

22 May 2020

Dear Parent and Carers,

We appreciate that there is ongoing debate in the media with regard to the proposed phased return for some pupils from June 1st. Whilst this debate rumbles, we continue to plan for each of our schools from the guidance we receive. There is now a distinct difference between planning for our Primary pupils and our Secondary pupils. We are still waiting for the updated guidance for Secondary schools and therefore we can't yet take this to the next level of planning. As soon as the guidance is shared with us, we will let you know.

For our Primary schools, we are now at a point where we require an understanding of the numbers of pupils likely to return if the Government gives the instruction to move ahead **on 28 May**. We must emphasise that this is the date when the Government have said they will be in a position to say that it is safe for some pupils **to start to return in the week commencing 1 June**.

Alongside this letter is a Primary school parent survey which we would ask you to complete [here](#). The year groups identified are Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6, so please only complete the survey if you have children in those year groups **or** you are a critical worker. Our individual school planning is based upon the completion of detailed risk assessments so it is vital that we have accuracy of numbers for the week commencing 1 June. It is extremely likely that each school will phase the return over the first week back, so that we can manage numbers gradually and to ensure that expectations and new ways of working are understood by each year group before introducing the next. We will also need to stagger the start and end of day timings to reduce numbers coming together at key points. The detail around all of this will be communicated to you by your individual school next week.

The guidance for Primary schools has been to split classes into smaller numbers with a maximum of fifteen children in a group. In some schools these may need to be smaller than this. It is therefore impossible for all children to have their normal class teacher and some will be supported by their teaching assistant or by another teacher. It is also important to recognise that some of our staff are in vulnerable groups, so may not be back in school yet either. In all cases the adult assigned to your child will be a member of your own school staff.

The adult with each group will remain with them for the majority of the day. This will not be 'school' as your child currently knows it and at first it will take some getting used to. Our priority in the first two weeks will be in ensuring children feel comfortable, safe and happy, reducing any anxiety they may feel about returning. Please support us with this and please understand that we will be unable to allocate a child to a group at your request or to move any children from one group to another once allocated. We will do our utmost to group children carefully and sensitively but this has to be directed by the school.

We want all our parents to feel confident about allowing their children to return to school and we want to be transparent around the actions we have taken to ensure their safety and the safety of our staff. Each school has carried out specific risk assessments in their own environment and have put in place measures to reduce social mixing beyond the specific group your child will be part of. However, the year groups that the Government have requested return first are some of our youngest and as parents, you will know and understand how hard it is for young children to understand the concept of social distancing. It is not an expectation that Primary aged children will maintain a two-metre distance from one another. This is why we have been asked to group them in 'bubbles' of

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fifteen as a maximum. In this way they will always be with the same children and adults and it reduces their interaction with anyone else outside of this bubble. Children will not be able to wear facemasks in school because there is a greater risk associated with them taking them on and off and potentially leaving them in a variety of places.

All schools will:

- Stagger timings for arrivals, departures, lunch and break times
- Have hand washing facilities which will be directed to on arrival and at regular points throughout the day
- Provide outdoor learning opportunities
- Restrict the sharing of equipment where possible, individual schools will inform parents what can be brought in from home
- Thoroughly clean all used spaces at the end of each day and wipe down during the day, particularly surfaces, door handles, etc.
- Ensure there are no whole school or large group gatherings in a single space for assemblies or meetings
- Provide adequate signage reminding pupils, staff and visitors to adhere to social distancing and good hygiene

We also request that parents don't increase any risk to our staff by using additional provision to the school, for example a child minder. This would increase the number of people the child is exposed to and could increase their risk of infection.

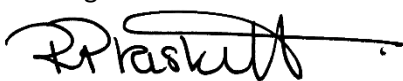
We know the decision to send your child back to school may be a difficult one and the timing of this, even more so. It is important to recognise that some children have been continuing to attend school throughout the lockdown and our dedicated staff have ensured that these children have been cared for and kept safe to allow their parents to provide front line services. These children will continue to attend school throughout the phased return and remain our priority groups.

The safety of your children and our staff is our absolute priority, which is why we are following the guidance very carefully. We will plan specifically based upon your feedback. If you reply to the survey that you **will not be** sending your child then we will not have planned for them and will not expect them to arrive. We realise that you may change your mind when school has been operating for a week or two but we ask that if you do, you contact your school by Wednesday of the week prior to the date you would like them to attend. This way our groups can be amended and staffing can be arranged. As the planning is so important we require certainty, so your child must attend every day if they choose to return. If your child or anyone in your family develop any symptoms of COVID-19 please contact the school immediately and do not send your child to school.

Please complete the survey by **4pm Sunday 24 May**. Your individual school will then be in touch with you next week to set out their plans for the phased return, with details of dates and timings. Please remember that all of this is subject to the Government monitoring the data and providing a firm approval **on 28 May** that it is safe for schools to increase pupil numbers.

Thank you for your patience and your support as we prepare our schools.

Kind regards



Rebecca Plaskitt, Chief Executive Officer

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