



# VICTORIA LANE ACADEMY

VICTORIA LANE  
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BISHOP AUCKLAND  
COUNTY DURHAM  
DL14 8NN

HEADTEACHER – Mrs J Richardson

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A member of Tudhoe Learning Trust

Dear Parents/Carers,

Since schools closed on 20<sup>th</sup> March, Victoria Lane Academy has remained open for vulnerable children and the children of 'Key Workers'. Now, we have been asked by Government to prepare our school for a wider opening to include those children in Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6, from June 1<sup>st</sup> **at the earliest** and only if **their 5 key tests are met**. This potential reopening has posed a huge logistical challenge for us, but we have managed to develop a realistic plan of how reopening will be implemented, including detailed risk assessments. While we have taken all reasonable steps to reduce the risk of infection, we cannot guarantee that the risk is zero. We will not hesitate to delay or suspend the reopening of school, if the situation changes and the risk becomes too high, as safety is our utmost priority.

Attending school at this point is not compulsory and parents will not be penalised for keeping their children at home. Last week, we spoke to all the parents of children in the affected year groups to see who would be wanting their children to attend. Thank you for taking the time to speak to us - we really appreciate your support and honesty and fully respect whatever decision you made. **The government is making a decision on whether schools are to reopen on Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> May.**

Many parents have decided to wait until a later date before bringing their children back and those children will continue to receive our Home Learning Packs alongside online support from teaching staff. We will be in touch with these parents later in the term when we review our provision.

For those of you who have chosen to bring your children back, we need to make it clear that school life at Victoria Lane will not be as it was when your children were last here. While we will still have all of our kind and passionate staff caring for everyone who attends, significant changes have had to be made to keep everyone safe and I would like to outline these to you now.

**Bubbles:** In order to maintain social distancing and to reduce the risk of infection, children and teaching staff will be in small groups of approximately 10 known as 'bubbles.' Due to the low number of children attending initially, each year group will be in their own bubble, in their own classroom, with their usual class teachers. These bubbles will spend the whole school day together, maintaining 2m social distance guidance wherever possible, and WILL NOT mix with other bubbles. Each child will have their own personal resources (pencil cases etc.). We must acknowledge at this point, that even in bubbles, children of Nursery, Reception and Year 1 age may not be able to socially distance from themselves or adults.

**Hygiene:** A significant amount of time will be spent teaching/reminding children, in a positive and fun manner, how to practise good personal hygiene, including handwashing, not touching their faces and how to deal with coughs and sneezes using the "Catch it, Bin it, Kill it" approach. Children will be required to wash their hands on arrival at school, before and after each lesson, before and after lunch, every time they use the toilet and before they go home. Each day, children must attend school in freshly laundered clothes – not school uniform- and bring their own personal water bottle. Outdoor learning will take place as much as possible as this environment is scientifically proven to be much less of a risk so please ensure sensible footwear is worn.

**Dropping off and collecting children:** To ensure strict social distancing guidelines remain in place, we are introducing a one way drop off and collection route. Please use the table below to see which gate you will be required to enter and exit the school premises from. All gates will be open from 8:45am for dropping off and will be open at 3:00pm for collection (Nursery 12:00pm). Mrs Richardson and Mr Blake will be supervising at these times and will direct you where to go.

	Drop off/collection entry point	Drop off/collection exit point
<b>Nursery</b>	Gate leading to school office	Infant yard gate
<b>Reception</b>	Gate leading to school office	Infant yard gate
<b>Year 1</b>	Junior Yard gate	Gate leading to Victoria Lane
<b>Year 6</b>	Junior Yard gate	Gate leading to Victoria Lane
<b>Key worker</b>	Junior Yard gate	Gate leading to Victoria Lane

While you wait to collect your child at the end of the day, we will be insisting that you stand next to social distancing markers - placed around the Infant and Junior yards - to help us keep everyone safe.





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**Lunches:** Nursery children will be attending morning only so no lunch will be provided. Marie Wall, our school cook, will continue to provide hot meals cooked on site. If your child is not in Reception, Year 1 children or entitled to free school meals, lunches must be paid for via ParentPay. Any Year 6 pupils or those attending our Key Worker Childcare, who bring a packed lunch from home, must ensure it is in a plastic container that can be wiped down on arrival. Government issued supermarket vouchers will continue to be provided for those entitled to free school meals who have not yet returned to school.

**Clubs:** Unfortunately, there will be no Breakfast, Teatime or afterschool clubs for the remainder of the summer term.

**Curriculum:** Upon return to school, classes will be following a 'Return to School' curriculum at first that focuses on outdoor learning, social and emotional wellbeing and reading for pleasure. When we feel it is appropriate, class teachers will begin to revisit age-appropriate basic skills in Reading, Writing and Maths.

**Keyworker and vulnerable childcare:** These sessions will continue and children attending will be in their own bubble. Those who have been attending but are now eligible to return to school (Reception, Year 1 and Year 6) will be moved into their class bubbles.

**Proposed phased return timetable:** To ensure the emotional and mental well-being of all of our staff and pupils, we will be operating a phased return as outlined below that will ensure a smooth transition back to school.

Week beginning	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
1 <sup>st</sup> June	Key worker children only	Key worker children only	Nursery, Reception, Year 1 & Year 6	Nursery, Reception, Year 1 & Year 6	Key worker children only
8 <sup>th</sup> June	Key worker children only	Nursery, Reception, Year 1 & Year 6	Nursery, Reception, Year 1 & Year 6	Nursery, Reception, Year 1 & Year 6	Key worker children only
15 <sup>th</sup> June	Nursery, Reception, Year 1 & Year 6	Nursery, Reception, Year 1 & Year 6	Nursery, Reception, Year 1 & Year 6	Nursery, Reception, Year 1 & Year 6	Key worker children only
22 <sup>nd</sup> June	Nursery, Reception, Year 1 & Year 6	Nursery, Reception, Year 1 & Year 6	Nursery, Reception, Year 1 & Year 6	Nursery, Reception, Year 1 & Year 6	Key worker children only

Please note that we are only open for Key Worker children every Friday so that school can have a deep clean and rooms and resources can then be left to decontaminate for at least 72 hours over the weekend.

**Covid 19 symptoms:** Should staff/children, or anyone in their household, display symptoms of Coronavirus they MUST NOT attend school until a test has been undertaken and they have received a negative result. If a positive result is received, then they must self-isolate for at least 14 days. Furthermore, if a child or staff member receives a positive result then their bubble will be asked to stay away from school for 14 days. Any child who develops symptoms while at school, will be isolated from the rest of the school and will be supervised by Mrs Richardson or Mr Blake until parents/carers can collect them.

**Year 2, 3, 4 & 5:** The government has stated that they would like to see all primary aged children back in school for a month before the end of the school year. This will be reviewed regularly, and we will update you on any developments as they arise.

The safety of our children is at the heart of every decision we make and we would like to thank you for your continued support during this difficult time.

Mrs Richardson & Mr Blake

