LONG CLOSE SCHOOL

BACK TO SCHOOL

A guide to a smooth and safe transition

LONG CLOSE SCHOOL

MESSAGE FROM THE HEADTEACHER

Over the past few months, our lives have been turned upside down by the COVID-19 pandemic and the impact that the virus has had on our families, our communities and our nation has been catastrophic. A nationwide lockdown is something I never would have imagined happening in my life time.

Amidst all of this change, and as we have entered unchartered territory, it has been fantastic to observe the spirit of Long Close prevail. The response of our school community during the current pandemic has been absolutely astonishing. The last few months have not been an easy time for any of us, but I must commend everyone for their endeavours throughout these ever shifting and complex times. I would like to thank our pupils for their resilience, energy and enterprise, the staff for their hard work, passion and innovation and parents, for the time and obvious support you are giving your children.

When you encounter a significant challenge as a community, you really do find out how strong your collective spirit is, and the events of recent months have certainly presented such a challenge. The sense of togetherness, inner strength, and perseverance in the face of adversity really is fantastic to see and has made me appreciate our community here at Long Close all the more.

After several weeks of lockdown I am pleased to be able to tell you that we shall be re-opening our schools to children in Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 following the half term break. We are keen to support this return, for the wellbeing of the children, as much as anything else. We are aware that children need their friends and the nurturing school environment, and the classroom is definitely the best place for their education.

Since the announcement to reopen schools was made, we have been planning in earnest and we are leaving nothing to chance in our preparation. As you will appreciate there is significant logistical complexity in facilitating the safe return of any pupils to the school site. Much thought and consideration has been given to ensuring the safest possible return for your children and I want to give you absolute reassurance that the safety of our pupils and staff is of utmost priority.

As this is a pandemic, we understand it is not possible to eliminate all risk, however we will take every possible precaution and continuously review our practice. We are following the Department for Education's guidance closely as we prepare for reopening. These measures include teaching small classes or clusters of pupils, social distancing in the school buildings as much as possible and an enhanced cleaning regime both at the end of the day and during the day – as well as regular and careful handwashing. I would also like to assure you that we shall only reopen after completing a thorough risk assessment.

We are fortunate to be well supported by the central Cognita Team, and we have also drawn heavily upon expertise from Cognita colleagues around the globe on how to manage the transition back to school smoothly. Cognita's Health and Safety Manager (Europe) will be visiting the school ahead of reopening to ensure all the health and safety and facilities checks have been carried out meticulously.

As our teaching staff return to the classroom fulltime, we will no longer be able to teach our pupils online. Of course, we understand that there will be some children who are shielding or who have underlying health conditions, who will not be able to return to school and in these cases we shall be providing their curriculum at home, as we did in the immediate aftermath of the closure of school, combined with regular check-ins with their teacher. We appreciate your understanding that the curriculum offered will be modified by circumstances so that as far as possible pupils and staff are safe at all times. This includes staggered starts and ends to the shortened school day.

I hope that all families will feel comfortable enough to return their children to school and will be reassured by the rigour of our planning and the significant measures that have been undertaken to keep your children as safe as possible. I know that you will appreciate how essential it is that we do all we can to keep all members of our community safe. Collectively, and with a cohesive, communal approach, I am positive that Long Close will make the very best of a challenging situation.

Headmistress
Miss K Nijjar

RE-OPENING FOR YEAR 1

APPROACH & TIMELINE

In developing the plan for our return to school we have followed government guidelines, listened to your views through our Parent Survey and built on learnings from other Cognita schools across the world.

The staggered return by year groups helps us to welcome the school community back through our doors in a safe, orderly and effective manner.

The schedule for return is set out clearly below, together with new timings for the school day.

If you have chosen to opt out of coming back to school but wish to opt back in, we will require 72 hours notice to ensure a safe return to school.

We will maintain consistent small (under 15 children plus 1 or 2 adults) groups to limit the chances of infection spreading.

Years	Date of return	School day	Drop off	Pick up
Year 1	Monday 15th June	8.50am-1.20pm	8.50am	1.20pm

A COMBINED TRANSITION TO

TEACHING & LEARNING

As a school we are committed to balancing the needs of both the students in our physical classrooms and also those who remain in our virtual classrooms.

