

Returning to School



Information for Parents

We appreciate that returning to school, no matter how excited your child may be, will be a daunting experience as they get used to the necessary changes.

We also understand the difficult choice you have been faced with as parents over recent weeks.

I hope that the information that follows will support you in your decision and help you and your child prepare for their return to school.

For those returning, we look forward to seeing you soon. For those who are not returning yet, we look forward very much to the time when we can all be back together again.



What measures are we introducing to make school as safe as possible?

As explained in previous communications, whilst we will encourage it, we cannot guarantee social distancing and must accept that children will come into closer contact (and parents must also understand this). Therefore, our focus will be on maintaining;

- the integrity of the 'bubble' to ensure that children do not mix outside of their group and space
- high standards and increased frequency of cleaning.

We have completed a rigorous risk assessment process and many changes / additional procedures have been put in place.



STAY 2 METRES



APART

At Birches we have;

Arranged for a 'decontamination' clean prior to wider opening.

Increased our cleaning schedule and heightened cleaning routines.

Completed infection control training as a staff.

Removed all soft furnishings where possible.

Removed unnecessary furniture from rooms to ensure effective cleaning and maximise space.

Rearranged classrooms and spaces to promote social distancing.

Created a range of signage to support and remind all members of the school community

Created a one-way system around the school site

Made changes to the school day to prevent bubbles mixing and large numbers of people gathering

Cordoned off areas of additional risk

Planned for increased levels of hand hygiene

Purchased new bins for safe disposal of tissues and waste.

Purchased PPE for situations that may require it.



Arrival and collection

We ask that parents and children observe social distancing at all times when on the school site. A range of signs have been created to remind all members of the school community.

Please arrive promptly at your child's arrival and collection time but not more than 5 minutes before (to allow time for the previous group to move through and exit.) Late arrivals/collections will place additional demand on an already stretched staff and increase risk levels. The gates will be locked in between groups to help us maintain the system.

Guidance states that only one parent per family should come to school. We also ask that siblings not attending school are left at home if at all possible and not brought to school unless parents have no other option.



Movement around school - external

Children and staff will move around the school site externally whenever possible.

As you will see from the photos, the site map (at end of this PowerPoint) and on arrival; a one way system has been set up to support social distancing and to help us manage arrival and collection times.

Parents must arrive on time – please line up at the marker by the playground gate. We ask parents to observe social distancing in the queue by following the markers, ensuring your child stays with you until you reach their 'bubble' room. At each arrival time (8.30, 8.45, 9am) the gate will open.

Parents should walk around the school site, following the 2 metre markers until their reach their child's bubble room.

Whilst we appreciate this is less convenient for parents, we ask that siblings are brought and collected at their own, separate, designated times due to staffing capacity and time needed to clean rooms.



Movement around school – external cont...

When you arrive with your child at their room, please encourage your child to enter the room swiftly to avoid congestion behind you.

Unfortunately, staff are not able to take a child's hand or lift them off parents as they must observe the 2 metre rule. If parents are unable to encourage their child into school they will unfortunately be required to take them home. (If a child comes into school distressed and we are unable to settle them we will contact parents as we do not want children to be upset.)

Children will need to have their lunch and water bottle in their hand to carry into class themselves (again, staff are unable to take items for children.)



Movement around school – external cont...

Once children have walked to their classroom door from the path, we ask that parents move swiftly on, following the path around the school site and onto the daily mile.

The route will take you to the mid-field gate and back onto the car park. Once back onto the pavement, whilst beyond the school grounds, we hope that parents will continue to observe social distancing, especially if the next group of parents (and children) are queuing. We would suggest that parents cross the road to walk on the other side of the road to exit Birches Avenue.

Please note – the Adventure Playground and Silly Sally Tower (behind Year 1) are out of bounds – please do not allow children to play on these areas.



Movement around school - internal

Children based in the Year 3 classroom (**Violet Bubble**) will use the internal corridor to access their class and the playground. 2 metre markers have been laid to support social distancing.

Yellow Bubble children will access their toilets via the corridor. Again, 2 metre markers are in place.

Staff will supervise children in their movement around school.

