



18 May 2020

Dear Parent / Carer

The reopening of school for Year 6 pupils

Further to my letter to all parents today, I am writing to you with a bit more detail on our preparations for the possible return of year 6 pupils next half term. The precise details of how we will operate will become clear in due course but are dependent on several factors, including what the likely demand will be and our responsibility to consult carefully with staff.

For now, I would like to share some broad principles guiding our thinking so that you in turn can give us a broad indication of whether you think, on the basis of the information you have, your child is likely or unlikely to be returning in the initial phase. To this end, I would ask you to complete a short survey. Given the pace of events, **if you could get this back to us by return and by the end of Tuesday 19th May** at the latest if possible, that would be very much appreciated.

The link to the survey is [here](#).

Health and safety

First and foremost is our duty of care and our responsibility to ensure a safe environment for the young people in our charge and for members of staff. Our thinking is very much rooted in this and the specific plans will clarify precisely what is intended to ensure that when more children do attend than has been the case over the past eight weeks, the risks will have been properly assessed and safe arrangements put in place. In broad terms for now, consideration is being given to things like: enabling the safe arrival and reception of pupils, classroom capacity and associated groupings, enabling safe movement, minimizing mixing, ensuring 2m distancing as far as is possible, hand-washing arrangements, first aid requirements, social times, lunch arrangements, site cleaning, safe use of outdoor space, and so on. For those who use a service bus to travel to school, Northumberland County Council are intending to provide information this week regarding safe arrangements on board.

Start small and build from there

Relating to the above point, our thinking is based on an approach of beginning any return on a small scale first, then gradually building from there. This is a cautious approach but it will enable us to be securely on top of the manageability of the new normal from the off. We think this is important to give confidence to you as a parent or carer and to our staff that appropriate measures will be in place. It may be that we focus on one form group at a time over the first few days. We may even conclude that the necessary arrangements are not sufficiently in place for a safe return from 1st June, in which case we would delay the return.

Year 6 children of key workers and those who are vulnerable

The provision that has been in place until now will be superseded by the fuller arrangements for the year group after half term. However, should we decide that we are not ready to implement the new, wider arrangements from the 1st of June, the existing on-site provision will continue daily in the Orchard block.

Remote learning at home

Should you prefer not to send your child to school in the early period next half term, or your child is not able to attend (see guidance below), they will be able to continue learning at home as per the arrangements that have been in place since lockdown began.

Clarity on who is and isn't able to attend school

In its [guidance](#) last week, the government provided updated clarification about who is and isn't able to be in school, as follows:

- Children who have been classed as **clinically extremely vulnerable** due to pre-existing medical conditions (as outlined [here](#)), have been advised to shield in accordance with this [guidance](#). We do not expect children in this category to be attending school. Neither do we expect children who **live in a household with someone who is extremely clinically vulnerable**, to attend.
- **Clinically vulnerable** (but not clinically extremely vulnerable) people, as defined [here](#), are those considered to be at a higher risk of severe illness from coronavirus. Few if any children will fall into this category, but parents should follow medical advice if their child is in this category.
- A child who **lives with someone who is clinically vulnerable (but not clinically extremely vulnerable)**, including those who are pregnant, can now attend school.
- Children with symptoms of coronavirus or who are self-isolating due to symptoms in their household should not attend. Guidance on this can be found [here](#).

Next steps

Over the coming days, the senior team and I will be firming up our thinking, in consultation with staff. I shall write to you later in the week with more details. In the meantime, I hope the above gives you some reassurance that we are adopting a careful, cautious, step-by-step approach that will allow us to position ourselves safely and credibly when the time comes.

Yours faithfully



Graeme Akins
Executive Headteacher