To do this we will:

- Continue the online educational provision for students who are not yet in the 'returning' year groups.
- Provide as full a curriculum as possible for pupils attending school, although it will have to be tailored to be suitable.
- Provide online resources and support for those students who have actively decided not to return to school for the time being despite being in the 'returning' year groups.
- Please note, this will be on a 'best endeavours' basis. Our teachers are now spread across smaller physical classrooms (micro-classes or bubbles) so their capacity to also provide online teaching for these year groups is limited.
- Please also note, this will more resemble the "remote" phase of learning with less frequent feedback from the teacher.
- Live wellbeing check-ins will remain for those not attending as wellbeing is so important to us.

NEW GUIDANCE DURING THE SCHOOL DAY

We will all have to adapt our behaviour during the school day to ensure everyone's safety.

BEFORE YOU LEAVE FOR SCHOOL

You must check your child's temperature before leaving for school each morning. If it is raised, keep your child at home and notify the school of the temperature reading.

DROP OFF/COLLECTION

Changes to drop off and pick up routines will be required to reduce the number of people arriving at the Upton Court car park gate. Whilst we appreciate that this may result in a narrow window to drop off your child, it is essential to ensure a smooth transition at the start of the school day, and to minimise over-crowding or grouping, in the interest of infection control. We ask that you adhere to the social distancing measures while waiting, as marked out.

Gatherings on the School site to talk to one another will no longer be possible (which is of course disappointing), including at collection.

Please ensure that you stand on the marked points at both drop off and collection. To avoid congestion, we ask politely that you only enter the site within the allocated window assigned to your child's year group.

DROP OFF/COLLECTION

For drop off, pupils and parents will be directed from the student entrance to the drop off zone outside the KS1 building where they will be met by their teachers. .

Upon collection for all year groups, please queue at the marked points within the window allotted. All pupils and parents will exit the site using the pedestrian gate.

If your child is going to be late for their staggered start time, parents must contact the office by telephone to let them know. Office staff will then inform your child's teacher. Arrangements will then need to be made.

NEW GUIDANCE DURING THE SCHOOL DAY

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UNIFORM

It is advised that normal personal hygiene measures will suffice, and that clothes should be washed following a day in school. As we are aware that some items of uniform are not machine washable, and that it may not be possible or practical to wash your child's school uniform on a daily basis, pupils are not required to wear uniform. Your child's home clothing should be washed at the end of the school day, and your child should not wear these same clothes again, until washing has taken place. Please ensure your child is dressed suitably for a day in school, where they are comfortable and also able to take part in physical activity. We advise that they wear trainers to and from school, so that no changing will be needed during the school day.

EQUIPMENT

Pupils in Years 1 will not need to bring their own stationery to school as normal. We have ordered new stationery for them and each pupil will be required to leave the items on their desk to ensure they always have what they need in school.

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NEW GUIDANCE DURING THE SCHOOL DAY

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SOCIAL DISTANCING IN THE CLASSROOM

We are following the government advice: *…early years and primary age children cannot be expected to remain 2 metres apart from each other and staff*.

We know young children will not stay apart whilst playing, especially after not seeing each other for such a long time. To mitigate the risk we are following the advice that students are split into 'micro-classes'.

Government guidance stipulates a maximum size of 15 per class which we can easily accommodate with our small class sizes. This means that students will be assigned a class and will stay within it for the whole day, including at lunch and breaks. The teacher will also stay with them.

We are using all the available space and staff we have to achieve this government stipulation so your child may unfortunately not be in their usual classroom.

BREAK AND LUNCH TIMES

Break and lunch time will be staggered to avoid all returning children having to share recreational space and time. Pupils will only be able to spend break and lunch play time in their small groups, as opposed to the entire year group. Pupils will be unable to play on the climbing frame and the emphasis will be about creating their own games and resocialising with their friends. The teachers will give them some good ideas of games they can play!

MOVING AROUND SCHOOL

We have added signage and floor markings to help everyone maintain social distancing.

PERSONAL HYGIENE

We will continue to urge children to regularly wash hands just as we did pre-lockdown.
We have enough bathrooms to support this.

Extra supplies of soap and paper towels have been purchased. You can help by reminding your children of the need to regularly wash their hands for 20 seconds by singing happy birthday twice.

NEW GUIDANCE DURING THE SCHOOL DAY

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FIRST AID / ILLNESS

We will have paediatric first aiders on site, as well as additional first aiders. In the case of an accident or an emergency, we may need to come into physical contact with your child to support them, for example, if they have fallen over or require First Aid.

Should a member of your household, or your child, display coronavirus symptoms (a high temperature, a new, continuous cough, or a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste)) then it is vital that you do not send your child to school. Please follow the most current advice on Public Health England and email jinfo@longcloseschool.co.uk to inform us.

