

Our School Plan for the Reopening and Operation of Thornton Primary School Summer Term 2020



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This document sets out our pathway for the reopening and operation of Thornton Primary School for the period of June and July 2020. We are currently living through an international health emergency, a once in a generation event. The world's understanding, and our Government's response, to COVID-19 is evolving on an almost daily basis. This document outlines our proposed pathway as of June 2020, it is highly likely that there will be many twists and turns and this document will need to be adjusted accordingly.

- Section A** The principles which underpin and inform decisions regarding the reopening of Thornton Primary School and operational decisions during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Section B** A description of our three Phases.
- Section C** Our plan for next half term (June and July 2020).
- Section D** Consultation outcomes.
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Section A

A SET OF PRINCIPLES FOR THE REOPENING AND OPERATION OF THORNTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

We have created a set of principles which will support Thornton Primary School and governors in deciding how we reopen and operate during this current COVID-19 pandemic. These principles have been created in consultation with staff and parents, and with reference to guidance documents from Public Health England, the Department for Education, and our Local Authority.

1. All our decisions will be rooted in our school community values
2. We will be mindful of Public Health England guidance.
3. We believe the best place for our children is in school.
4. School must be a safe place. All decisions carry a certain degree of risk but risks must be minimised. Detailed risk assessments will be carried out.
5. In addition to being safe, our community must also believe that school is safe. We will be open and transparent in order to build confidence and maintain trust. Parents must feel it is a safe place to send their children, children must feel school is a safe environment in which to learn and staff must feel it is a safe place in which to work.
6. School is not just a place for children. We will consult with and consider the needs of all staff.
7. We will be mindful of the safety and mental, emotional and physical wellbeing of our children, their families and our staff.
8. We aim to create and maintain a culture of vigilance. Practices will be closely monitored and adjusted, if and when required.
9. We recognise that lockdown has caused the loss of routine, structure, friendship, opportunity and freedom. We aim to support the mental health and well-being of our children. We will modify our curriculum and teaching and learning practices to reflect this aim.
10. The reopening and returning to 'normal' school life will take time and it will be carefully planned and managed. It cannot, and will not, be decided by arbitrary dates.
11. We will consider the needs of different groups of children, and individual children, and will prioritise these children where we feel this is appropriate.
12. We will plan for changes that are sustainable for the medium and longer term, and are as supportive as possible for children and families whilst being manageable for school. Our plans will adhere to the principles laid out in this document.
13. We will maintain a flexible and adaptable approach, responsive to the changing needs of our school, our local and our national community. We will be mindful of ongoing Government guidelines and legislation.
14. The careful and phased reopening of school will focus on supporting children to learn, to stay safe, and to enjoy being back with friends and their teachers.

15. We aim to ensure consistency of provision wherever possible. We believe children are best served through a little schooling often rather than a lot of schooling now and again.

16. We believe children need to be taught and supported by teachers and teaching support staff who know them well. Relationships are at the heart of school life. Children need to be taught by: staff who know their names; staff who know the things which make them smile and laugh; staff who know what worries them and makes them feel sad; staff who know how they learn best and when they need a little extra help. We see minimal value in children returning to school with teachers and teaching support staff who the children don't know and who are not known to the staff.

17. Families will be encouraged and supported to send their children back to school when the time is right. We will work closely with families who have concerns and will do our best to find solutions.

18. We recognise that we are privileged to have such strong and supportive parent-school relationships. Our decisions will be made in the belief that our parents will support us and will abide by our requests.

Section B

A DESCRIPTION OF OUR THREE PHASES

We believe it is helpful to think of school operating in three different phases. These are Thornton Primary School's phases and thoughts are not based on any national or local recommendations.

