



Thursday 14th May 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

I hope this letter finds you all well and that you are managing to get out in the sunshine a little more.

As you know since 23rd March schools have remained open for priority children as set out in the previous guidance. This included over the Easter holiday. Any children not in the priority group were supported to continue learning at home. The Government has now announced its ambition for a phased return for some additional groups of children **if and when** we are able to move to step two of the Government's recovery strategy. **If** the conditions are met to move to step two it is proposed that schools begin a phased return on 1st June **at the earliest**. Parents of eligible children are encouraged to send their child to school but **it will not be compulsory for any parent/carer to send their child to school if they do not feel it is safe to do so**.

As I said in my letter earlier this week, we are currently working our way through, and trying to understand, the mound of guidance documents intended to support schools in preparing for a possible phased reopening. One of the difficulties is that the expectations are of the one size fits all variety despite the fact that every school context may be vastly different. The current expectations have made it particularly challenging for large infant schools such as ours who are expected to reopen to 2/3 of our children in addition to a significant number of critical worker children. Large primary schools on the other hand are only taking 3 out of 7 year groups and will consequently have more staff and more spaces to accommodate this. In addition, each school is faced with different numbers of staff available depending on how many staff are excluded from work because they are in a shielding of clinically vulnerable group. We also have a lovely Victorian building which unfortunately means smaller capacity classrooms. (The reason we have an admissions number of 81 as opposed to 90.) The guidance is clear that social distancing in schools, especially with very young children, is not possible. Instead we are being asked to implement a range of protective measures to reduce risk. The good news is that we have already been practicing in this way very successfully for the past 8 weeks whilst providing care for priority groups.

I also said in my previous letter that the safety and well-being of children and staff is at the forefront of any plans we make. We will therefore be taking a cautious and methodical approach to any phased reopening. I do not feel that we will be able to maintain the required protective measures and admit all children in FS2 and Year One in addition to the children of critical workers at the same time. I also think it highly improbable that we will be able to open to all our children at the same time before the end of the summer term. I am however very mindful that our Year Two children are facing a transition to WBJIS and will be working with Mr Willis and the LA on a plan to address this.

To help us evaluate more accurately what provision we are able to offer I would ask you to read the following information before completing the attached questionnaire. I apologise in advance for the amount of information but this reflects the complexity of the task we are faced with.

The guidance suggests that schools should plan a phased return to school for the following groups of children and in this order of priority:

- Children of critical workers already eligible for care
- Vulnerable children
- Children with at least one parent who is a critical worker not already accessing care
- Children in Reception (FS2)
- Children in Year one

To check if you are a critical worker please see section 7 of the linked document on critical workers <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers>

To check if your child is counted as vulnerable please follow the link and read section 6 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers>

- The Government have suggested the reopening of schools **might** be possible from the 1st of June at the earliest and only if the five tests set out in stage one of the road map are met.
- We will only be given 48hours notice if this changes.
- When we reopen school it will be very different to what the children are used to.
- The guidance is clear that social distancing in schools, especially with very young children, is not possible. Instead we are being asked to implement a range of protective measures to reduce risk. (This includes frequent hand washing and cleaning procedures.)
- It is suggested that children work in 'bubbles' of no more than 15. However, given the age of our children and the size of our classrooms, we feel 8 is the maximum number of children we can accommodate in each learning space initially.
- The children will be cared for in smaller 'bubbles' of 8 children.
- Each 'bubble' will be supervised by a Teacher or a Teaching Assistant. This may not be their current class Teacher.
- The children will not be allowed to mix with children in the other 'bubbles'.
- If there is a confirmed case of corona virus in a 'bubble' all children and staff in that group will have to self-isolate for 14 days and follow the usual guidance. Testing will be available for anyone displaying symptoms.
- Unless you are a critical worker siblings of eligible children in other year groups will not be eligible for a place.
- Only one parent/carer will be able to drop off children at school each day.
- There will be staggered starts to the beginning and end of the day to allow for safe entry/exit.
- Staff will be carrying out significant amounts of extra cleaning throughout the day as well as supervising hand-washing several times each day. This will clearly impact on the amount of time supporting learning.
- Timetables and the curriculum will be significantly adapted to reduce movement around school and allow for more practical and outdoor learning.
- Any children not attending school after reopening will continue to receive home learning as they do now.

- Preparing and responding to home learning will also require teaching time and will again impact on the amount of provision available. (If all Teachers and Teaching Assistants are needed to supervise the bubbles we will need to build in time when they do not have any children to allow them to support home learning.)
- You may decide that it is best to keep your child at home even though they are eligible to be in school.
- Parents/carers will not be fined for non-attendance at this time.
- If your child is in the 'clinically extremely vulnerable' health category they will be expected to stay at home and continue shielding.
- If your child is in the 'clinically vulnerable' but not 'extremely vulnerable' health category, you should follow the guidance on this group and speak to your GP if unsure. If you would then like your child to attend school you should contact us to discuss this.
- Whatever care we are able to provide we will always make the safety and well-being of the children and staff in school our priority. We will always ensure that time in school is a positive and happy experience for your children.

If you would like to read some of the guidance yourself the links are as follows:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers/reopening-schools-and-other-educational-settings-from-1-june>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-protective-measures-in-education-and-childcare-settings/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-protective-measures-in-education-and-childcare-settings>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers/reopening-schools-and-other-educational-settings-from-1-june>

If you have any further questions after reading this letter and the questionnaire, please feel free to contact us by email office@westbridgford-inf.notts.sch.uk or by phone 0115 974 7885

In order to plan our provision and establish how many children we can safely offer places to we need to collect the information in the questionnaire which can be accessed via this link.

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=U3ZN8kJnh0Oz2kFjZeSAQEggUtzS7G5In4f0NdwsMH5UQzBWWU9TOFpQVjRXN1M4QU83VjFaWDc1Ni4u>

Please complete by 9am on Monday 18th May.

Once again, thank you so much for your support and patience. Our thoughts are with you all.

Kind regards

Fiona Stevens

Head Teacher