Should the staff feel that your child has symptoms of coronavirus while they are in school, they will be separated from other pupils immediately, and you will be required to collect your child as soon as possible. Your cooperation with this will be required, in order that a risk is not posed to the other pupils and the staff. Full PPE will be worn by staff caring for the child.

VISITING THE SITE DURING THE SCHOOL DAY

The site will remain a locked site for the duration of the school day, to limit the number of external visitors to the school during school hours.

You should only come to the school outside of the drop off/collection times when strictly necessary, and you will need to come to the main office to do so.

Please be aware that there will not be a facility to drop any forgotten items off at the main office. Should this happen, we cannot guarantee, unless staffing permits, that a member of staff will be able to take it over to where it is required. Please ensure that your child has all of the necessary items when you drop them off in the morning.

Should you wish to meet with your child's teacher/room leader, this can be organised directly with them and must take place remotely, using Microsoft Teams or via phone.

NEW GUIDANCE DURING THE SCHOOL DAY

We will all have to adapt our behaviour during the school day to ensure everyone's safety.

CLEANING AND HYGIENE

The following points of routine will be enacted:

- All frequently-touched surfaces, equipment, door handles and toilets will be cleaned thoroughly at both the start and end of each day, as well as at regular intervals during school hours.
- Regular checks will be made to ensure that soap is available in every toilet.
- Hand sanitiser will be available in every classroom, as well as at other prominent stations around school. These will be replenished regularly.
- Classroom bins will be replaced by lidded-bins, for the disposal of tissues. All bins will be double-bagged and emptied each day.
- Disposable tissues will be available in every classroom to implement the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach in each group, and we will ensure that these are topped-up regularly.
- All surfaces and floors will be cleaned thoroughly each day, and in advance of School opening.
- Toys will be cleaned regularly and disinfected in advance of the School reopening.
- Cleaning throughout the day will take place both in classrooms and throughout the school multiple times a day by teaching staff and our site team.

ADDITIONAL HEALTH AND SAFTEY MEASURES

- For younger children, the resources made available for child-initiated learning will be carefully considered. For example, malleable resources, such as playdough, will not be shared and will be removed from the classroom
- Resources for activities such as painting, sticking, cutting, small world play, indoor and outdoor construction activities, will be washed before and after use and children will be discouraged from sharing these.
- Signage will be located at regular stations throughout the School to remind pupils about social distancing and general information signs relating to coronavirus.
- Teachers will monitor how many children are sent to the toilet at one time to use the facilities and wash their hands. Only two children of each gender can be sent to the toilet at one time, to avoid over-crowding.
- Doors to classrooms will remain open, to avoid excessive touching of door handles.
- Doors and windows will remain open, to allow for air flow and ventilation.
- Toys will be split between the different groups of children and not swapped from classroom to classroom. This means that only the pupils in your child's group will be able to use the same resources. However, where resources for teaching and learning are necessary for lessons to be delivered successfully, they will be cleaned before being used by the next group.

NEW GUIDANCE DURING THE SCHOOL DAY

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EMBEDDED ROUTINES

The immediate priority for young children at this time is to re-socialise them into new and safe school routines. As such:

All pupils will begin their first day with staff reminding and reteaching them how to wash their hands properly. In addition, at regualr intervals pupils will be expected, in groups no larger than two, to wash their hands thoroughly. They will also be directed to wash their hands after particular activities e.g. using wheeled bikes, trikes and other large, movable toys, or during key transition points throughout the day.

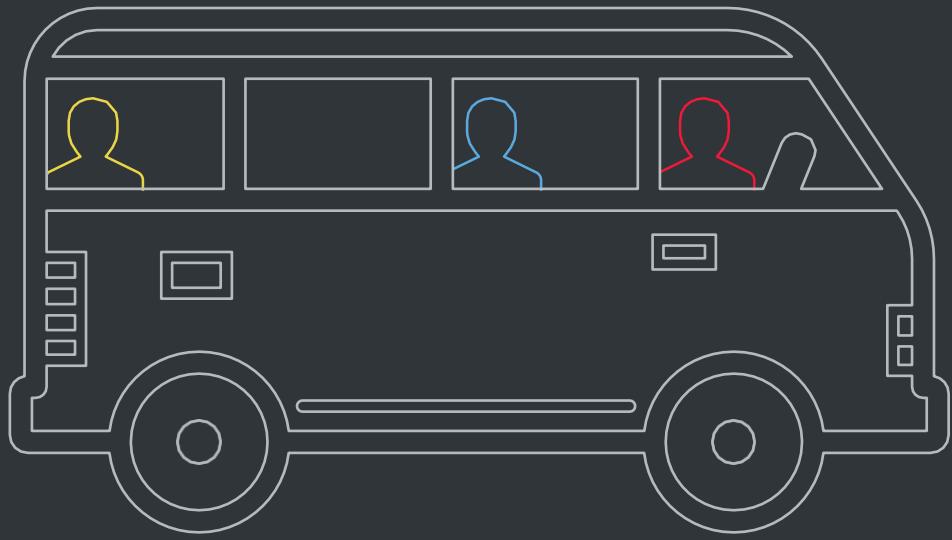
Pupils, particularly in EYFS, will be gently encouraged, where possible, not to touch their faces or to put objects in their mouths. When this does happen, the items will be placed in soapy water and cleaned as soon as this has been identified, in order that other children do not use them.

