

## Combined Summer 2020 Covid 19 messages for Alma families

Dear Alma families,

*I hope you are having an enjoyable summer and have managed to have time to re-charge. The past four months have been immensely challenging for us all as families have juggled multiple demands and children have not had time with friends or teachers. Our staff have worked tirelessly throughout to provide children with access to learning and I am grateful for the support from Alma families as well as the appreciation our staff have been shown, including the generous end of year messages and gifts that many of you have given. A recent survey by the Office for National Statistics found that during lockdown only 13% of primary children have had the kind of learning opportunities given to children at Alma Primary, something we should be proud of. Below are the key messages we have sent to families over the summer break.*

### Later start times on the first two days of September

Our starting date for all children in Years 1 to 6 remains Monday 7<sup>th</sup> September, however we will have special arrangements in place on the first two days. **On September 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>, a majority of children will be starting school between 09:30am and 10:00** (see below). This is because we know that some of our children will have particular needs in September. As part of our reintegration plan we will be offering 'soft starts' to specific children and we will be contacting the families of these children directly. Where needed, children will be offered further support.

### Managed times for drop off and collection

Throughout the first half of the autumn term we will continue to have managed times to drop children off and to collect them at the end of the day. The times are based on the three school wide groups *and we will send separate confirmation regarding which group each family is in:*

	Sept 7 <sup>th</sup> & 8 <sup>th</sup> Drop off (see above)	Drop off from Weds 9 <sup>th</sup> Sept	Collection
<b>Group A</b>	09:30-09:40	08:20-08:30	15:00-15:10
<b>Group B</b>	09:40-09:50	08:30-08:40	15:10-15:20
<b>Group C</b>	09:50-10:00	08:40-08:50	15:20-15:30

We will review these times after the first three weeks to see if we can condense the times further and again prior to half term to decide if we need to continue this system.

### Attendance

The government has made clear that school attendance is mandatory again from the beginning of the autumn term. The guidance on shielding is currently paused, so if you have a concern about your child or about another adult in your family, please check on [the current advice which you can find here](#).

We will be closed on Monday 28<sup>th</sup> September, for Yom Kippur, the Jewish day of Atonement. From Friday 6<sup>th</sup> November, we will be closing early on Fridays for Shabbat (Sabbath) and we will send details of collection arrangements for this time, prior to half term – for more information on terms dates please see the full calendar on our school website, [here](#).

As I mentioned in my last message, **if you are taking your children abroad then it is important that you plan time to adhere to any self-quarantine requirements that the Government have put in place before term starts on Sept 7<sup>th</sup>**. If any quarantine period extends into the school term, this will mean a delayed start for your child so please message the admin team if this is likely to affect you.

### **Transportation, Drop-off and Collection**

As per current government guidance, we continue to ask families to walk or cycle to school, however we understand many Alma families will need to drive. In the event that children are using public transport, it is essential that the law requiring children over 11 and adults to wear face masks is followed. Face masks must be safely removed when coming into school.

Morning drop off: during the first three weeks drop off on site will continue to be only by walking in. There won't be any drive & drop facilities at the start of the year, however we will look to start this from Tuesday Sept 29<sup>th</sup>. Parents will need to allow a little extra time for dropping off, as parking in the area is likely to be more congested and challenging. During this period, please show every consideration for local residents by avoiding parking across drive ways or parking in ways that are illegal or dangerous for others. We do not want to upset or cause a nuisance to our neighbours

Afternoon pick up: similarly, at the start of September there will be no on-site Park & Pick up facility, as we work through strategies for parents to collect children safely. Our current approach to ensuring the safety of adults collecting, means that we need to use whole of the playground to keep parents socially distant, so we don't have any specific date yet to restart the Park & Pick up system. However as with other aspects of provision we will be reviewing this during the first three weeks of term, as we are aware of the importance of this system for parents.

Throughout the autumn term, we will be continuing a 'one adult only' rule, so please come alone when bringing to or collecting your children from Alma and do not bring any siblings except where absolutely necessary.

### **Lockdown letters**

Many families have experienced some very difficult periods during the past five months. We know that nationally children have been affected in profound ways, many of which will continue to affect them when they return to school. As part of our preparations for the autumn term we are inviting families to send '*lockdown letters*' telling us about your experiences from March to July. These optional letters can be written by parents and children together, or just by parents and might include positives, such as things that the children were able to do or learn, as well as challenges and problems faced by the children or the whole family. These letters will initially be read by the leadership team and, where appropriate, a summary of key points will be given to class teams (teachers and LSAs).

