

FRIDAY 22ND MAY 2020

Dear Parents & Carers,

Since the Government announced their plans to re-open schools to more children from June 1st – the staff and myself have been working tirelessly to see how this increase in numbers could work, whilst keeping staff, children and parents safe, as well as continuing to support our local community.

As I am sure you can appreciate, this is not an easy task and I am grateful for your patience whilst we have worked through this. As a school we pride ourselves on excellent communication and forward thinking but the challenges that we have faced since the Government announcement have been unprecedented, and working out a plan to open effectively and safely has taken a lot of time. The fact we are dealing with the health and wellbeing of children and adults has meant that we have not been able to rush through any stage of this process and I am certain that no one within our community would expect us to do so either.

Within this letter I will outline very briefly our plan moving forward. Attached to this is also a Risk Assessment/Planning Summary document for your reference. The Risk Assessment has been written in consultation with all staff, LGB and the Trust CEO and Board of Directors of the Trust.

It must be noted that this Risk Assessment will be reviewed by the Senior Team on a weekly basis at least. If at any time myself or the Senior Team feel that there is a change in circumstance which has resulted in an increased risk to any adult, parent or child, we will not hesitate to scale back what we are offering. This may be at short notice. Whilst this may prove difficult for some families if this happens, which we appreciate, the safety and wellbeing of children and staff on our site is the number one priority. That cannot ever be compromised.

Moving forward, the school will remain closed over the half term holiday. Whilst this was a difficult decision to make in that we would not be there for our Key Worker children, the scale of operation required to get the school in a position to accept more children in the Government timescale was impossible if we remained open. The school will be closed to allow alterations to classrooms, new protective measures for moving around the school to be implemented and for a thorough deep clean to take place.

Following the half term, the school will open as follows under current guidance:

JUNE 1ST – CLOSED

JUNE 2ND – CLOSED

JUNE 3RD – CRITICAL WORKER CHILDREN ONLY

JUNE 8TH – RECEPTION CHILDREN (+ Critical Worker chn)

JUNE 10TH – YEAR 1 & YEAR 6 CHILDREN (+ Reception chn & Critical Worker chn)

The decisions taken to open in this way were the only possible way we as a school felt we could safely invite more children and adults onto our site. The decision to remain closed for Critical Worker children on June 1st and 2nd again was difficult for the school – but to put this in perspective, the

numbers of children now “qualifying” in that group have doubled. Which meant an increase in both children and staff on site from June 1st would have posed a greater risk than we were prepared to take. Staff require training on what the “new normal” in school will look like – in order to be able to facilitate the safe return of more children and in the longer term – accept children from other year groups.

As will be explained in the attached summary document – children will now be placed into groups. These groups or “bubbles” as the Government guidance states, will have no contact with any other child or adult from any other “bubble” throughout the day. This means any child who is in Reception, Year 1 or Year 6 and is also a “Critical Worker” child – **CANNOT** be placed into the Critical Worker group from June 3rd, as this would mean they have been exposed to the Critical Worker “bubble” and will then go into another “bubble” if the school opens to more children. Again, we understand that this may prove difficult for some families, but this is the only way our Risk Assessment will allow us to even think about allowing more children onto our site in the future. As I have stated before, safety and wellbeing of staff and children comes before anything else.

I would like to thank all parents who responded to the surveys we sent out in the previous weeks about returning to school. The deadlines we gave may now become apparent as to why we set them. All children whose parents have said they will be coming back if schools could accept more children have now been assigned a “bubble” – of both adults and children. Our Risk Assessment is now based on those figures. Any child who is eligible to return, but who has not expressed to the school they wished to return, WILL NOT be permitted onto site until the Risk Assessment has been reviewed to see if it can be managed. Likewise – any parent who initially did not want their child to return, but has subsequently changed their mind, must let the Office know. Again, the Senior Team would need to review the Risk Assessment before any decision could then be made. This process would not give an immediate answer – so please bear that in mind.

I hope as parents you not only understand the incredibly difficult position schools are in but also the complexity around opening the school to more children.

I again would personally like to thank our school community for your wonderful support, our incredible staff team here who have worked tirelessly throughout the lockdown to serve our local area and the LGB and BWAFF Trust for their guidance and support in helping us to welcome back safely some more of our children. It must also be noted that each school’s scenario is very different and their ability to open to more children will vary greatly from school to school.

Thank you again and we look forward to seeing some more of you on June 3rd and hopefully even more of you in the coming weeks – if all goes well.

Kind regards,

Dr Early