Staff will also be observing social distancing measures in their own movement around school.



'Bubbles'

Bubbles will be organised to contain no more than 15 children.

The staff allocated to each bubble will remain the same (as far as is possible – in the event of staff sickness etc, we may be required to make changes).

Bubbles will not come into contact or mix with other bubbles during the day, including staff.

Once a child has been allocated to a bubble they will remain part of that bubble until further notice.



Attendance

Places are allocated on a full time basis but we appreciate that Key Worker parents may prefer to send their child on the days they work **ONLY**.

Children in Nursery may attend all day for 5 days, 5 mornings only (8.45-11.45am) or a mixture of days and mornings.

Emails have been sent asking parents to confirm their child's attendance pattern.

Parents are reminded that it is their choice whether to send their child back to school.

There will be no consequences for keeping your child at home.

If your child is returning to school but is absent for any reason, please do notify the school office by telephone or email as usual.



The school day

To reduce the number of people arriving on site at any time and avoid large numbers gathering, we will be operating staggered start and collection times.

Parents MUST arrive promptly (but not too early!) to ensure this system works smoothly and swiftly.

Bubble	Location/ classroom	Arrive	Collect
Blue KW 1	Hall	8.30am	3.15pm
Indigo KW 2	Y4 Mobile	8.30am	3.15pm
Orange	Nursery	8.45am	2.45pm
Yellow	Reception	9am	3pm
Green	Year 1	9am	3pm
Violet	Year 3	8.45am	2.45pm



Confirmation of the bubble your child has been placed in will be emailed.

Whilst we appreciate this is less convenient for parents, we ask that siblings are brought and collected at their own, separate, designated times due to staffing capacity and time needed to clean rooms.

Before and afterschool club

Guidance says that schools should only offer additional provision if children can remain in the same groups (children and staff) that they are with for the rest of the day. Unfortunately, this means we are not able to combine children from different bubbles to create 'club' as we normally would.

I am aware however, that for our Key Workers, a slightly early drop off or later collection is needed. Due to staffing constraints our offer is unfortunately limited.

We are able to offer an early drop off (8.15am) and later collection (3.45pm) to children in the **Key Worker bubbles only**. Later collection will be charged at £2.50 for the half an hour additional care.

If parents of children in Nursery, Reception or Year 1 **need** before or after school care and have no other option, their child can be allocated a space in one of the Key Worker groups (subject to availability). This does mean however that they will be with the older children and will not be able to join their year group's bubble. I appreciate this is far from ideal but I hope you understand the reasons for this.

I'd like to mention that some of the Birches staff have been impacted by the limitations of the before and afterschool care that their children's schools are able to offer. Please be understanding if you see a few members of staff arriving later than others or leaving shortly before the end of the day.



Lunchtimes

Children will eat in their 'bubble' room in their usual designated space.

Tables will be cleaned before eating.

Children ordering a school packed lunch will have their lunch delivered to the classroom door by kitchen staff (they will not be entering the room.)

A Lunchtime Supervisor or the 'bubble' TA will supervise the children while they eat and while they have their play.

A thorough clean will be carried out in the room while the children are outside.



Packed lunches

Our school kitchen will provide packed lunches for those who would like one (free for children in Reception, Year 1 and those eligible for FSMs, £2.40 for all other children.) **This would be our preferred option to minimise items being sent in from home.**

However, if your child will only eat what you provide then they can bring their own packed lunch. We ask that parents send them with items **they can open and manage themselves** (items like Frubes etc are very tricky for children to open themselves and make a lot of mess if children open them incorrectly.) Staff **will not be able** to keep handling yoghurts and crisps etc to open them as this involves close contact at a time of day when children will be transferring their hands to their mouths and back a lot. Many children struggle to open crisp packets, parents may want to consider tipping the crisps into an easy to open plastic pot or container to ensure children can manage this themselves.