***Letters should be sent to [community@almaprimary.org](mailto:community@almaprimary.org)*** (please don't send to any other school address) by the end of August and titled '***Lockdown letter for FAMILY NAME***', including the name and class of each child in the family at the top of the letter. As there will be a high volume of letters, we won't be able to respond to parents individually, so please don't include questions which require a direct answer in your letter. Finally, a reminder that Alma staff are not medical practitioners, so if you are experiencing any health issues, including mental health concerns, please contact your GP to discuss this. I hope that these letters will enable us to better understand your experiences over the past term.

### **Learning in the Autumn term**

The complex nature of the lockdown period means that children will be returning to school in September with very different levels of confidence, understanding and skills. We are therefore preparing work for the start of the year that encourages children to re-engage with their class-mates and teachers, which enables teachers to gauge the emotional state of children as well as to assess their learning needs, and which begins the process of rebuilding our school community as a place of learning with common goals and shared values. As part of this approach we will be engaging in a whole

school project focused on English, wellbeing and mental health for the first two weeks of the autumn term.

After the October half term, we will be holding Learning Journey Meetings when we will be able to discuss with each family the needs of their child and how we will be helping them make the further progress in their learning. At the moment, we expect these meetings to be held via zoom, but will confirm this nearer the time. We also expect to hold our 'meet the staff' evening in the autumn term via zoom, and will be in touch with parents to give details on this in September.

### **Inclusion Work**

Interventions in class and with Mrs Tarleton, including Nurture Group, will start up again in September. We will be selecting children for these interventions based on the level of need in September and will contact parents individually to invite a child to join an intervention. If you have any questions about interventions, including Nurture Group, please contact Mrs Tarleton and Mrs Clark via the school office.

### **Lunches in September**

When children initially return, for the first three weeks of September, they will continue to have packed lunches provided by Caterlink in the classrooms. During this period we will be preparing to have lunches in the hall, for two year groups at a time. Provided that guidance remains the same, we are expecting that from Tues 29<sup>th</sup> September (after *Yom Kippur* - the Jewish day of Atonement) we will be serving hot food in the hall, however some older classes will continue to have packed lunches on specific days in order to avoid having too many children in the lunch hall. We will send further information on this in September.

### **Healthy lifestyle**

Barnet Public Health have created a child friendly online booklet that contains info about healthy eating, healthy snacking, physical activity and sleep. The booklet is available [here](#) so please encourage your children to read this booklet, or share it with younger children.

### **Expectations of families**

In September, as in this past term, we expect families to keep children at home if they are showing any Covid19 symptoms (raised temperature, new cough etc), or if someone in their household has been confirmed as having the virus. From September we will no longer be asking all family daily questions in the morning, but we will be asking all families in advance to sign up to a digital agreement confirming acceptance of these expectations, in order to ensure we keep our school free of Covid-19.

From September our school will operate in whole class bubbles and in three 'wider' bubbles of class grouping: Reception and Year 1; Years 2 and 3; Year 4, 5 and 6 (see below). We know that during the summer children are likely to engage in playdates and camps with children outside of their bubbles, however from the beginning of September we ask parents to ensure that Alma children only mix with children in their wider bubbles. In the event that we experience any virus in school this will help us to limit the numbers of children this affects.

### **Protocols to maintain hygiene, maximise distance and reduce contacts**

Our Governing Body have now approved our Risk Assessment for September, a summary of which is on our school website. In order to reduce the potential for infection, there are two key things that we are emphasising for September: *maximising distance and reducing the number of contacts.*

As part of this approach, ***in September only children and staff will be allowed to enter the school building.*** While we are missing having parents in school, we need to continue to avoid infection risks

so parents will only be able to come into the building by appointment. Please help us by prepare children for September, ensuring that they understand you will be saying goodbye to them in the playground and will not be able to come into school. This will not apply to our incoming Reception children during staggered entry and settling in, when parents will be able to bring their child into the Reception class. ***We will also be reminding parents not to congregate outside the school, as this increases the possibility of infection and is still a security risk.***

### **Uniform**

During the summer term we have had a relaxed approach to uniform however from September all children will need to wear full school uniform every day. Recent government guidance has emphasised that there is no significant risk from uniform, which can be worn and washed at a normal rate. Parents can order any new 'logoed' items of uniform, such as polo tops, jumpers and cardigans from [Uniform4Kids](#) and can also book an appointment to visit their store, if needed.

*During the pandemic there was a great deal of discussion in our country about the importance of kindness, something we take seriously at Alma Primary, striving for kindness and respect in our interactions with each other. On behalf of the staff and governors, I wish you all a healthy and happy summer.*

B'shalom – in peace,  
*Marc Shoffren*  
Headteacher, Alma Primary