

Dear Parents/Carers,

### **Assessment of Potential to Re-Open School**

You will be aware that the Government has announced that schools may have the potential to re-open from the 1<sup>st</sup> June, in a phased manner. At this stage it is important to note that discussions at a national level are still ongoing and being reported daily in the media. The first possible date to re-open schools has still not been confirmed. As a school we believe that your child's safety is of paramount importance and the governors and I will not take the decision to re-open until such time we are certain that it is safe to do so. The British Medical Association has recently confirmed that there has been very little research about the potential impact of opening schools. Research that has been produced doesn't lead to any concrete conclusions and some of it has even produced conflicting results. The British Medical Association clearly states that 'until we have the case numbers much lower, we should not consider opening schools.' The Governors and I will continue to monitor the scientific information available and will take this into consideration when making a decision about when we open.

We do however need to plan for an eventual re-opening at some point in the future and as such I have been working with the staff, Governors and Local Authority to ensure that when the decision is made to open we have all required procedures in place at that point in time. In order to plan in more detail, I am asking all parents to complete a short survey indicating whether you intend to send your child back to school as part of the potential phased return if it happens this term. I appreciate this is a difficult decision and I hope that the information in this letter provides a background to what school may look like should we return. Whilst we would all love to have your children back in school I believe you should have the information needed to make an informed decision about what school will be like if the Government ask schools to re-open.

The phased return being proposed by the Government involves Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 pupils. If all children in those year groups should return that would equate to 170 children plus approximately 30 staff. In order to ensure the safety of our children and staff schools will operate in a very different way. Each class or group will form what the Government calls a 'bubble'. Each bubble will have a separate playtime, separate lunch time and children will be limited to the contact they have with staff. No contact with other children outside their designated bubble will be permitted. As far as possible the children will remain in their classroom throughout the day and will also eat their lunch in the classroom to avoid the risk of them being exposed to the virus in other areas of the school. It is important to note that your child may not be taught by their current class teacher and at times we may ask our Teaching Assistants to lead the class, with advice and guidance from a teacher.

In accordance with the Government guidance there will be a need for staggered starts to the beginning and end of the day to avoid congestion at the gates and possible reduced school days or hours. This could mean drop offs at a given time between 8.30 and 9.10am and pick ups at a given time between 2.40 and 3.15pm. There will be no provision for Breakfast and After School Clubs at this time. Children will sit on individual desks 2 metres away from other children and we will, where practical, put procedures into place to maintain social distancing. I hope parents understand that in practice monitoring social distancing between children is a significant task and it will not be practical for school to guarantee social distancing at all times. The Government guidance advises us to remove equipment and toys from the classroom if they cannot be cleaned. This will inevitably mean we will need to restrict the range of activities and learning opportunities we offer to our children. For outdoor break time in the playground, children will not be permitted to play team games or games that involve being in close proximity to their friends as this will not meet social distancing requirements. We will encourage children to play games they can do on their own to support meeting safety requirements.

The provision for key worker and vulnerable children will remain unchanged and these children will remain in the current group rather than being with their own class. This is because in effect the key worker children are already in a designated bubble and will remain in that bubble for their safety and that of other children and staff.

In terms of the curriculum, the children who come into school will access the same learning materials as those who choose not to return to school and instead continue with their home-learning. We will continue to base our lessons on the Oak National Academy materials so that there is consistency between the in-school and

home-school groups and children. To reiterate, if you choose not to send your child to school if and when the Government asks schools to re-open, we will continue to provide and monitor home-learning material, the same as for those in school and therefore your child will not be educationally disadvantaged.

We ask that parents and guardians consider the information provided in this letter and make an informed choice as to whether you anticipate sending your child into school, should we re-open, or if you anticipate continuing with home-learning with ongoing support from the teachers. Please note that if you choose to maintain the current home-learning approach there will be no penalties or fines for non-attendance, as per Government guidance.

I appreciate you may want some time to consider this information before you make a decision and as such we ask that you indicate your preference by Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> May date via this link:

[School Survey May 2020](#)

Please be assured that the Governors and I continue to have the safety and well-being of your children, and our staff, at the heart of all we do. I'd be grateful if you could pass our thanks and well wishes to your little ones and encourage them to continue to read and learn, in the meantime!

Take care and stay safe

*J. McNally*