	National Level	Local Thornton Primary Level
Phase 1 Full lockdown School Closure	<p>The Government asked all schools to close.</p> <p>The Government asked schools to provide childcare support for a very small group of children e.g. vulnerable children or children whose parents are key workers.</p>	<p>Thornton Primary School closed for schooling (lessons) for all pupils.</p> <p>Thornton Primary School provides childcare based on guidance from Government for vulnerable children or children whose parents are key workers.</p>
Phase 2 Partial lockdown Partial reopening or partial closure	<p>The Government asks schools to begin to reopen for certain groups of children.</p> <p>Phase 2 also includes the closing down of schools where schools are asked to move from Phase 3 to Phase 2. At the beginning of this pandemic (March 2020) schools were asked to move from Phase 3 into Phase 1, there was no partial lockdown just an immediate full lockdown.</p>	<p>Phase 2 is the most challenging for any school to manage and it is highly likely that schools will take different approaches to reflect their individual circumstances.</p> <p>It is important to note that Phase 2 is very fluid and procedures and practices may change to reflect changing priorities and needs, both nationally and locally.</p> <p>When making reopening/closure and operational decisions within Phase 2 Thornton Primary School will follow the principles outlined in this document.</p>
Phase 3 No lockdown	<p>The Government asks all schools to return to normal, no restrictions are required.</p>	<p>Thornton Primary School will be fully open to all pupils.</p>

Section C

OUR SCHOOL PLAN – MOVING OUT OF PHASE 1 AND INTO PHASE 2

Monday 1 June 2020 to Friday 17 July 2020

All of us want to get our children back into school as soon as it is safe to do so. Working in a school is a true vocation. Staff have devoted their lives to the care and education of Thornton Primary School children. We miss them terribly and we do not want to see our classrooms empty for a day longer than they need to be. However, our first priority has to be the safety of everyone in our school community. We know that you, as parents, will have many questions and concerns. We hope this document will answer your questions and will allay your concerns. While, of course, we are mindful of national advice we have, and will continue, to use our principles as a framework for making decisions. On occasions, while mindful of national and local advice, we may adopt a slightly different approach if we feel this is in the best interest of our children, our staff and our families.

From the beginning of June we move from Phase 1 (full lockdown) to Phase 2 (partial lockdown). We must be quite clear that we are not in Phase 3 where school life returns to normal – we believe we are currently a long way from returning to Phase 3.

As described in Section B of this document, Phase 2 is a form of lockdown where strict measures are required to ensure the safety of everyone in our school community and to ensure transmission remains low. Phase 2 is also very fluid and while we believe the plan outlined in this section is the best approach for Thornton Primary School now, we must be really clear that things may change and our plan may need to change accordingly. We recognise that this uncertainty will cause anxiety and we will endeavour to be as open and as transparent as possible.

We thank you for all your patience and support. We recognise that this plan will be challenging for you as you attempt to juggle work commitments with a partial reopening of school. During Phase 2, while we will welcome Year 6 children back to school, but feel we must also state that you will not be fined if you choose to keep your Year 6 child at home. We recognise circumstances will be different for each family.

Phase 2 Starting at Step 1	School will reopen to Year 6 pupils only from Monday 8 th June 2020. This will be a partial reopening and children will attend school in small groups called 'bubble' groups of no more than 10 children. Once they have been allocated their 'bubble' group, they will be unable to move into a different group. Children will remain in this 'bubble' group all day, including break and lunchtimes, and will not be able to mix with other 'bubble' groups. Childcare provision will continue for vulnerable pupils as well as children whose parents are Key Workers.
Phase 2 Moving to Step 2	School will reopen for children in Year 3, Year 4 and Year 5. This will not follow the same model for Year 6 children as outlined in Step 1 due to available space restrictions. Children in Years 3 to Year 5 will be allocated morning or afternoon sessions and will attend for a few days each week with the exception of a Friday. Children will be in small groups of no more than 10 children. These children will not be in school during the lunchtime period.

	Childcare provision will continue for vulnerable children and children whose parents are key workers.
Phase 2 Moving to Step 3	Some groups of children will return full time. Group sizes will need to increase above 10. Some lockdown restrictions will remain in place. It is highly unlikely that we will reach step 3 before the end of this academic year.

Timescales – we cannot give arbitrary dates. Phase 2 Step 1 will be from Monday 8th June 2020. We will only move to Phase 2 Step 2 when it is safe to do so and when we are advised to do so by national and/or local government. We do not know how long we will remain in Phase 2 and Phase 2 may continue into the new academic year.

Section D

CONSULTATION OUTCOMES

At every stage in the production of our plan we have listened to and carefully considered the advice on offer, both nationally and locally. We are still listening and we will change our plan if we believe we need to – being flexible and responsive is one of our principles outlined in Section A of this document.