PASTORAL SUPPORT

We are very much aware that the coronavirus outbreak may have caused significant mental health or wellbeing difficulties for some children, and therefore fully recognise that while 'getting back to normal' is important, and will be reassuring for many, the School staff will need to consider how to support pupils who have found the lockdown period particularly challenging. Our staff will ensure that they provide:

- opportunities for pupils to talk about their experiences of the past few weeks
- opportunities for one-to-one conversations with trusted adults
- some refocussed lessons on relevant topics, for example, mental wellbeing or staying safe
- pastoral activities, such as positive opportunities to renew and develop friendships and peer groups
- other enriching developmental activities

SCHOOL SERVICES



Transport

- As per government advice we urge you to avoid public transport, if possible. If not possible, please follow guidelines around face coverings and carry hand sanitiser with you or wear gloves.

Before and After School Care

- This service will not be operating during this period, as we would be unable to supervise this facility safely and in accordance with government guidance. We ask that you make arrangements to collect your child (with a maximum of one adult coming to the site per family) within the allotted time frame.

Catering:

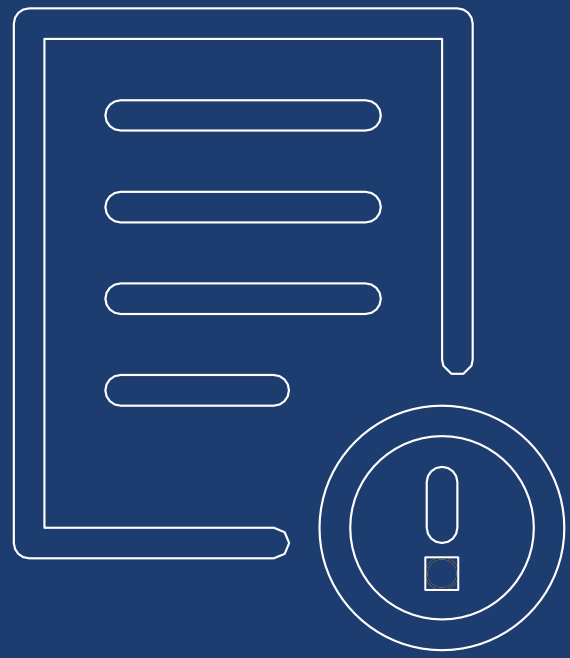
- We request that all children bring in packed lunches.
- It is essential that you consider the allergies of other children and avoid packing nuts into the lunches.
- Lunch times have been staggered as they normally would be, and children will sit at allocated, distanced, spaces from the other children within their small group.
- Please provide a healthy, nut-free snack for break time.
- The water fountains will not be in use. Please ensure your child has a water bottle which can be replenished at allocated drinking water sinks.

Extra Curricular:

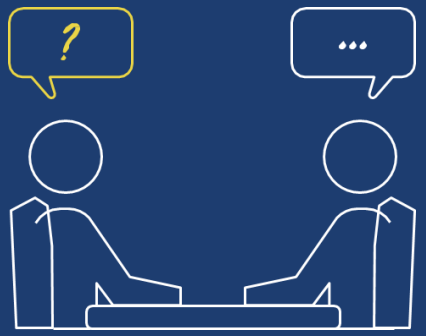
- We will not be offering before and after school care for the time being, although we are eager to offer this service as soon as is feasible.
- There will be no extra curricular clubs or events such as sports fixtures.
- Extra curricular activity is an important part of the educational experience and we hope to return to a normal schedule as soon as government guidance allows.
- We will continue to participate in the Cognita competitions which provide opportunities for creativity.

