

2nd July 2020

Dear Parent / Carer

Returning to school

We know this has been a very difficult time for children and their families and we thank you all for the efforts you have made to support your child's learning at home. Most schools are now open more widely as the COVID-19 infection rates fall.

This letter is being sent to you to encourage you to consider sending your children back to school if you have not done so and if the school has capacity to welcome your child so that they can meet their friends and teachers again before the end of term. We know a lot of parents have found it hard to keep their children engaged with education at home but also may be concerned about sending their children back to school. We hope that the information in this letter will reassure you and your child.

Primary Pupils

We know that saying goodbye is important and if your child is in year 6 it is an important time for them to say goodbye to their friends and teacher. For other year groups, if the schools can welcome them back, then it is a great opportunity to go in and see teachers and perhaps classrooms for next year.

The 'lockdown' has had a very big effect on us all, but particularly children. By allowing your child to return to school, they will be able to enjoy the last couple of weeks with their class teacher and friends whilst ending the academic year positively. For the younger pupils they will be able to re-establish relationships with their friends and start to build a relationship with their new teacher.

Secondary Pupils

Pupils in year 10 and 12 will be taking their GCSE exams this time next year. Returning to school now allows face to face time so teachers can better help pupils catch up on any lost learning. Because groups are smaller at the moment your child will receive lots of attention from their teacher which could help them settle back in.

Whatever year group your child is in and whatever their academic ability the most important thing about returning to school is that it allows your child to socialise with their friends which is very important after this long period of learning at home.

How are schools keeping children safe?

All Lambeth schools complete a very detailed risk assessment to reduce the spread of infection and keep your child safe.

The risk assessment considers:

- travel to school.
- your child's health.
- consideration of those who are living with vulnerable adults.
- hygiene factors such as washing of hands and closing schools for deep cleaning

- distances being observed between groups or 'bubbles' of children and adults
- Staggered lunch and break times

You can ask for a copy of the risk assessment or plan for wider reopening or it may be on the school's website.

For more information on keeping children safe then further information is available from the Lambeth Safeguarding Children Panel [here](#).

The 'Bubble' System

To reduce the risk of spreading the coronavirus schools have organised their teaching and play time so that children don't mix with lots of other children, they do this by:

- Operating a 'bubble' or small group system which consists of a class teacher and possibly a teaching assistant and no more than 15 pupils.
- Children will be spaced out in their classrooms and have their own equipment, books and resources
- Below is a picture of what a classroom in a primary school currently looks like and a weblink to Lambeth Secondary School setting out what a school day might be like
- Your child's bubble will not mix with pupils in other bubbles. Pupils will stay together break and lunch time and will go home and arrive at a particular time
- Those children that are in year 10 will only return to school on a specific day.

Please do contact your child's school for further information



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IxUiQMaptRM>



What can you do?

- Contact your child's school to ask for information such as the risk assessment or visit your child's school website.
- Ask what your child's 'bubble' will look like.
- Ask your child's school if your child can return on a part timetable as to build up your confidence in returning your child/ren to school.
- Go and visit the school by appointment and see how things operate or look at the school's website or twitter account
- Talk to your child about how they feel about returning to school.

Education at home and other support

If you choose to keep you child at home for now, please do access the online learning that is being provided by your child's school. If you are having difficulties with either accessing online learning or keeping your child engaged then please speak to your child's school or your social worker to see how they can assist you.

Further information and support for pupils with SEND is available from the [Lambeth Local Offer](#)

The Lambeth Educational Psychology Service has created some online video support [here](#)

Some young people between the ages of 15 and 18 who don't get on well with school or college we have created the [Unlock](#) programme to offer new ways of thinking, new skills and new experiences.

Free School Meals over the summer holiday

We are happy to let you know that the free school meal voucher system and food hub scheme will be continuing over the summer for eligible children. Government guidance [here](#)
Please also contact your child's school for more details on this.

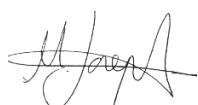
Summer activities

There are lots of summer activities planned from 10th July 2020. Information will be available on the [Lambeth Council website](#) and at your child/ren's school.

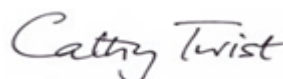
The Mayor's Fund for London has a [Summer of Food and Fun](#) activity programme for children and young people on Lambeth and Southwark.

You can also call and discuss any issues by contacting the Early Help duty line 020 7926 3100.

Yours sincerely



Merlin Joseph
Strategic Director of Children's Services



Cathy Twist
Director of Education & Learning





Alex Kubeyinje
Director of Children's Social Care