Consultation Responses – Thornton Primary School Teachers

Do you believe Thornton Primary's approach (just Year 6 pupils in 'bubble' groups of no more than 10) to reopening is the right approach for the reopening of our school?	Yes – 54% No – 46%
Do you believe the Government's plan (full time option for all children for the last month of the summer term) is the right approach for the reopening of Thornton Primary School?	Yes – 35% No – 65%
How would you rate the support you are receiving to prepare for the phased return of pupils (Year 6 from 08.06.2020)?	3* - 4% 4* - 23% 5* - 73%
What additional training/information sessions would you like to receive to further support you? (please write 'none' if you cannot identify any)	None – 85% - Social distancing - Fire drill - behaviour

Consultation Responses – Thornton Primary School Support Staff

Do you believe Thornton Primary's approach (just Year 6 pupils in 'bubble' groups of no more than 10) to reopening is the right approach for the reopening of our school?	Yes – 89% No – 11%
Do you believe the Government's plan (full time option for all children for the last month of the summer term) is the right approach for the reopening of Thornton Primary School?	Yes – 11% No - 89%
How would you rate the support you are receiving to prepare for the phased return of pupils (Year 6 from 08.06.2020)?	3* - 24% 4* - 24% 5* - 52%
What additional training/information sessions would you like to receive to further support you? (please write 'none' if you cannot identify any)	None – 89% -first aid

Consultation Responses – Year 6 Parents (50/150 responses)

<p>Taking into account the Government advice for parents and information that accompanied this survey, do you plan to send your child into school on the 1st June 2020?</p>	<p>Yes – 8 (16%)</p> <p>No – 36 (72%)</p> <p>Undecided – 6 (12%)</p>
<p>How do you feel about your child returning to school?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Not comfortable - Not able to maintain social distancing - Unsafe - Scared - Too risky - Worried about catching the virus - Apprehensive
<p>What is your biggest concern about them returning to school?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Safety - Catching the virus and becoming ill - Social distancing being maintained - Not being able to play with friends - Child bringing the virus home to vulnerable family members in household - Crowding during drop-off and pick-up times - Child's underlying health condition making them more vulnerable and at greater risk - Transition to secondary school
<p>How might we best help you with this?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Let us decide when it's safe for us to send our children back - Online work from home instead of being in school - Paper booklets rather than online versions - Sanitisation - Staggered drop-off and pick-up times - Strict hygiene – hand washing etc - Strict social distancing - Not open the school – stay closed until September - Communication about your plans
<p>Is there anything else that you would like to raise with us?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Y6 transition arrangements - Refund for Y6 residential trip - Inform us when it's safe for the children to return - Not too many children in a class - When will other children be allowed to return to school - What will happen at lunchtimes

Section E

FURTHER DETAILS – QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

This final section of our document is a question and answer section - questions and answers are in no particular order. This, we hope, will address many of the questions that we know you have and will provide some further detail regarding our current plan. National and local guidance is being updated on an almost daily basis so please do bear with us if we need to change our plan.

1. Is it now safe to send my child back to school?

Can school guarantee that my child, or a member of staff, will not be infected by COVID-19 if they return to school?

No, we cannot guarantee this, there is no absolute. But we are putting measures to minimise the risk and we will only reopen school if we believe school is safe. One of our principles for reopening states – ‘School must be a safe place. All decisions carry a certain degree of risk but risks must be minimised. Detailed risk assessments will be carried out.’

How will school ensure there is social distancing? Will school maintain a 2m distance rule at all times?

We know that social distancing is fundamental if we wish to reduce transmission and keep the R number below 1. The guidance we have received from the Government says:

‘We know that, unlike older children and adults, early years (Nursery and Reception) and primary age children cannot be expected to remain 2 metres apart from each other and staff. In deciding to bring more children back to early years and schools, we are taking this into account. Schools should therefore work through the hierarchy of measures set out below:

-avoiding contact with anyone with symptoms

-frequent hand cleaning and good respiratory hygiene practices

-regular cleaning of settings

-minimising contact and mixing

It is still important to reduce contact between people as much as possible, and we can achieve that and reduce transmission risk by ensuring children, young people and staff where possible, only mix in a small, consistent group and that small group stays away from other people and groups.

