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**Head teacher: Mrs K Douglass**

(1:1 BA Hons in Education)

15th May 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

I hope you are all keeping well, staying safe and making the best of the current situation. Following on from Sunday’s announcement from the Government and further guidance from The Department for Education, we have been working throughout the week to put together a plan and assess the risks of re-opening the school for Years Reception, Year 1 and Year 6, along with pupils of key workers. As a school and a MAT, we must adhere to Government recommendations regarding the priority of these year groups.

Thank you for completing our online survey. In response to this, we recognise and understand all of your worries. This is, indeed, an anxious time for all.  Due to Government plans for **all** pupils to return to school before the summer holidays, we need to ensure that we can accommodate this in terms of adhering to health and safety guidelines. There is a possibility that those, who are not the pupils of key workers, may return on a part-time basis, but this is as yet unconfirmed. The guidance is lengthy and additions are being made all the time, which poses a significant and rather frustrating challenge. It asks us to consider many factors in order to safeguard our children, staff and parents and will require significant alterations to the school day.

Some of you have requested further information regarding our re-opening structure.  We appreciate that you will all have worries and concerns about how your children can remain safe in school under such circumstances and we are taking this very seriously. This is why we are taking our time with our plans and risk assessments, whilst responding to the ever-changing guidance.

With this in mind, when your children return to school, either on 1st June or later, the experience will not be comparable to our usual structure. We will of course make the school a welcoming place, but strict restrictions will need to be imposed so we can maintain health and safety and minimise risks of the Covid virus spreading. In summary, we will be reducing class sizes, altering furnishings, adapting the format of teaching and learning, working on different timetables, reducing the number of other children individuals may come into contact with, introducing more frequent and stringent cleaning and personal hygiene measures and adapting arrival and dismissal times. Whilst social distancing will be actively encouraged at all times, we cannot guarantee that strict individual social distancing is possible when children naturally gravitate when playing together. This is a challenge for those particularly in the younger years.

Under these circumstances, as parents, you have a decision to make regarding your child’s attendance and I appreciate this is difficult and concerning. I can reassure you that the Government has withdrawn penalties for low attendance during this period. Rest assured, we are taking this very seriously and are being rigorous and thorough in our approach and we will adhere to the guidance offered to us as much as possible. I will give you further details of our return next week and publish our risk assessment so that you can see the more detailed, comprehensive procedures we will take to mitigate the risks.

Thank you for your constructive feedback regarding home learning; this will be shared in our staff meeting on Monday.  Online learning will be reviewed once again, especially as we return to school and teachers will be back in classes and therefore less available to support home learning. We will of course notify you of any change.

Please can I request that you read the Department for Education guidance for parents and carers, as it will answer many of your questions as well as challenge some of the misconceptions you may have heard in the media.

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

Please take care, enjoy this wonderful weather with your children and consider your options as a family    

Yours sincerely

Kate Douglass

Headteacher