social distancing and wanting to avoid congestion.

On a positive note, we have had very little lateness, which is important. To manage staggered entry, children must be on time, so we thank you for your help with this.

As with the wider general public (we have all seen the news clips), there is a temptation for individuals to think that the advice and regulations do not apply to them, but it must apply to everyone. I apologise that this letter is quite 'hard hitting'. Longstanding parents know that this is not my usual 'style', but these are worrying times and messages need to be firm ones. We have had emails and phone calls from some parents this morning with similar concerns to us.

We appreciate that one or two of the issues this morning arose because it is all new to us, and, as said, systems were untested. Rest-assured, Coppice Senior Leadership Team will review things daily and tweak as necessary. Already, we have decided that Year 5 will now enter by their usual KS2 gate (adjacent to the Site Manager's bungalow). Also, to save the bottle-neck, children will be 'hand-sanitised' by the class teacher at the classroom door. A reminder of logistics is copied below.

We witnessed many examples where things were orderly, with parents queuing and considering others. This was particularly evident with Nursery and Reception handover. Mr Hutt was extremely impressed with how the parents managed the handover of their children and the confidence of the children in walking along the path to meet their teachers. A big 'thank you' for this.

I finish by thanking all parents who engaged with our home learning, so limiting children's gaps in learning. Rest-assured, early on in the school year we will be assessing children to check for gaps and plan our teaching accordingly in order for the children to get back up to speed as quickly as possible.

So, in short:

- Please protect others by wearing a mask on site (i.e. once entering from Shawhurst Lane)
- Please go as soon as you have dropped off/picked up children
- Please adhere to expectations around social distancing (2 metres) and avoid the *'it doesn't matter if it's just me'* culture
- Please park off site unless you hold a blue badge

I do hope you appreciate that with the above messages we have everybody's best interests at heart. We thank you in anticipation of your full cooperation.

Yours sincerely

Bill Heptinstall

Headteacher

	DROP OFF TIME	DROP OFFPOINT	COLLECTION TIME	COLLECTION POINT
NGT	8.30am	Nursery gate (big)	3.15pm	Nursery gate (big)
NB	8.45am	Nursery gate (big)	2.45pm	Nursery gate (big)
RF	8.30-8.45am	External classroom doors	3.00pm	Nursery gate (big)
RL				Reception gate
RH				External classroom doors
1T	8.40am	KS1 gate	3.10pm	KS1 gate
1D				
1RB				
3K	8.30am	KS1 gate	3.05pm	KS1 gate
3HK				
3P				
2CA	8.40am	KS2 gate	3.10pm	KS2 gate
2J				
2A				
4AW	8.30am	KS2 gate	3.05pm	KS2 gate
4MW				
4J				
5MS	8.20am	KS2 gate	3.15pm	KS2 gate
5G				
5K				
6G	8.20am	KS2 gate	3.15pm	KS2 gate
6L				
6C				