Public Health England (PHE) is clear that if early years settings, schools and colleges do this, and crucially if they are also applying regular hand cleaning, hygiene and cleaning measures and handling potential cases of the virus as per the advice, then the risk of transmission will be lowered.’

www.GOV.Uk publication - Coronavirus (COVID-19): implementing protective measures in education and childcare settings. 11th May 2020

We need to be really clear on this point, we will put measures in place to distance children but we cannot ensure children remain 2m apart from each other and staff when in school. We will

verbally and supportively remind the children to maintain social distancing, and will talk with parents of any children who are struggling to do this. It may be that for some children who struggle, remote learning from home will be the safest option for everyone: this will be a discussion staff will have with parents immediately if a concern is identified.

What hygiene practices will be in place?

Children will be required to wash their hands when they arrive in school, handwashing will be supervised by a member of staff. Children will be required to wash their hands throughout the day including at the start and end of breaktimes and lunchtimes, as well as before they go home. Visitors entering school will be kept to a minimum and they will be required to wash their hands or use hand sanitiser before entering the main school building. Anyone arriving at school who is symptomatic will not be allowed into the main school building and they will be asked to leave our site immediately.

In regard to respiratory hygiene, we will provide tissues in each classroom, but we do ask that children have their own supply of tissues with them if possible. The children will continue to be taught: Catch it! Bin it! Kill it! – please reinforce this slogan at home. Each classroom has a lidded pedal style bin for tissues which will be emptied and cleaned during the day and at the end of the day.

What cleaning practices will be in place?

A detailed, increased cleaning schedule has been created to reduce transmission. To reduce the risk of transmission, classroom furniture and surfaces, toilets, all touch surfaces such as door handles and all equipment children will have been in contact with will be cleaned every breaktime and lunchtime and at the end of every school day.

Will toilets be a place of high transmission?

We recognise that different groups of children using the same toilets pose an increased risk of transmission between different groups. Therefore, each group will have their own designated toilet block to access. Toilets will be cleaned before and after break and lunchtimes to avoid transmission. Toilets will be cleaned again at the end of the school day.

Will school staff be wearing personal protective equipment?

We will strictly adhere to the Government advice in regard to PPE. The current advice (www.gov.uk publication - Coronavirus (COVID-19): implementing protective measures in education and childcare settings. 11th May 2020) is that the majority of staff in education settings do not require PPE. The guidance does list a very small number of cases where Public Health England believes PPE would be appropriate.

Will staff be wearing face masks? Will children be allowed to wear face masks in school?

Wearing a face covering or face mask in schools, or other education setting, has not been recommended by the Government. The only exception is where a child becomes unwell with symptoms of coronavirus and needs direct personal care until they can return home.

What will happen if my child, or another child, begins to display symptoms?

We will strictly adhere to the guidance from Public Health England (PHE). If anyone becomes unwell with a new continuous cough, or a high temperature, or a loss or change to their sense of smell or taste, they will be sent home and parents will be advised to follow PHE guidance - COVID-19: guidance for households with a possible coronavirus infection guidance (<https://www.gov.uk/Government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance>). This guidance states that you must use the 111 online coronavirus service who will tell you what to do and help you get a test if you need one. It also states, call 111 if you cannot get help online: do not go to places like a GP surgery, hospital or pharmacy.

Where a child is awaiting collection, they will be moved to our small meeting room at the front of school where they will be isolated. If they need to go to the toilet while waiting to be collected they will use the visitor toilet. This will then be cleaned and disinfected before being used by anyone else. If the child requires personal care staff will wear personal protective equipment.

Will the member of staff who has helped a child who is displaying symptoms also have to go home?

No, the current guidance (Coronavirus COVID-19: implementing protective measures in education and child care settings, 11th May 2020) states that staff do not need to go home unless they develop symptoms themselves or the child subsequently tests positive.

What will happen if there is a confirmed case of coronavirus in school?

When a child, or staff member, develops symptoms compatible with coronavirus, they will be sent home and asked to isolate for 7 days. All fellow household members must then self-isolate for 14 days. All staff and children who are displaying symptoms need to get tested. Where the child, or staff member, tests negative they can return to school and their fellow household members can end their self-isolation. Where the child, or staff member, tests positive the rest of their 'bubble' group will be sent home and they will be advised to self-isolate for 14 days. The other household members of that wider group do not need to self-isolate unless the child, or staff member, in that group subsequently develops symptoms.