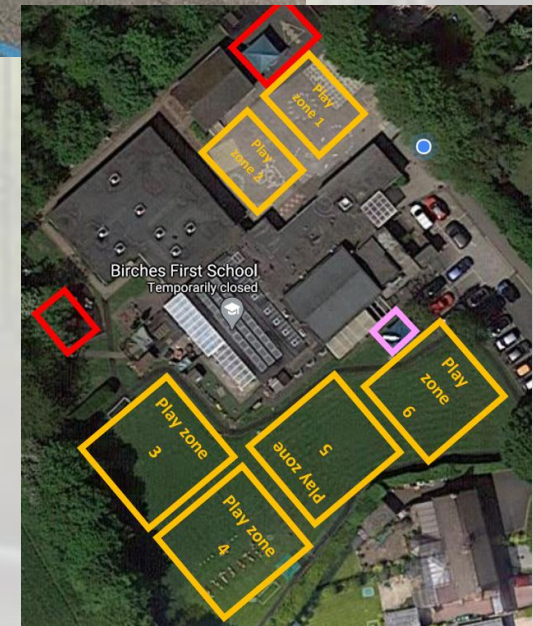
Please also send a **mid-morning snack** for your child as the government funded free fruit will not be available.



Playtimes

Children will have a morning and afternoon playtime as well as a lunchtime play as usual. These will be staggered however to ensure that we don't have large numbers of children outside at the same time.

'Play Zones' have been created on the playground and on the school field (see site map) to ensure that if more than one bubble is outside at the same time, they will not come into contact.



What should my child bring?

Children only need to bring;

- a filled water bottle (cups will not be available)
- packed lunch (if bringing own) and mid-morning snack.

Plus, dependant on forecast, please send a **coat/ sunhat**. If warm weather, please apply an all day sun cream before school in the morning.

Children in **Nursery** should bring a small bag with spare clothes in (in case of accidents). This bag will be left in school on their peg.

Guidance states that schools should avoid items coming in and going out of school wherever possible. Therefore reading books will not be sent home and home learning will now be completed on paper and kept in school. (No need to send in home learning books as Key Workers have done previously).

Please **DO NOT** send your child into school with a bag or any other items.



Spare clothes for Nursery please – to be left in school.



All day cream applied before school please.



Leave at home please



What should my child wear?

School uniform is encouraged please (summer or winter uniform depending on parent preference/availability)

We recognise that some children may have grown since March and parents may not have been able to get replacements (for example, if children's feet have grown). We will, therefore be understanding of this.

It is advised that children wear freshly washed clothes each day to minimise risk of transmission.

Long hair should be tied back please.

Children will not need their PE kit at this time.



Early Years Classrooms

Classrooms have been adapted to encourage social distancing as much as possible.

In Early Years, all children will be allocated a 'station'. This will be their base when asked to sit at a table (story time, snack time, lunchtime etc.) Children must always sit in their own designated space.

Each child will have a tray and a set of resources to help them with their learning (pencils, pens, colouring pencils, phonic mats, number lines etc.)

The children will NOT be expected to sit at their table all day – they will engage with a range of carefully planned activities around the classroom and in the outdoor area.



Orange
Bubble



Yellow Bubble



Year 1 and Key Worker Classrooms

Classrooms have been adapted to encourage social distancing as much as possible.

For children returning in Year 1 and Key Worker children in Years 2-4, children will be allocated a desk which will only be used by them.

Each child will have a tray and a set of resources to help them with their learning (pencils, pens, colouring pencils, phonic mats, number lines etc.)

Outdoor learning time will be encouraged as much as possible and the children will have playtimes throughout the day.



Indigo
Bubble



Blue
Bubble



Green
Bubble



Toilets

Each bubble has allocated toilets and only the children in the designated bubble(s) can use them.

Where possible, sinks and cubicles will be taken out of use to ensure that only one child at a time can enter.

Toilets and sinks will be clearly labelled and handwashing guidance / reminders will be on display.

Staff will carry out regular cleaning of toilet areas, wiping down handles, doors, taps and bin lids etc.



First aid, medications and illness

Staff will administer prescribed medicines where this required in line with the school policy. However, due to our vigilance regarding illness in school it may be necessary for your child to remain at home until any course of prescribed medicine is completed to ensure they are fully fit and well. Please speak to Mrs Ferretti/the school office.

Inhalers and general first aid will be managed within bubbles.

