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15 May 2020

Dear Parents/Carers

I hope you are all keeping well, are staying safe and making the most of the current situation. I apologise for writing to you at length but before putting out a survey, I feel you need to know a few facts about what school will look like for your child should you decide to send them back at the time we open for more children – it is your choice.

You will have heard the government's plans to begin to phase the opening of schools to children in Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6. No plans were communicated to us prior to the government's announcement on Sunday and further communication has been filtering in during the week.

In order to ensure the safety of your child if they return to school here are some of the things we think we will need to have in place:

- Staggered starts to the day and staggered finish times to avoid congestion outside of school. Only one adult will be allowed to drop off and collect
- Children will be with the same small group of pupils for the whole day. The size of the group will be approximately 10 children (depending on the size of the room). The government is referring to these groups as 'bubbles'. Bubbles of children will not be allowed to mix so that the virus can be tracked and traced and those people who have been in the affected 'bubble' can isolate and be tested
- Wherever possible, the same adults will work with the group whenever they are in school. This is likely to mean the class teacher will not teach your child, although it will be a member of the school staff they are familiar with
- Children will not necessarily be in the classroom they were used to
- Breaks and lunchtimes will be staggered and children will remain in their groups at this time. They will not mix with children from other groups
- Infant children and children eligible for free school meals will be given a packed lunch. Children in other year groups will need to bring a packed lunch. Lunches will be eaten in groups either in the classroom or outside
- Lessons will be in a different format from usual. Tables and chairs will be spaced out at a safe distance and children will have a designated area to sit in during the day.
- Children will not be allowed to move freely around the school

Assistant Headteachers: Mrs J. Taylor & Mrs S. Clamp



We will also need to consider staffing ratios, classroom space and toilet capacity. Once we have carried out a thorough risk assessment we will be able to determine how many children and which year groups could safely return. It is highly unlikely we will be able to provide full time education for any year groups and rotas will be in place. It is likely that the initial return will be phased so that only certain year groups are in school.

Do I want the children and staff all back in school? Of course I do. However, I am not going to write and tell you we can achieve social distancing. I can tell you quite honestly that there is no such thing as social distancing in a school – we can try our very best but we certainly cannot guarantee it.

The youngest children will find this all very difficult. They will not have access to most of the practical resources they would normally have because they all have to be kept clean to avoid infection.

I will be sending out a survey to the parents/carers of children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 to find out how many of you would want to send your children back. We will of course endeavour to make the experience as positive as possible and we recognise that children will be anxious – small groups will help with this but school will not be school in that sense. IT WILL NOT BE THE NORMAL THEY ARE USED TO.

So that initial plans can be developed further, the numbers who want to return are needed. The key worker/vulnerable group will remain as it is. I need to be clear that it is ONLY Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 being considered – if you have children in other year groups they CANNOT return at this time.

I apologise for what I have described, but as a parent, I would want to know exactly what it would look like. Should you decide that you wish for your child to stay at home then I assure you that I understand and respect your decision. The official DfE guidance states that ‘Parents will not be fined for non-attendance at this time’. We will aim to continue to provide some form of home learning. What I do ask is that you decide one way or the other - it will take a lot of organising and I cannot have people dropping in and out.

Please note that school will be closed for ALL pupils on 1st/2nd June to allow staff to prepare the environment and to carry out a deep clean.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter. I appreciate that it is an extremely difficult decision to decide what to do.

Take care and stay safe.

With warmest regards

J Cutbush

Mrs J Cutbush
Headteacher

Assistant Headteachers: Mrs J. Taylor & Mrs S. Clamp

