



Hanley St Luke's C of E Aided Primary School

Learning, Laughing, Loving at Family St Luke's

Headteacher: Mrs L Williamson
BA (Hons) Cert Ed. NPQH

Email: office@hanleystlukes.com
www.hanleystlukes.com

Wellington Road, Hanley,
Stoke-on-Trent, ST1 3QH

Dear Parents,

I mentioned in my recent communication that school was trying to adapt our procedures in school to further reduce the size of our current year group bubbles. I am now in a position to share with you which year groups we feel this will operate successfully with and the details of our plan. It is in question and answer format for clarity:

Why are you making changes to size of bubbles?

We are attempting to limit the number of pupils identified as a close contact if we have a pupil test positive within a year group to avoid 60 families being affected when we could reduce that in some cases to 30.

Which year groups will trial operating mainly as class bubbles?

Year 1, 2, 4 & 5

Why can't all year groups operate as smaller class bubbles?

There are a range of logistical reasons but for our nursery and reception children one limiting factor is that they share outdoor learning areas throughout the day and the ratios of staff to pupils make this impossible to manage as the groupings need to be fluid to support a range of pupil needs.

Y3 and Y6 have both been identified as year groups requiring particular support following lockdown to address a range of needs. As such these children benefit from a range of mixed class teaching most of the morning and at various points throughout the day which needs to continue to meet our children's needs.

How will you reduce bubbles to classes for Y1,2,4,&5?

The main changes are to playtimes and lunchtimes and some amendments to arrival and dismissal to ensure each class is kept separate from the other.

When will these change start?

We will start officially on Monday 30th November but we are starting to trial some of the elements within the school day this week which don't directly impact on parents.

How will morning playtimes be affected?

We have adjusted procedures so that only one year group is on the playground at any one time and each class will have half of the playground each with at least a 2m gap in between the two groups. Reception will access their own outdoor learning spaces for their playtime to facilitate this.

How will lunchtimes be affected?

From Monday 30th November children in Y1,2,4 & 5 will alternate having their lunch in the dining room one day and in their classroom the next. So for instance if 1S is in the dining room, 1L will be in class. They will also alternate use of the playground at lunchtime, with one class being on the yard and one class enjoying activities in the classroom with access to fresh air and a run around later in the day, where possible. If children have eaten their lunch in class, they will have access to outdoor play on that day.

Will you be serving hot meals in classes?

No. On the days where children are eating lunch in class, then school meals will be a picnic bag with a sandwich/ wrap option (alternatives for dietary needs will be available). We do not have the staff or facilities to serve hot meals in all affected classrooms.

If my child is having a sandwich/ wrap option, will there still be choice?

Yes. We will take your child's order from the choices available either the day before or on the morning, depending on how this works best for both kitchen and classroom staff.

Will there be any changes to arrival and dismissal?

There will be minimal changes for the groups affected. Y1 and Y2 will wait in classes on the yard but will be taken off the yard to school in small groups as they arrive to be supervised by staff in the hall separated into classes until all Y1 & Y2 staff are off the yard.

All Y4 children will arrive at same gate as now but only 4S will use the fire escape entrance and 4L will walk around the path to enter school at the rear of building. On dismissal, 4L will dismiss out of the carpark gate just a few feet below the gate where they are usually dismissed. 4L parents would therefore perhaps be better waiting on opposite side of road or below the carpark gates and down Wellington Rd (once Reception parents have finished collection).

Y5 will dismiss and arrive as normal with staff ensuring classes are kept separate.

How will access to toilets work?

Toilets will be supervised where necessary (as now) to support younger children in only accessing the toilet with children from their class. Children are already well trained in only accessing the toilets with members of their year group and do this brilliantly so this should not be too tricky other than taking more time.

What about lunchtime and before and after clubs?

If your child enjoys a lunchtime club currently, you will receive a separate message ready for next week explaining the changes for the remaining weeks. Lexia clubs will be unaffected as the IT suite is large enough to separate the children into classes easily. Choir clubs can also operate with classes kept appropriately separate where necessary.

What about Breakfast Club?

Staff will try to keep children in class only bubbles but this may not always be possible depending on numbers. Again we will keep careful records of mixed bubbles to use for close contact identification.

Will staff only work in one class?

Not always, no. We have tried to minimise staff working across more than one class and have made some changes to reduce this but it is impossible to function safely and effectively, or to cover absence, without staff crossing bubbles. However, we will try to ensure that where staff do work with classes outside of their 'base' that contact is kept to a minimum, if possible.

Will these changes guarantee that if a child tests positive in the parallel class that my child will not be identified as a contact?

No. We cannot guarantee this as there will still be some cases where very small group intervention may take place across two classes but we will keep careful records of children affected to minimise impact which will now be far easier with these additional measures in place.

Why are you only considering class size bubbles now?

When we opened in September, we felt year group bubbles was the best use of staff and gave a near normal experience for pupils. However, the local authority has asked all schools to reassess their risk assessments and operating plans as the winter is likely to cause us more disruption. Of course, we have also seen first -hand the disruption caused to families, staff and school with whole year group closures which we wish to minimise going forward. We are not out of the woods yet, by a long way.

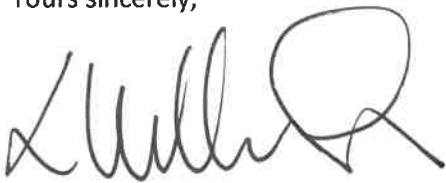
Will you look to include the other year groups at some point in these class bubble plans?

We constantly review our plans and will continue to do so both for those year groups where we are trialling class bubbles, and for those where we are keeping the existing year group bubbles, but it is unlikely that we will ever be able to include all year groups for a range of logistical reasons.

If you have any queries or concerns please speak to your child's class teacher or to the office.

Thank you for your ongoing support.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L Williamson', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Mrs L Williamson
Headteacher