Will school be checking children's temperature at the start of each day?

No, we will not be checking children's temperature. Government guidance (<https://www.gov.uk/Government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance>) states that routine testing of a child's temperature is not a reliable method for identifying coronavirus.

My child has been classified as clinically vulnerable, will they have to attend?

If your child has been classified as clinically vulnerable they should not be attending school. If you are unsure if your child falls into this category we strongly recommend you seek medical advice from your child's GP. The guidance we have received from the Government states:

For the vast majority of children and young people, coronavirus is a mild illness. Children and young people (0 to 18 years of age) who have been classed as clinically extremely vulnerable due to pre-existing medical conditions have been advised to shield. We do not expect these children to be attending school or college, and they should continue to be supported at home as much as possible. Clinically vulnerable (but not clinically extremely vulnerable) people are those considered to be at a higher risk of severe illness from coronavirus. A small minority of children will fall into this category, and parents should follow medical advice if their child is in this category.

2. Can you please share some more details of your plan?

What are the timings for the school day for Year 6?

Morning session – The morning session will start at 9am. Children can be dropped off at school from 8:30am – you must not arrive at school before 8:30am as we have closed all waiting areas. Children will enter via the external door nearest to their classroom (or the classroom door itself).

Can will please ask parents to stagger their arrival time to avoid long queues. We are suggesting:

8:30am-8:45am Year 6 children in 'Group A'

8:45am-9:00am Year 6 children in 'Group B'

9:00am-9:15am Year 6 children in 'Group C'

School will provide ALL children with a healthy packed lunch (nothing from home should be brought into school).

All children will need to be collected by 3:30pm from Monday to Thursday, and by 12pm on Fridays. It is essential that children are collected on time as there will be no facilities in school where children can wait for their parents who are late collecting them. Children will exit via the external door nearest to their classroom (or the classroom door itself).

Can will please ask parents to stagger their arrival time to collect their children to avoid long queues. We are suggesting:

3.00-3.15pm Year 6 children in 'Group A' (FRIDAYS: 12-12.10pm)

3.15-3.30pm Year 6 children in 'Group B' (FRIDAYS: 12.10-12.20pm)

3.30pm Year 6 children in 'Group C' (FRIDAYS: 12.20-12.30pm)

Why is Thornton Primary School closed for schooling on Friday afternoon?

Children will not be returning to their normal lessons and our normal school curriculum. Teachers will need to create a 'bespoke' curriculum. This new curriculum will support our children in coming to terms with this health emergency and will aim to begin to recover the education lost during full lockdown. No schooling on Friday afternoon will give these teachers time, each week, to plan and prepare. This time will also enable teachers to reflect on and evaluate their practices. We are unable to ask a different member of staff to cover this time as we are avoiding unnecessary contact between groups of children and different staff, this is to reduce the risk of transmission between groups of children.

How many children will there be in each schooling group?

We have planned for a maximum of 10 children in each group, this is a more cautious approach than the Government recommendations of 15 children in each group. The decision to limit our group sizes to 10 children is made on the available space within each classroom and the importance of the need to maintain appropriate level of social distancing.

Will school allocate each child a schooling 'bubble' group?

Yes. Currently, we are carefully considering the groups we allocate Year 6 children to in order to ensure we have the correct sized 'bubble' groups taught in a space big enough to ensure social distancing rules can be applied. Therefore, if you decide at first that you do not wish to send your Year 6 child back to school and then change your mind, you must provide us with 48 hours notice. This will allow us to make the necessary arrangements to ensure we can accommodate your Year 6 child safely in school.

For Year 3, 4 and 5, we will be contacting you over the next few weeks to talk to you about the potential return of your child for a few weeks towards the end of the summer term.

What will the drop-off arrangements be at the start of each day?

A one-way pedestrian system will be in operation for morning drop-offs. To enter school, please use the gates on Thornton Road to enter the school site and St. Agatha's Road to exit the school site. On entry to school, please adhere to social distancing rules. Please note, to minimise the number of adults on the school site we are requesting that only one adult drops-off and picks-up. Please leave siblings at home if you are able to. No dogs at all please

What will the pick-up arrangements be at the end of the school day?