PARENT GUIDE AT A GLANCE

1. Long Close School will open for Year 1 from the 15th June.
2. Talk to your child about the new measures in this guide.
3. Take note of any changes to the timings of the school day for your child.
4. Please adhere to the drop off and pick up timings.
5. Please check your child's temperature before leaving school each morning.
6. Please provide a nut free packed lunch, a healthy snack and a water bottle for your child until further notice.
7. Should a member of your household, or your child, display coronavirus symptoms (a high temperature, a new, continuous cough or a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste) then it is vital that you do not send your child to school.
8. If you have decided not to send your child back, please confirm this. If you subsequently change your mind, please give us 72 hours notice so we can implement the necessary changes and adjust our plans accordingly (notification given on a weekend will not be considered).



FAQS



WILL THE SCHOOL FEES DISCOUNT BE REMOVED?

No. Although we did communicate previously that once schools re-open we would revert to normal fees we have decided to waive this for the remainder of the summer term. The exceptional circumstances, the economic situation, and the value we place on our relationship with you – our parent community – means we have decided the existing discount continues for this academic year. The fee freeze for next year remains too.

WHAT'S YOUR POLICY ON VISITORS?

Visitors are welcome to the school but are required to book in advance and we will be following social distancing guidelines.

As parents you are always welcome to contact us and arrange a meeting with staff working in the school. This will need to be arranged by appointment via telephone or Teams.

HOW ARE YOU RECORDING ABSENCE OF PUPILS WHEN SCHOOL RE-OPENS?

If you choose not to send your child back to school for the time being, for those in the 'returning' year groups, this will be recorded as an 'Authorised Absence'.

WHAT IF I CHOOSE NOT TO SEND MY CHILD BACK TO SCHOOL?

We understand that some parents and students may be wary about physically returning to school, and we will do our best to deliver a suitable level of remote provision for these students. It would not be feasible for learning to take the same format as has taken place this half term, given that staff will be in school teaching. Once school reopens, our provision has to be on a 'best endeavours' basis as we look to balance a lower number of staff across the school. Live wellbeing check-ins will remain for those not attending as wellbeing is so important to us.

WHAT IS YOUR CLEANING REGIME?

We have a robust cleaning regime throughout the school day with a focus on toilets and high-touch areas. At the end of the day we also repeat this and pay particular attention on the common areas of the school. On a Friday evening we do a weekly enhanced clean of all rooms in the school. In the instance of a confirmed COVID-19 case we do a deep clean which includes all surface areas and carpets. In all cases we use coronavirus approved disinfectants/aerosols, and our cleaners have ordered sufficient stocks.

WILL CHILDREN AND STAFF BE EXPECTED TO WEAR FACE COVERINGS ON SITE?

No. This is the government advice: *Wearing a face covering or face mask in schools or other education settings is not recommended.*

Face coverings are primarily worn to prevent the wearer from spreading the virus rather than catching it. Primary age children are likely to be distracted and discomforted by the wearing of such an item and cannot be expected to do so safely.

If a student or member of staff wishes to wear a face covering they will be allowed to do so. We request they follow guidance on the safe method of using and when removing it should be placed carefully into a sealed plastic bag.

WHAT HAPPENS TO THE EQUIPMENT THE CHILDREN USE DURING THE DAY?

Once the children have left the building, the staff will clean and sanitise all equipment that has been used during the day to prepare for the following.

HEALTH CHECKS

Plese continue to check your child's temperature before leaving for school. If it is raised, please stay at home and inform school immediately.

WELLBEING

The transition back to school will still be a challenge for all of us trying to adjust to a new way of 'being', coping with fear of the unknown and in some cases balancing a mix of online and face to face learning. The wellbeing of our students, parents and teaching staff is our highest priority and we are lucky to be part of Cognita's Global network and receive support from schools in other parts of the world who have successfully re-opened.

This support includes live webinars with our education experts, podcasts, and a series of videos and resources on wellbeing in these strange times for both students and parents. Members of our parent community have even shared how they have coped with lockdown. This evolving set of content can all be found at www.cognita.com

POSITIVE FEEDBACK

It was great to hear some of your feedback about how the school responded during lockdown. **Here are a few of the comments that make us feel proud.**

"The school and teachers are doing an excellent job with respect to online teaching . Very well organised and structured!"

"The school and teachers are doing a wonderful job."

"Long Close has provided a good service for my child. It has not been detrimental to my child's learning in any way."

"Excellent feedback which encourages my son."

"Fantastic. Thank you to all the staff."

"The teachers are doing a great job with interacting with children via teams. The lesson delivery is very good."