



Friday 22nd May 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

I am writing to update you on the progress of our plans to prepare to meet the Government's ambition for a possible reopening to more children on 1st June at the earliest. Firstly, can I say a huge thank you for your patience, kindness and support during this last few weeks. It must be so frustrating for you as parents trying to organise your own work schedules whilst not knowing if your child will be able to return to school or not. I am desperate to see the children back in school as soon as possible but quite honestly this last week it has felt like an impossible task to meet all the conditions set out and to do so safely.

We have been planning on the basis that the Government might move to phase two of their recovery plan on 1st June. However we currently have no further indication of how likely this is. The Government are set to review the progress towards their plan on Thursday 28th May. (As previously mentioned schools may only be informed if this is not the case 48 hours before 1st June.) This being the case I strongly recommend that you do not make any concrete plans until we are able to confirm the exact date that your child is able to return to school. Hopefully you will have read the letter I sent you from Colin Pettigrew, Corporate Director, Children and Young People's Services at Nottinghamshire County Council. As indicated in this letter and my previous letters the potential reopening has posed particular challenges for standalone infant schools such as ours. In addition, we have a significant proportion of our parents/carers who fall into the critical worker category.

We are very conscious of the impact not being at school is having on our children and their parents/carers ability to return to work. We have therefore worked towards reopening as soon as we feel we can have everything in place and we have been working tirelessly with the goal of opening w/c 1st June. However, we are faced with an overwhelming quantity of ever changing guidance from multiple sources including the DfE, unions, Health & Safety and HR. This is often conflicting or incomplete and has not filled me with confidence. It leaves many critical questions as yet unanswered. We have been told that some information will not be released until late next week. I also feel there is insufficient time to complete the preparation that still has to be done. I am therefore sorry to say that I have now concluded that opening to more children on w/c 1st June is not feasible and that w/c 8th June will be the earliest we can admit more children.

As I previously explained my approach is going to be cautious and methodical. I want to be sure at each stage that our plans and protocols are workable and effective in keeping children, staff and yourselves as safe as possible. Therefore being mindful of the current Government guidance and having consulted with staff, the LA and Governors our plans are as follows:

Half term week commencing 25th May

School will be open to provide care for the children who have already been attending during phase one of the lockdown. Parents/carers of these children have already been contacted to arrange this. Some staff will be working through the half term, others will be having a break to ensure they are refreshed and ready for the return.

Monday 1st – Friday 5th June

We will only be able to provide care for the children who have already been attending during phase one of the lockdown.

Alongside providing care for these children this week will be used to provide staff training to ensure all staff are fully conversant with new protocols, routines, risk assessments etc. We will also be able to issue parents/carers of children returning in the next phase with starter packs and preparation activities for the children. I feel this is critical to a successful reopening. I need to know that staff are confident that they and the children are as safe as possible and that everyone knows what they are doing before we readmit the children.

Monday 8th June

Proposed first day of extended opening. **At this stage we will only be able to accommodate the children of critical workers. (I.e. any child with at least one parent who is a critical worker.) We will contact all eligible families next week.** The data we have gathered from parents/carers to date indicates that we will require all our staff to supervise the required number of 'bubbles' for these children alone. There will be very detailed guidance for these parents/carers w/c 1st June.

This means that initially we will not have space for children in reception (FS2) or year one where one parent/carer is not a critical worker. Our plan is to monitor the numbers of children attending in the first few weeks of June and to also closely scrutinise how well our systems are working. We will review this before Friday 19th June with a view to admitting those children in reception whose non critical worker parents/carers have requested a place. Again we will only be able to do this if staffing and space allows. We will of course keep you updated as we move forward.

Home learning for those children unable to return to school

Initially we plan to continue with our current approach and to try and keep home learning broadly in line with what's happening in school. We will then be reviewing home learning and looking at ways to support parents/carers at home whilst managing full time teaching commitments. This is over and above the Government guidance in respect to home learning, once we move to phase two, which is that schools should make their best endeavours to provide some home learning and should direct parents/carers to the Oak National Academy and BBC Bitesize online resources. Updated guidance can be found here <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/help-primary-school-children-continue-their-education-during-coronavirus-covid-19>

What are we doing to prepare for potential reopening?

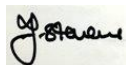
I have previously mentioned how complex the process of reopening will be. Here is a flavour of what we are doing.

- Collecting, collating and analysing data from parents/carers to identify critical workers that want a school place after 1st June.
- Collecting, collating and analysing data from parents/carers to identify parents/carers who are not critical workers with children in reception and year one that want a school place after 1st June.
- Assessing availability of staff who are not excluded from work due to being in shielding categories or ill and completing individual risk assessments
- Completing detailed risk assessments
- Consulting Unions on risk assessments
- Checking health and safety compliance
- Re organising fire evacuation and other statutory procedures

- Deep cleaning the building
- Rearranging all classrooms and all spaces in school to allow for social distancing and safe movement around the building
- Removing significant amounts of resources such as soft toys/cushions/difficult to clean toys etc. to reduce opportunities for transmission
- Preparing a personal resource pack for each child containing items which are used daily such as pencil, glue stick, white board & pen.
- Reorganising and labelling outdoor resources so they are not used by multiple bubbles.
- Preparing detailed timetables to ensure staffing levels are appropriate to safely manage all aspects of the school day
- Reorganising the structure of the whole school day to allow for staggered starts, play, lunch etc.
- Planning in several staggered hand washing opportunities and subsequent cleaning routines.
- Negotiating with NCC catering team to provide a lunch menu which can be delivered in classrooms
- Ordering additional resources for classrooms and outdoors as these cannot be shared by different bubbles
- Ordering additional supplies of soap, paper towels, hand gel, cleaning products and PPE
- Planning school and home learning for after half term
- Monitoring and responding to existing home learning
- Coordinating with wrap around care providers.
- Planning a 'recovery curriculum' for those children who will be able to return to school in the next phase.
- Preparing information packs for parents/carers of those children who will be able to return after half term.
- Planning 'return to school' packs for those children who will be able to return to school in the next phase. This is a therapeutic play based approach to acknowledging that children will have missed their friends, that they need to re-establish attachments, that they may or may not be happy about returning, that they may be anxious or worried etc.
- Communicating plans via year group and whole staff online meetings
- Working in partnership with WBSJ to share plans
- Participating in online meetings with the LA and analysing daily updates to ensure we are fully briefed and compliant with guidance from DfE, HR and health and safety.
- Staff training on supporting children through loss and potentially bereavement.

I am so sorry that this may not be the news that many of you may want to hear. But as I have and always will say, I have to know that the welfare of children and staff are the first priority and that we are able to keep them as safe as possible in the current challenging circumstances.

Kind Regards



Fiona Stevens

Head Teacher