Parents will be asked to wait on the school playground and will be asked to observe social distancing rules. Waiting points will be marked with yellow paint. Two areas will be created – a waiting zone inside school and a collection zone outside the external door. Children will be brought into the collection zone on a staggered basis. Parents will then move forward into the collection zone as their child is brought forward, one at a time. Please bear with us as it will take a few minutes to reunite all the children with the right parent.

Can I arrange for another parent to collect my child?

We would strongly advise against this, particularly as it does not comply with the social distancing guidance and could pose a high risk of increasing transmission between household groups.

Will I be able to talk to my child's teacher at the beginning or end of the school day?

No, a member of staff will be on the school gates at the beginning and the end of each school day. We ask that you pass on messages to them and they will then pass on the message to your child's class teacher. If you need to discuss a matter with your child's class teacher please email the school office using enquiry@thornton.bham.sch.uk. Your child's class teacher will then telephone you to discuss the matter.

What are the changes to childcare provision?

We will continue to offer childcare for vulnerable children and for children of key workers, in line with national guidance. If a Year 6 child attends childcare they will not be able to join a Year 6 schooling 'bubble' group, this is to avoid transmission between groups of children.

A team of staff is allocated to each childcare group and they will stay with their childcare group from 8.45am until 3.30pm Monday to Thursday and 8.45am to 12.30pm on Fridays. The same measures will be in place as for those Year 6 children in the schooling 'bubble' groups. Children in childcare groups will eat their packed lunch (provided by school) in their designated room at their desk. They will use the side 'treehouse playground' and be kept separate from the Year 6 'bubble' groups. All children will be kept in their groups and will not be allowed to mix with other childcare groups.

Will my child have to wear school uniform?

It will not be compulsory for children to return to school wearing their school uniform, including children who are attending childcare, as we recognise that managing daily laundry can be a bit tricky. Where possible, we would like children to be able to wear a set of clean, fresh clothes each day to support hygiene and reduce transmission.

What will happen when children arrive in school?

Children will take their coats into their classroom and keep them at their seat. We know that our cloakroom areas and our locker areas are very congested spaces and the risk of transmission in these areas are high. Children in Year 6 will enter their classrooms through their classroom doors where possible. Some groups may need to enter and exit the school building using main doors from the playground – this will depend on the number of children returning, and we will let you know more detail when you book a place for your child to return.

What will the curriculum look like? What will be taught during schooling?

The curriculum will be very different from our normal curriculum which is based on the National Curriculum. Teachers have begun to plan and prepare their new curriculum. We will issue further details in due course. However, we want to reassure you that we will be placing high importance on the children's wellbeing and mental health throughout the school day.

Will children share classroom resources?

No, it is important that children do not share resources such as pencils, rulers etc. We will provide each child with their own stationary set: each child will have their own pencil case with their own pencil, pritt glue stick, rubber, ruler etc. These resources will be kept on their desk and only used by them.

Will there be break times?

Yes, there will be break times in the morning and at lunchtime. Free play will not be allowed at break times. All our hard work to avoid transmission within the school building and between groups of children could be easily undone during this time. Each group will be given a designated time when they can go onto the playground: they will always go out onto the same area of playground for breaks and lunchtimes. Break times will be for fresh air and movement. It will be similar to a keep fit session, children will be spread out and will complete a fitness routine led by their teacher or one of their peers.

What will happen about school meals?

We are working closely with our caterers, ABM, to provide all children with a cold packed lunch. This will be eaten at their own desk to minimise transmission.

The children in the childcare group will also eat their school packed lunch in their classroom at their own desk.

Will there be morning tuck?

No, we will not be offering morning tuck. Children may bring a snack from home.

Will there be daily collective worship or assemblies?

Yes, but they will take place in classrooms as there will be no gathering in the school hall for any form of assembly.

Will there be PE lessons?

Yes, but these will be outside and will be weather permitting. Lessons will be planned to ensure children do not have physical contact with each other.

Will I receive a fine if I decide not to send my child to school this academic year?

No. You must make the decision which is right for your child. We are here to support you in what is a very difficult decision.

If my child is in childcare can they also attend Year 6 schooling in a 'bubble' group?

No, if you choose childcare for your child they must remain in that childcare group, children are not allowed to move between childcare and Year 6 schooling 'bubble' groups. This is to avoid transmission between different groups.