To safeguard all, we will have a zero-tolerance approach to children who cannot adhere to Catch it, Kill it, Bin it as this is a risk to others. Where we believe a child is coughing or sneezing frequently, or we believe is otherwise unwell, parents will be asked to arrange collection. As such if your child has hayfever, please do give them antihistamine as we may be concerned about symptoms which may overlap with Covid-19 symptoms.

If your child is unwell in any way, especially if they have displayed any Covid-19 symptoms, please **do not** send them into school.



What happens if a child displays symptoms while at school?

In the case of a child (or staff member) displaying symptoms, they will be immediately placed into a well ventilated space for isolation, supervised by a member of staff. A designated isolation toilet will be available.

If they have a sibling in school, they will be collected from their bubble and will join them in isolation. Parents will be called immediately and the child(ren) taken home.

Once collected, the isolation area and the child's bubble room will be thoroughly cleaned in line with guidance.

The child should start a 7 day period of isolation.
All household members should isolate for 14 days.
A test should be arranged.

If the test comes back positive, all staff and children within the child's bubble must isolate for 14 days (we will notify parents of this).

If the test is negative, isolation can end for the child and family members and they can return to school and work (unless they have since developed symptoms themselves – they must then wait for results of their own test).

Public Health England

Education guidance

The most important symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19)

- new and continuous cough
- high temperature
- loss of, or change in, your normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia)

If **you have symptoms** of coronavirus, you need to **self-isolate for 7 days**.
If **you live with someone who has symptoms**, you need to **self-isolate for 14 days** from the day their symptoms started.

For most people coronavirus will be a mild illness. However if you have any of the symptoms you should self-isolate at home.

Stop the spread of coronavirus

Wash your hands more often and for 20 seconds

Use soap and water or a hand sanitiser when you:

- Get home or into work
- Blow your nose, sneeze or cough
- Eat or handle food

Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when you cough or sneeze and throw the tissue away straight away.

Supervise young children to ensure they wash their hands more often than usual

Posters and lesson plans on general hand hygiene can be found on the eBug website

Clean and disinfect regularly touched objects and surfaces more often than usual using your standard cleaning products

Staff, young people and children should stay at home if they are unwell with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature or loss of, or change in, normal sense of taste or smell **to avoid spreading infection to others**

If staff, young people or children become unwell with any of the coronavirus symptoms on site, **they should be sent home**

We are asking schools, colleges, nurseries, childminders and other registered childcare settings **to remain open for children of critical workers and vulnerable children** where they can

Behaviour

We understand that children may find aspects of the return to school challenging, particularly at the beginning.

Staff will support them with these changes as best they can, however, they are not able to provide the same support and comfort they might usually give.

As a school we will have the same high expectations of behaviour and children will be expected to follow the Golden Rules. We have also created some new rules which are necessary to ensure that we can reduce risk as much as possible. Please refer to our amended Behaviour Policy – it is important that parents read and understand these expectations and send their child back to school in the knowledge that they are agreeing to comply. We ask that parents talk through these new rules with their child before they return.



Parents

We ask that parents are understanding and supportive of the measures we have put in place and adhere to the new arrangements themselves and remind their children to do the same.

As you know, we value the partnership with our parents very much and want our positive community spirit to continue to grow.

Please understand that staff will, at no point, wish to be obstructive or unwilling to provide comfort or support. As a team we must follow strict guidelines in the interests of everyone's safety.

We appreciate your cooperation and patience during this time.



My child isn't returning to school. Will they still have home learning?

Yes, of course. The majority of our children remain at home. Our teaching team will continue to provide the high standard of home learning (daily tasks and project grid) they have been uploading to the website since we closed in March. Parents are reminded that home learning tasks and expectations should be adapted to suit the needs of your child(ren) and your family circumstances.

Teacher's are still available for support by email, I do ask that parents are understanding of the fact that teachers will now be working full time with classes and therefore will not be able to reply to any queries as promptly as they may have done previously.



