

Friday 15th May 2020

Dear Parents, Guardians, Carers and Children,

I wrote to you all earlier in the week and promised that I would come back to you with a further update before the weekend.

As you will have no doubt seen and heard in the media there has been a lot of mixed messaging this week about the Government's plans for a phased re-opening of schools. We have had some initial updates in guidance this week, but are still waiting further guidance on the practicalities and the expectations of how schools will ultimately open as it has been suggested that we can. Until we have further guidance we are not in a position yet to fully plan for how we will re-open. We will continue to seek and wait for guidance over the forthcoming week, and weeks in order that we can let you know how, and when our schools will start to re-open.

There are some key things, however that we do know now and I wanted to share those with you today as it will help you in your own planning for the forthcoming weeks.

We are planning really carefully for the proposed phased re-opening of schools on the basis of a **'Safety and Capacity First'** model. We are risk assessing our school buildings and environments; checking available staff numbers; planning the curriculum for both in school and remote learning; restructuring our teaching spaces to meet the social distancing requirements; ensuring that we have the correct PPE and safety equipment to protect pupils, staff and parents; and developing our daily structures to ensure that we are a safe environment for everyone, and to assess the capacity each of our schools has for returning pupils in the key groups identified.

Please accept my reassurance that we will not be expanding the reopening of any of our schools until we are absolutely sure that it safe to do so, and confident in how we will reopen.

The Government guidance has been that schools should start to prepare for a phased re-opening for specific groups of pupils **from** 1st June 2020, but not **on** 1st June. Schools have been told that we will hear on **28th May** whether all of the key requirements have been met sufficiently to enable schools to start the process of re-opening the following week. This announcement will give our schools 1 working day (during the half-term break) to ensure that schools are safe, secure, prepared and ready to receive some additional children from the Monday morning. We do not believe this is safe, appropriate, or possible in the current circumstances and so our schools will not be open to any children, other than those in the identified keyworker and vulnerable pupil categories, until **Thursday 4th June at the earliest**, and only if it is possible to do so.

In 'normal times' half-term would be starting on Monday 25th May which is the bank holiday. We have taken the decision to close all of our schools on Monday 25th May, and it is an expectation that the vast majority of our schools will be closed over the half-term holiday to ensure that staff have the time to rest and to plan for the week of 1st June. Where there are local arrangements for cover over the half-term break your child's school will let you know what they will be.

It is our intention, once we have taken account of all available guidance, next week to share with you our broad plans for how our schools will seek to meet the requirements that the Government have set out for us. These will be different for each of our schools and for each community as we need to ensure that what we do is both consistent and appropriate to each school.

It is my hope that we will also be able to give you a little more information about what 'school' might look like over the forthcoming weeks and how we will operate under our 'Safety and Capacity First' model.

Whilst I haven't been able to share much more information with you all I hope that I have been able to offer some reassurance that we are working hard to be able to start the process of a phased reopening of our schools, and that we will only do so when we are sure that it is safe and practical to do so. Until we are advised that it is safe for schools to start the phased re-opening of schools we will continue to operate as we are doing at the moment and there will no change to our approach. Your safety and that of our staff is absolutely paramount.

My thanks again for your continued support for our schools and their work; and my thanks to you all for the 'juggling' of many things that you will be doing at home, and at work in this most complicated of times.

I hope that you have a lovely weekend. Stay safe and take good care.

With kind regards,

Jez Piper

CEO