



# CHESSWOOD JUNIOR SCHOOL

## *Home of Bright Sparks*

Chesswood Road Worthing West Sussex BN11 2AA

**Head Teacher: Mr Andrew Jolley**

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Monday, 11 May 2020

### **Response requested from all families by Friday 15th May 4:00p.m.**

Dear Parent,

Please complete the online form by **Friday 15<sup>th</sup> May 4:00p.m.** at:

**HOME > PARENTS > COVID 19 - CORONA VIRUS UPDATES > EXPANDING SCHOOL ATTENDANCE - SUMMER 2020**

<https://www.chesswood.w-sussex.sch.uk/page/?title=Expanding+School+Attendance+%2D+Summer+2020&pid=947>

### ***Response to increasing capacity and demand – Summer 2020***

In anticipation of last night's announcement from Prime Minister Boris Johnson, school leaders had been looking carefully at a wide range of

- factors that need to be considered when seeking to expand capacity
- models to facilitate that expansion.

At this time, Chesswood Junior School has opened every day except Saturdays and Sundays since the lock down, given its close proximity to Worthing Hospital and the need to support frontline workers. We have typically had 30-50 children in each day during term time – 65 children overall have attended at some point during the summer term and over 90 children since lock down measures were introduced. At the same time, we have managed a comprehensive online learning curriculum (@500 children) for those children with appropriate technology and provided hard copy learning packs (@100 children) for those families that do not have sufficient technology at home.

In addition to this, our staff have made in excess of 1100 courtesy calls to families providing a wide range of guidance and support. We have now made some changes to the 'keeping in contact' calls. We are now using a triage system with a group of teaching assistants and other specialist staff to call parents rather than the class teacher, in anticipation of the expansion of pupil numbers in school.

I would like to reassure parents that Chesswood Junior School staff are acutely aware of the wide ranging and significant issues facing families; our 'keeping in contact' calls have reinforced this viewpoint. We are particularly concerned about our many parents who do not get paid if they do not attend work, leading to very real concerns about meeting financial commitments being met. In addition, families who have children whose

- mental health and well-being is in crisis
- ability to sustain any quality learning during the lock down has been highly challenging for them and/or their parent/s

My staff and I take very seriously the need to expand school capacity and will do everything reasonable to do so in a coherent and safe way. There are a number of aspects that it would be right to share with parents, so there can be no misunderstanding about the choices and challenges facing our school community as the school capacity expands.



We believe there are 215 children who might require a school place from June 1st; including Y6 (166 children) and all children that have attended in the summer term so far (Key worker and vulnerable children not in Y6 54). The Government’s ambition is for the whole school to return before the end of July, whether this is for short periods or for the school to operate normally is unclear.

To help us manage this changing and challenging situation, we expect to communicate clearly and transparently with families and staff. We hope that in doing so and maintaining such communication, school leaders will better understand different perspectives and will, as a result, build responses that are more effective and successful for the overwhelming majority. Any model we create will be tested on three levels – is it safe, satisfactory and sustainable for three distinct groups, children, school staff, families of children and staff? The table below provides a small number of aspects that should be considered at each level – it is not exhaustive and to be reliable it will rely on all families completing the online form by Friday 15<sup>th</sup> May 4:00p.m.

For – Children; School Staff; Families of Children and staff	
<b>Is it Safe?</b>	<p>Working with uncertain risk and uncertain safety, which models can school leaders create that would support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safe health and well being: including minimising risk of contracting or sharing Covid-19 especially directly to others with underlying health conditions (UHCs) or family members with whom they live with UHCs.</li> <li>• Safeguarding: during this period we have managed many safeguarding concerns with police, social workers and family link workers – again minimising risk of harm to individual children through neglect, domestic violence and family trauma is a priority.</li> </ul>
<b>Is it Satisfactory?</b>	<p>Once any model is created, how satisfactory is it for the above groups e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If attending school for some prevents a high-quality online learning experience for others (due to diverted staff time and resource) – who would this be satisfactory for and who not? Are there any other adjustments that can ensure, as a minimum, it is satisfactory for all?</li> <li>• If the 2m distancing cannot be assured between children as they learn and play, and despite every reasonable precaution, how satisfactory is it for the different groups?</li> </ul>
<b>Is it Sustainable?</b>	<p>With large numbers potentially set to return, the following aspects would be considerations for sustainability:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How can all parts of the school and resource that are used be cleaned sufficiently to minimise risk with typical cleaning staff hours?</li> <li>• If children cannot return full time Mon- Fri due to social distancing requirements and staff available for working on site, how sustainable will that be for parents who need to attend work to secure an income?</li> </ul>

Key factors that may frustrate our attempts to meet that demand with sufficient capacity include:



## Maintaining social distancing

- Whilst the strict 2m distancing remains in place and with classroom usable space approximately 41m<sup>2</sup> ; 10 -12 children may be accommodated. A further 2 adults will be required in many classes. Taken to its furthest extent, we would need 18 classrooms for the expected 215 children. Washing hands, using toilets, moving in corridors, playing on the playground, sharing resources are all aspects that will need safe, satisfactory and sustainable answers.

## Sufficient staff on the school site

- Almost 40% of school staff are unable to attend the school site due to shielding or underlying health conditions for themselves, their own children or their adult partner they live with. There is no sufficient national or local guidance to support any confident decision for those staff when schools, including ours, confirm they cannot assure 2m social distancing between children and between children and staff.
- As the number of children increases, the need for more staff to manage support roles will be required, particularly cleaning and pupil welfare (temperature checks, first aid and illness). If a model is adopted that some children attend in the morning and others in an afternoon, the deep cleaning at lunch time would require many more cleaning staff than we employ.

## Sufficient staff to maintain off site services

- Maintaining a sustainable and satisfactory balance to meet the demand of children attending in school whilst also maintaining -
- the planning and monitoring of online daily learning for the majority of children not in school
- recognise and celebrate the efforts of children at home - a significant factor in the overwhelming positive engagement
- the keeping in contact process with the majority of families learning from home



Finally, please accept my apologies for such a long and detailed letter, I genuinely hope that it starts to build a clearer picture for families on the journey we are undertaking to meet the demand for school places with sufficient capacity. Each and every family can be assured we will do everything possible within the three key tests to maximise capacity at the earliest stage possible from the 1<sup>st</sup> June.

West Sussex Local Authority confirmed the following to all school leaders today:  
*please note that, as of today, the advice linked to schools is still unchanged. Schools remain closed for children with the exception of the children of key workers, children with social workers, and those children with EHCPs. Although schools may be under pressure from parents who are wishing to return to work and therefore need their children to attend school, we must be **consistent in following the existing guidance and therefore should not be widening the access to school for other groups at this stage.***

If you believe your child is eligible for a school place and you would like to apply for dates between 11<sup>th</sup> May and 29<sup>th</sup> May please complete the application form at:  
HOME > PARENTS > COVID 19 - CORONA VIRUS UPDATES > SCHOOL ATTENDANCE  
<https://www.chesswood.w-sussex.sch.uk/page/?title=School+Attendance&pid=790>

I hope you and your family remain safe and well and are able to see the most positive way through the current challenges. I know my staff and I have appreciated all of the positive messages of support and thanks we have received in recent weeks – they really do make a huge difference to morale 😊

Yours sincerely,