Questions, queries and comments

Please email;

the office office@birches.staffs.sch.uk

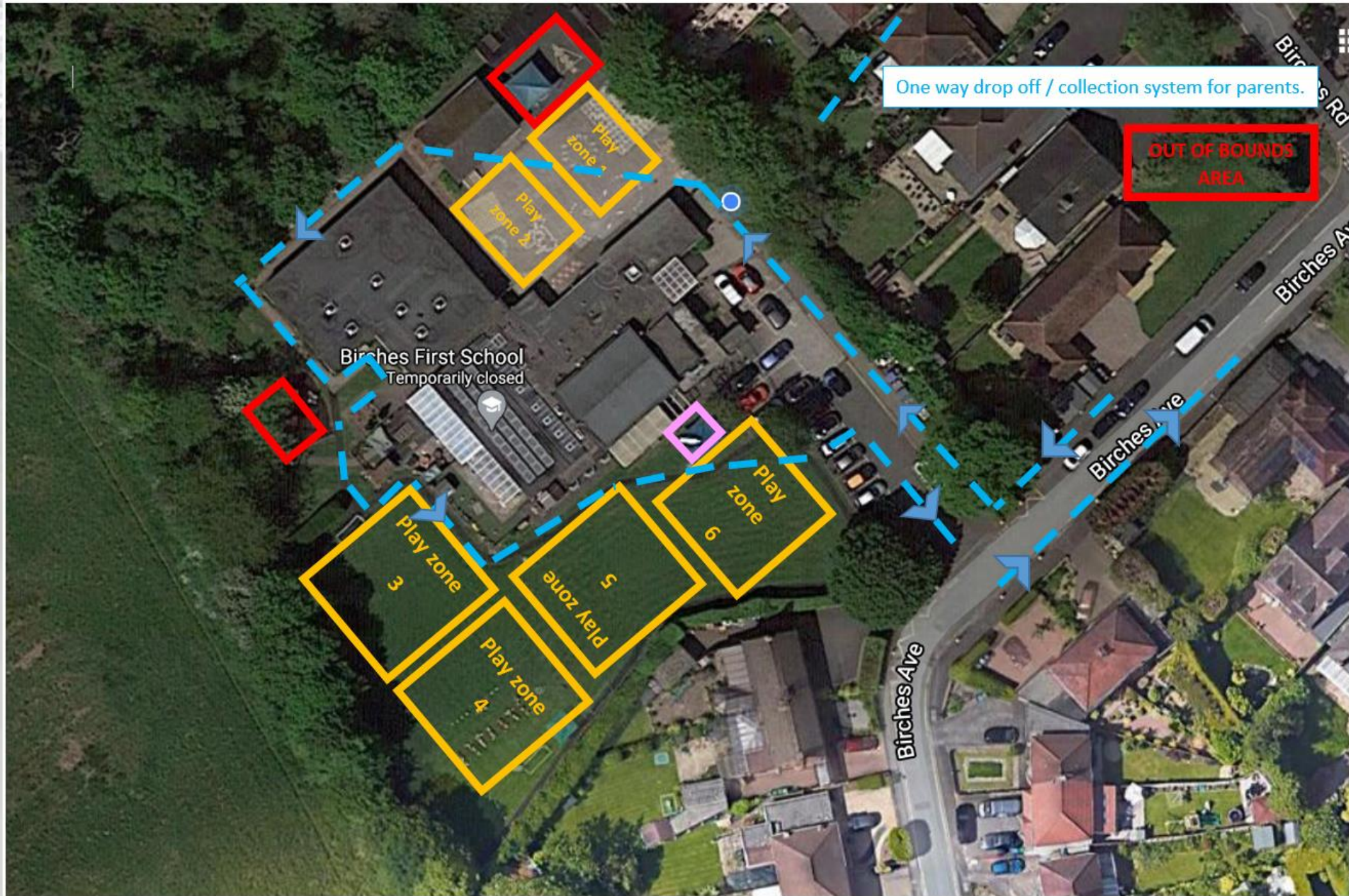
Mrs Ferretti jferretti@birches.staffs.sch.uk

or your child's class/'bubble' teacher (if different).

