

## **The Re-opening of Elmfield School**

Friday 5<sup>th</sup> June 2020

Dear All,

We are very happy to be able to tell you that our wonderful school will be reopening on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> June. We have all missed the children over the past weeks and are really looking forward to welcoming them back to their school.

The first week, starting on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> June, will see us welcoming back vulnerable children, their siblings, and children of critical workers. We will be offering provision five days a week from 8:30am until 3:15pm. We will send you more details of what this provision will look like next week.

During the first week of our phased return we will be closely monitoring and reviewing what we are doing and how the children are responding, with the firm aim of welcoming back from Monday 29<sup>th</sup> June as many other children who wish to return as the school can safely accommodate within current government guidelines. Please bear in mind that we may have to consider part-time provision for these children if there are too many to accommodate full-time.

In preparation for this we would like to share with you the things we are taking into account when making decisions around the reopening of our school in the hope that this will give our whole school community a clearer understanding of what we are able to offer in these unprecedented times, and the reasons for this.

### **PRINCIPLES**

#### ***Site safety***

Our Health and Safety team are currently undertaking robust risk assessments. Work will start on cleaning the school and tidying up the grounds next week. Rooms have been measured with social distancing requirements in mind and hygiene guidance scrutinised.

#### ***Children's wellbeing and education***

All school pupils will continue to receive online provision until the end of the summer term, and into next year if this is deemed necessary by the government. On-site provision will therefore focus on those aspects of Waldorf education that are less easily shared online.

A "recovery curriculum" will be provided at school and through online learning before the summer holiday to support the healing of relationships and community lost during the pandemic. We anticipate that this will primarily consist of movement-based, creative and imaginative activities. Support will be offered to children to complete work set by subject teachers online, and craft and movement activities will mirror what is sent home wherever possible.

We will also draw on the individual skills and strengths of the staff in charge of each group (or “bubble”), and therefore some variation is to be expected in the activities each group is offered. In the Upper School we will be putting in some GCSE support to supplement the pupils’ online provision.

### ***Staff wellbeing***

Unfortunately some of our staff are not yet able to return to work for a variety of reasons. They may be ill themselves, in which case we wish them well and a speedy recovery, or they may be shielding or living with someone who is shielding. We want to reassure the whole school community that only those members of staff who can safely return to work will be involved in the reopening of the school.

### ***Parent communication***

We have really missed seeing you all in the school and, as we are sure you'll agree, ParentMail is a poor substitute for all those conversations in classrooms, corridors and the front lawn. We have really appreciated your participation in online parent-teacher meetings and the surveys we have been sending out. A big thank-you to you all!

In preparation for the school reopening on Monday 22nd June, we will be sending you further details at 10am on Friday 12th June and final details will be sent on Friday 19th June.

## **PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

With social distancing measures in place, our school can accommodate at any one time no more than 172 of its current 277 pupils (205 in Classes 1-11 and 72 in the Early Years department).

In accordance with government guidance, each pupil group cannot exceed 15 pupils, and in the Early Years department we are aiming for groups of 8 children. However, in practice, the number in each group will be limited by the size of the rooms available. Each group will be supervised by two members of staff, one in the morning and one in the afternoon. The school has only 20 full-time teachers, most of which are currently teaching online and will continue to do this once we reopen. As a result, the school will be calling on part-time staff to help out as well, and the process of unfurloughing has already begun.

There will be a member of the safeguarding team on site during the day and first aid provision.

The detailed plans that we will be sharing with you next week will outline the likely provision for each group of children as well as laying out new expectations and protocols for those returning to school.

We hope that this email has provided you with an explanation of the principles the school is applying to the phased re-opening of the school and the practical decisions it is making in light of government regulations and guidance. Of course, we should point out that all of these plans are subject to change in the event that government guidance changes.

We are really looking forward to welcoming your children back and rounding off the year with them in the last few weeks of term, which we hope will be joyous and full of light. This has been and continues to be a challenging time for all of us but we firmly believe that by holding together as a community we will be able to provide a wonderful education for our pupils.

If you have any questions or would like to speak to a member of the Coordination Group about anything concerning your child or the reopening of the school, please do not hesitate to get in touch with us via [diana.ball@elmfield.com](mailto:diana.ball@elmfield.com) or [gertraud.soukup@elmfield.com](mailto:gertraud.soukup@elmfield.com).

With warm greetings, and sending you all strength and courage,

**Diana Ball** (Interim Education Lead)

**Gertraud Soukup** (Chair of the College of Teachers)

**Sue Dawson** (Chair of the Council of Management)