



Waltham Forest Local Authority

**FAQs on re-opening following headteacher meetings –
May 2020**

<p>What are the priorities for the LA at this time?</p>	<p>The LA's priority is that vulnerable children should receive full-time educational provision throughout the summer term. The attendance of vulnerable pupils has increased from 10% to 31% during the lockdown period which is encouraging. The LA is also keen to support year 6 transition to secondary schools and the youngest children. We want schools to re-open to priority groups only when it is safe to do so.</p>
<p>Does the LA have set expectations on how schools will organise the return from 1 June?</p>	<p>The LA has no set view on how schools will re-open although further guidance is expected from the DfE shortly. The LA supports schools prioritising the year groups identified by the DfE. The LA believes that schools should re-open cautiously and slowly.</p>
<p>What are the LA's views on social distancing?</p>	<p>The LA believes that school should follow DfE guidance on social distancing and implement DfE recommendations. Younger children should be kept in small groups 2 metres away from other groups. Older children should be kept 2 metres from each other.</p>
<p>How many children are likely to return on 1 June?</p>	<p>Meetings have very recently been held with over 40 headteachers who predicted that 45-50% of parents would want their children to return on 1 June. Many parents are awaiting the government announcement on 28 May about schools opening.</p>
<p>How are schools planning for the return?</p>	<p>All schools are planning carefully for the return to school. Each school has a different context in terms of intake, premises and organisation so the planning reflects the specific school situation. There are many different patterns of return in Waltham Forest with differing return dates in some instances. The DfE does not favour half days and prefers, where necessary, alternate weeks of attendance. The LA, however, will support any reasonable arrangements. Many schools are considering bubbles of up to 15 pupils with a member of staff (or possibly two) staying in one area of the school. Once the children have left, the area will be thoroughly</p>

	cleaned. Teaching outdoors is also being considered by many schools. The DfE may announce a preferred model for children returning in the next few days.
Is personal protective equipment (PPE) needed in school?	The vast majority of staff will not require PPE beyond what they would normally need for their work. The exception to this is where a child becomes ill and needs personal care before going home. A fluid-resistant surgical mask should be worn and if contacting the child, gloves and an apron. Eye protection should be worn if there is danger of splashing on the eyes.
Will PPE be provided for schools?	The LA is arranging for a proportionate amount of PPE to be delivered to schools during half term. Schools will be able to order more supplies as necessary.
Will the LA be providing a risk assessment template for the safe return to school?	The LA will be sending a risk assessment template and associated papers to schools for return by 25 May.
Can the school refuse to accept a pupil who has very challenging behaviour?	The DfE says that the school should amend the behaviour policy to admit all eligible pupils.
What about informing the public on social distancing in schools?	The LA is providing signage and will check what schools need. Signage will include floor stencils, posters and wraparounds for lamp posts.
Is there a new set of key workers?	Yes – the DfE has issued new guidance which expands in a limited way the list of critical and key workers.
Will the returning pupils work as before on the curriculum?	In the new context of social distancing and separation, schools will be working hard on the emotional, social and mental health of the children. Pupils will need careful re-integration into school as they may have new classmates, classrooms and teachers. It is likely that the pupils will not progress as previously academically as there is much else to cover.
What about staff who need to be shielded?	Shielding staff should work from home. Clinically vulnerable individuals who are at higher risk of severe illness should maintain social distancing if required to work in school but should be supported to work from home where possible.

Can pupils attend another school?	LAs and schools can negotiate education for individual pupils at different schools although this is likely to be extremely rare.
Will the LA direct schools on their organisation of the return to school?	The LA will support schools as they generate the best plan for their particular context. There will be no LA demands on the ways that schools organise their return or deadlines set beyond an expectation that all schools will be open for vulnerable children unless alternative arrangements are agreed with the LA.
What happens if a child or staff member tests positive for COVID-19?	<p>When a child, young person or staff member develops symptoms compatible with coronavirus, they should be sent home and advised to self-isolate for 7 days. Their fellow household members should self-isolate for 14 days. All staff and students who are attending an education or childcare setting will have access to a test if they display symptoms of coronavirus, and are encouraged to get tested in this scenario.</p> <p>Where the child, young person or staff member tests negative, they can return to their setting and the fellow household members can end their self-isolation.</p> <p>Where the child, young person or staff member tests positive, the rest of their class or group within their childcare or education setting should be sent home and advised to self-isolate for 14 days. The other household members of that wider class or group do not need to self-isolate unless the child, young person or staff member they live with in that group subsequently develops symptoms.</p>
How will pupils and parents enter and leave the school?	As part of their re-opening plan, schools will designate entrances and exits with clear signage. The selection of these will minimise congregation of people.
How do we know the school will be safe for return on 1 June?	Schools are completing a comprehensive risk assessment which will be submitted to the LA for ratification.
What happens during the half term break?	Schools will make independent decisions on this. Many are closing to prepare for the

