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Friday, 15 May 2020

Dear parent,

### Proposal for opening schools from June 1st

Much has changed in just a few days! Firstly, I'd like to remind you that our school has been open throughout for a small number of children. The staff have all been working on and off site.

I am writing to update you all on where we are as a school in response to the announcement over the weekend on the possible phased reopening of schools. Sunday's Government announcement left many with more questions than answers. We are in the position now to digest what the latest advice means for you as parents and us as teachers.

Let me start by reminding you what the Prime Minister actually said as opposed to what the media and others have inferred. '*In step two – at the earliest by June 1 – after half term – we believe we may be in a position to begin the phased reopening of shops and to get primary pupils back into schools, in stages, beginning with Reception, Year 1 and Year 6.*' And '*I must stress again that all of this is conditional, it all depends on a series of big Ifs. It depends on all of us – the entire country – to follow the advice, to observe social distancing, and to keep that R down.*' Also, the opening of nursery classes, was added by the Government after the Prime Minister's initial announcement. The PM went on set out an ambition for all primary children to have time in school before the summer if feasible.

All of us want to get more pupils back into school as soon as it is safe to do so. Our staff team are committed to the care and education of your children and they do not want to see our classrooms empty for a day longer than they need to be. However, every school leader will tell you, the first priority has to be the safety of everyone in the school community. What that means for our school is a gradual, carefully planned, and risk assessed increase in staff and pupil numbers, taking into account safety of adults and children at all times.

The information from the Government, as currently set out, does not provide us with a workable plan or clear explanation of the scientific and medical advice the Government is relying on to make these decisions. For example, what the science says when it comes to the safety of adults in schools and the impact and risk to children. Without this information I am concerned that staff alongside those in our school community simply won't feel safe to return.

This week we are devising a plan for the partial opening of the school. We have been advised to plan for nursery, reception, year one and year 6 children. **However, we will not be opening the school to all entitled pupils on 1<sup>st</sup> June 2020.** We will, based on the advice of Government that we hope to receive on 28<sup>th</sup> May 2020, be planning to invite small numbers of pupils in on a phased reopening. This means your child will not be returning to school until you receive an invitation, along with our safety plan, to do so.

PTO

Head Teacher: Ken Johnson  
Deputy Head: Leona Baffour



What remains the same, for now, is that vulnerable children and the children of key workers are able to attend school in its current format. I feel it is important that as parents you are aware of what we as a school need to carefully consider before a phased school opening is implemented. Managing your expectations is important at this time. A partial school opening does not mean that those children permitted to attend school can expect normality.

Some or all of the following measures may need to be in place before we partially reopen:

- Tables separated in the hall and in the classrooms
- Children being grouped and staying in that group throughout this process
- Class teachers may not be with their class for the entire school day
- Whole classes will be split into groups, each with different timetables
- Children may not be in their own classrooms for much of the day
- Staff are likely to be allocated to the same group of children throughout this process
- Some areas of the school may have a one-way system introduced to minimise contact
- It is likely there will be a staggered start and finish to the school day and different year groups allocated separate entrances.
- It is likely there will be staggered lunch and playtimes.
- Parents will be asked to collect and pick up children in line with social distancing procedures.

All of the above are just some of the many measures that are being discussed to ensure the safety of all. In addition, not all staff will be able to work on site this will mean that I may not have adequate staff cover for all classes in all year groups and still be able to operate the school safely for all pupils to return before the summer as the Government has suggested.

While we are addressing the above points, we will be strengthening our Home learning offer by introducing Google Classrooms. This we hope to roll out over the coming week. Activities will be planned and monitored by the teachers. More information about Google Classrooms will be sent to you shortly. Nursery and Reception classes will still be expected to continue to use Bug Club and Mathletics and these will continue to be available for all year groups. Each child will have their own log in from years 1 to 6 to Google Classrooms. We will text you with your child's individual log in when the system goes live.

Even though a phased and gradual return to school, at this stage, may not be in the form of what we are used to, we must remind ourselves once more how far we have come. The fact that we are talking about a return to school is a celebration in itself.

We look forward to planning a return-to-school curriculum which will focus on wellbeing, relationships and communication; as well as relevant and appropriate academic learning. We will keep you all informed and when your child receives their telephone invitation, we hope you will have confidence that we have done all that is reasonably practicable to make a return to school as safe as possible for the whole community.

Thank you for your patience and understanding.

Yours sincerely,



Ken Johnson

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