

1st May 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

Thank you once again for your spirit and commitment at what can only be described as an unsettling and tricky time. So much positivity continues to come back to school and individual class teachers and, as always, they are more than happy to support you as much or as little as you need. That said, we also feel and understand your frustrations with motivating your children with home learning the longer lockdown continues and the pressures the ongoing national situation is presenting us with. Please remember that you are doing more than enough and don't put yourselves under any unnecessary pressure. There is nothing to feel guilty about and we are only at the end of keyboard or phone if you need us to advise, support, or just simply listen. First and foremost, look after yourselves and the rest will look after itself.

Yesterday, the Prime Minister stated that next week he would be outlining the government's exit strategy and it was reassuring to hear that the extended reopening of schools is part of those discussions and plans. Despite no further commitment to an actual date, you may have also seen that the Secretary of State for Education, Gavin Williamson, said during his evidence to the Education Select Committee that when the government brings schools back, it will be in a phased manner. He said that he recognises the idea of schools returning on day one with a full complement of pupils is not realistic or practical. Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab, who was deputising for the Prime Minister, also said that it is "inconceivable" that schools could reopen without some form of social distancing being put in place, meaning that schools may be able to begin extending their current provisions to specific year groups or on a rota basis, balancing home learning with schooling. The Secretary of State has outlined the five tests that need to be in place, not just when considering reducing lockdown restrictions but before schools can open more widely. Mr Williamson is committed to working with the education sector and stated that he has asked the Scientific Advisory Group (SAGE) to set up a sub-group to look at the particular issue of opening schools.

As a school, we have been working tirelessly on our recovery plan and some of the specific actions and considerations contained within it include:

- **Health and safety and public health considerations:** decisions and actions related to whatever the public health advice is at the time and how to implement it, including social distancing measures, marking out of classrooms and corridors, signage and safety barriers, new routines for moving around the school site, arrangements for lunch and break times, safe arrangements for parents dropping up and picking up their children, PPE considerations and the supply of hand sanitisers and essential cleaning equipment, cleaning of toys in early years settings as well as equipment like computers, calculators, music equipment etc.
- **Staffing:** comprehensive audit of staff available to return to school – i.e. those who are not shielding due to underlying conditions that they or a member of their family have;
- **School site:** a range of decisions and actions related to the school estate including the full range of health and safety checks, deep cleaning, the maintenance of the cleaning regime, net capacity assessments/audits for all sites to determine a safe level of occupation;
- **Curriculum:** a clear plan for the curriculum that will be in place both for those who are returning to school and an online curriculum for those who are not, depending on what government guidance dictates, along with plans to address any gaps in learning;
- **Timetabling:** decisions and actions about the timetable and how this will operate;



- **Pastoral and welfare considerations:** decisions and actions related to how to support pupils with being reintroduced to the routines of schools and mental health and emotional support;
- **Policy frameworks:** amendments to existing school or trust policies including all operational policies, health and safety and attendance protocols, procedures for dealing with pupils or staff displaying symptoms.

As the government appreciate, ensuring it is safe to do so, there is a wealth of factors to consider with extending the opening of schools and adequate time will need to be given to ensure this is planned for and communicated to all relevant stakeholders carefully before a 'different kind of normal' can be achieved. We have looked to examples that other countries have set to help guide us in our thinking, but as many other nations reduce lockdown restrictions in different ways, it is difficult for us to pre-empt what this will look in the UK. For example, Denmark has reopened its schools in a phased manner, Sweden have not had any lockdown restrictions in place at all and Italy are not reopening their schools until September. Whatever our government decide, we have planned for a range of scenarios and hope to have more information for you in due course. We look forward to the unveiling of the government's exit strategy next week and will, as always, keep you fully informed of these impending developments.

Please have a lovely and relaxing weekend, look after yourselves and stay safe!

Kind regards,

Mr D Adams
Head Teacher



"Happy children, inspired learners"

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