	<p>June 1 re-opening. Staff have had no breaks for many weeks so some schools are providing time for staff to recover and prepare. Some schools may open only for the vulnerable and keyworker groups for that week.</p>
<p>Will nursery groups re-open?</p>	<p>Each school will inform parents and carers on this. The LA has a statutory duty to provide a nursery place if requested by the parent or carer and schools should ensure that Early Years are aware if their nursery provision is closed and parents or carers require alternative provision.</p>
<p>What about public transport?</p>	<p>The common ruling will apply – six passengers on a single decker, 15 on a double decker. Parents and children are encouraged to walk or cycle. The complications around pupils attending a nearer school are complex.</p>
<p>Should face masks be worn?</p>	<p>The DfE guidance is that face masks are not necessary in schools in almost all situations and indeed may provoke children to touch their faces more frequently. They may be worn when supporting someone who has been taken ill.</p>
<p>What about break and lunch times?</p>	<p>In their re-opening plans, schools will have planned for all the school day. It is likely that breaks will be staggered and each bubble or group released separately.</p>
<p>Is it best to work outdoors?</p>	<p>Schools have been reviewing outdoor space to make the best use of this resource. Some schools are fortunate here whereas others may face restrictions. Forest school activities may be appropriate for some children.</p>
<p>What about staff not attending school?</p>	<p>If staff do not attend without good reason, then this would be unauthorised absence and dealt with as such.</p>
<p>So can schools offer part-time education?</p>	<p>Although the DfE is recommending full-time attendance, the LA is happy to support schools who feel that part-time education is the best alternative. It is recognised that it will be very challenging to welcome all year groups back before the summer with social distancing in place. Safety is the priority. It is the view of officers that it</p>

	looks unlikely that schools will return to normal in September.
Is attendance compulsory?	All children are encouraged to attend school unless they are self-isolating or they are clinically vulnerable. Parents will not be fined for non-attendance at this time and schools will not be held accountable for attendance levels.
Is attendance for vulnerable children compulsory?	The expectation is that all vulnerable children, whatever year group, will attend school where it is safe and appropriate for them to do so.
Should shielding or medically vulnerable children attend school?	Clinically extremely vulnerable children are not expected to attend school.
Should a child attend school if someone in their household is shielding?	Such children should only attend where stringent social distancing is in place and the pupil understands this.
How should attendance be reported?	By completing an attendance register and the DfE online educational setting status form.
What about alternative provision?	AP settings should follow mainstream advice and welcome from 1 June reception, years 1 and 6 pupils; years 10 and 11 pupils at secondary.
Special schools?	They should work towards welcoming back as many children as can be safely catered for in their setting. These schools may want to introduce a part-time rota to maximise chances for the pupils.
Will exams be reinstated?	No examinations or assessments will take place this term nor any Ofsted inspections.
Will schools be providing meals for pupils onsite?	This will vary according to the school's context.
How are the extra costs because of COVID-19 being met?	The DfE is providing additional funding to cover specific costs as identified by schools in certain areas.
How big will class sizes be?	Each school is planning this carefully, depending on the school's context. The DfE recommends with younger children, that they stay in a small, consistent group which stays away from other people and groups. Classes are likely to be halved to 15 so that social distancing is possible. Teaching assistants can teach the class under the direction of a teacher.
How are shared areas managed?	Social distancing will be in place so only half the usual number of pupils will use shared

	areas – depending on the size and layout of the school. Cleaning between different groups will be taking place.
Is it essential we re-open on 1 June if we need more time to prepare?	Schools should continue to open for vulnerable children and those of keyworkers. The risk assessment, planning and preparation for wider re-opening to priority year groups needs to be completed as soon as possible. If the school cannot open safely on 1 June then this is accepted as schools should only open more widely when it is safe to do so. Parents and carers will need to be informed of the schools plans for opening.