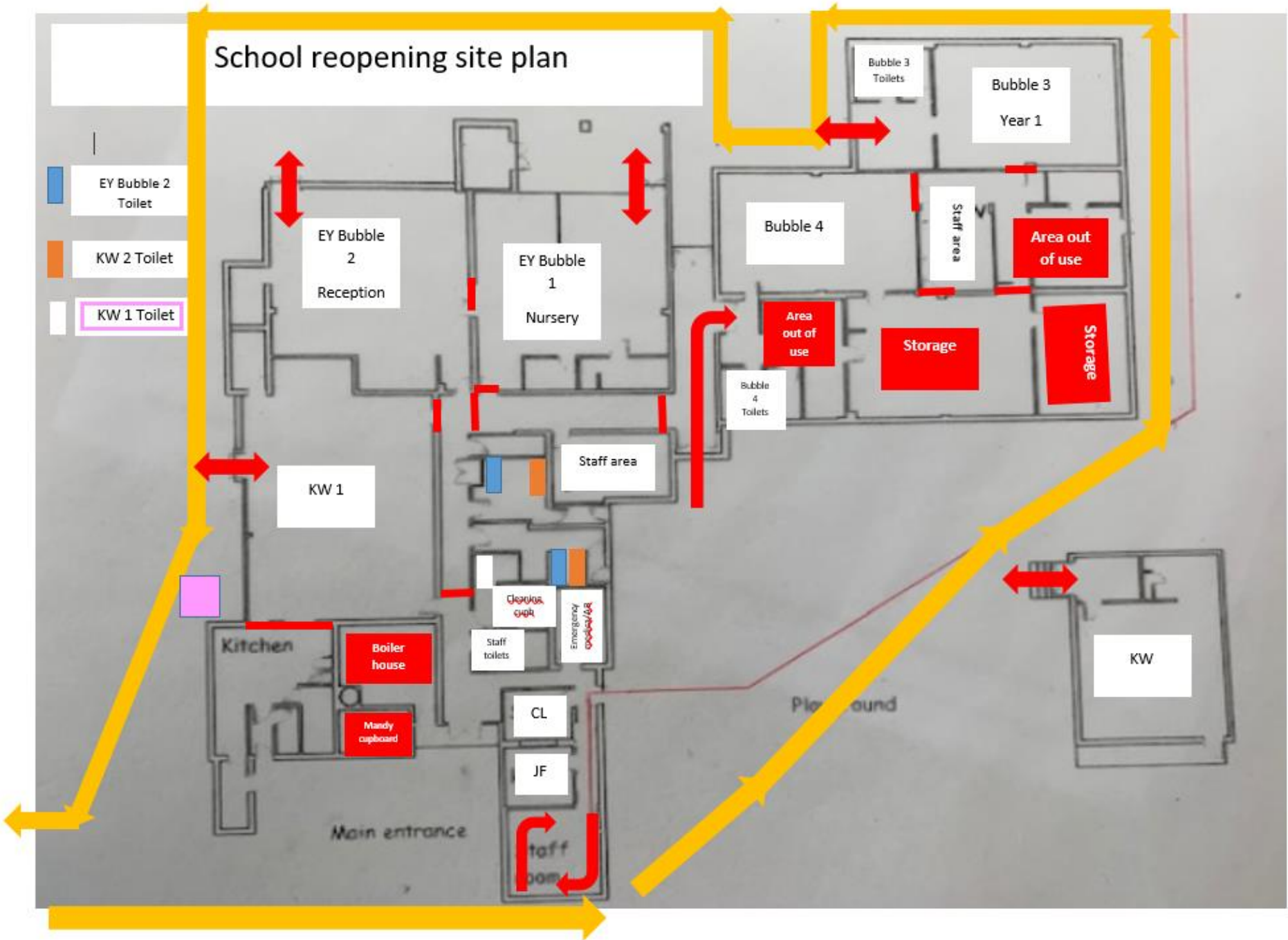
If you wish to speak to someone in person, please phone 01902 297910.

Teachers will reply to emails or return phone calls at their earliest convenience but please understand that they will be based with their 'bubble' during the day.





School reopening site plan



Thank you for your
continued support
during this time –

it has been much
appreciated.



Thank you