Will childcare be available to all families?

No, the current criteria remain. Childcare is in place for vulnerable children and children whose parents are key workers, as defined by the Government.

Will home learning continue during Phase 2? Will Thornton Primary School teachers continue to add activities and ideas onto their class pages?

Yes, during Phase 2 Step 1, when we will not be offering schooling for children in Years 3, 4 or 5 their class teachers will continue to update their year group pages with ideas and activities each week. For children in Year 6, home learning via their year group pages will also be provided as we are already aware there are some children who are shielding and unable to return to school. We would encourage parents to continue to make sure of the resources now available online, including those on BBC Bitesize and Oak Academy (links to these can be found on year group pages for home learning on the school website).

My child is in Year 6 and is returning to schooling in Phase 2 Step 1. Will their arrangements have to change when you move to Phase 2 Step 2 and more children return?

Hopefully no. Our plan has been created recognising that there will be a time when children from other year groups begin to return to school - when we move from Phase 2 Step 1 to Phase 2 Step 2. We have tried to avoid creating a plan which has to be constantly changed and adjusted for we know that consistency and routine, in whatever form this is, is essential.

What would happen if my child's teacher is absent from school?

If your child's teacher is absent from school we may have to close their schooling 'bubble' provision until your child's teacher returns. We will not move another member of staff from another group to cover an absent colleague, this is to reduce the risk of transmission between groups. We will not call in an agency teacher to cover.

3. Can you please explain why you have chosen this plan?

In Section A of this document, we describe the principles which underpin our decision-making process. We considered many different options for the reopening and operation of Thornton Primary School during Phase 2, partial lockdown. The plan we chose is the option we believe adheres most closely to our principles.

If all Year 6 children identified in Phase 2 Step 1 return on a full-time basis from early June, will other children be able to return before the summer holidays?

The Government's preferred option was for all Year 6 to return full time from Monday 1st June, however, we have delayed this date until Monday 8th June to ensure the school site and all staff are fully prepared to welcome the children back.

By adopting this full-time, small group model for Year 6 children, we would really struggle to welcome all the other children back into school before the summer holidays in a similar way and maintain our high levels of safety (assuming social distancing rules are still applied).

Based on small groups of 10 children per teacher/classroom, we would require:

Year group	Teachers required	Classrooms required
3	15	15
4	15	15
5	15	15
6	15	15
TOTAL	60 teachers	60 classrooms

We would not have the number of teaching staff or the space capacity to accommodate small 'bubble' groups for all year groups.

The Government's plan fails to recognise the importance of relationships in a school. Relationships are fundamental. We are keen for children to come back into school so we can reassure them, reduce their anxiety levels and support their mental and emotional well-being. This is best achieved when they are with a teacher they know and are with a teacher who knows them.

In terms of accommodating Year 3, 4 and 5 children towards the end of the summer term, we are currently exploring the feasibility of models that involve part-time, for a few days each week. We will update you with more information once we have decided about how best to safely proceed.

Why is Thornton Primary School's plan different to other schools?

We are aware that different schools are considering different models and are preparing different plans for their reopening. We have been talking with local schools to understand their thinking. Each school is preparing a plan which they believe is right for their school based on their school circumstances. It would be unfeasible to have one plan which can be rolled out across the country, or indeed across a local area. Each school has its own unique set of circumstances and its own unique community.

Have you considered different part-time models?

Yes, we have considered many different part-time models, including:

- Children coming into school for different blocks of days within a single week. For example, half a class full time on a Monday and Tuesday, closed on a Wednesday for cleaning and teacher preparation time and then the other half of the class full time on a Thursday and a Friday.
- Half the class coming into school full time for a complete week. Then off school for a complete week while the other half of the class are in school for their week.

We applied all of the different part-time models to our principles. We chose our model as we believe this model adheres most closely to our principles – see Section A.

Why does my child need to stay in the same 'bubble' group? Why can't they change 'bubble' groups?

To ensure school is as safe as possible for everyone we must reduce the risk of potential transmission between groups, we can do this by ensuring children stay in the same group.

This also applies to childcare. If you choose childcare (this option is only available for parents who meet the criteria) your child will need to stay in the same childcare group and not mix between childcare groups.

We hope this document has clearly set out our plans and the measures we have put into place to keep you, your child and our staff safe.