

Monday 18th May 2020

Dear Parents & Carers,

Thank you to those of you with children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 who responded to our short survey regarding schools opening to more children on June 1st. In this letter, I would like to provide you with some background information regarding the preparations that the school is currently undertaking, in order to be in a position to open to more children on June 1st.

I am sure you will all appreciate that this is an incredibly difficult task and the preparations being made by the school are not yet complete and the guidance from the DfE is continuously being changed and altered, making planning even harder. It is absolutely essential we get this right and that we take a gradual approach that enables us to ensure the necessary protective measures can be put in place. We want the return managed with extreme care and caution, and are currently undergoing a robust and rigorous risk assessment process that has the health and safety of our pupils, staff, families and community at the very heart of every decision we have to make. Our preparations are being made on the basis of risk reduction, as far as possible, based on our understanding of the guidance and how this can be applied to our own setting.

Parents must make their own decisions whether to send their child to school and households must refer to the documentation released by the Government and/or refer to their GPs if you feel that any member of your household has an increased medical risk. For example, guidance states that if a child, or someone in the household who the child lives with, is classed as extremely clinically vulnerable then they should not return to school. If your child is classed as clinically vulnerable, you should follow medical advice to decide if they should come back to school on June 1st.

If we are in a position to open to more children on June 1st, the school day will be very different to what we are all used to – and a focus on the mental and emotional wellbeing of our children who do come back in, will be at the forefront of our thinking.

Below is a list of alterations and arrangements that the school is currently having to think about – this list is not exhaustive. As soon as we are in a position to be able to release more precise details to parents we will do so:

Current planning arrangements include:

- Reducing the numbers of children in each classroom significantly (no more than 15 per classroom).
- Children will remain in the teaching group in which they will be placed, with the teaching staff remaining constant to prevent mixing between groups. This means children may not be in the classroom where they were previously taught and they may have a different teacher. Each group will be made up of children from the same year.
- A rigorous approach to hygiene will be adopted, including regular handwashing and additional classroom cleaning.
- Organising new routines for travelling in and around the school.
- Implementation of a staggered drop off and collection time to minimise contact between these year groups and across parental groups.
- Organising staggered break times and lunchtimes to minimise contact between “working groups” of children. There will also be zoning of playground/outdoor space.
- Reducing the range of resources available to children in classrooms

- Increased cleaning time regimes
- We will endeavour to cover year group specific curriculum content, but both this, and Home Learning for year groups not in school, may be affected

I hope this illustrates the level of complexity that all schools around the country are facing and it will give you as parents a realistic view of what the school day could be like, should we be in a position to open to more children on June 1st.

If you decide to not send your child back, there will be no issuing of fines.

The school's ability to operate in any capacity will also be dependent on staffing levels and any provision we are able to offer may need to change at short notice, if we are unable to meet safe adult:child ratios.

May Half Term:

The school **will not** be in a position to offer child care to our Key Worker children over the May half term. In order to be in any position to open to more children on June 1st, the school needs a rigorous deep clean to ensure high hygiene standards are met. This can only be done without any children or adults entering the building – so the difficult decision to close the school has been taken.

FSM Vouchers:

For those families who are in receipt of Free School Meals, the Government have announced that there will be no provision of FSM vouchers over the May half term. As yet, we have had no communication from the Government or the DfE with regards to what happens with the voucher scheme if schools open to more children on June 1st.

The decisions needing to be taken over these last 8 weeks have been some of the most difficult that I, and my school, have ever had to take. We will continue to do whatever we can to support our school community, but we must exercise caution, and only move forward when we feel comfortable to do so.

On behalf of everyone at Wygate Park – we thank you for your support and patience. Please continue to stay safe and look after each other.

Kind regards,

Dr Early