

15th May 2020



Update to parents and carers about COVID-19 Recovery steps

Dear Parents and Carers,

Since I wrote to you on 11th May we have had different daily updates with new guidance about opening schools from the government. The latest guidance received on the evening of 14th May gave us some vital details about planning for opening.

As I hope you will appreciate this has meant adapting planning approaches on daily basis, posing some challenges in timescales to prepare.

We are leading a group of other schools in the local area scrutinising government advice together to create safe working protocols and the consensus from our local HTs is that to enable us to plan safely further consideration needs to be given to the timescales in being able to allow children back safely.

Our Oval Board considered this carefully, alongside the emerging guidance and the views of our Headteachers and determined this week that in order to ensure sufficient planning time, we will be opening schools to Year R, 1 and 6 year groups from the week **beginning 8th June 2020 at the earliest**. Current arrangements for keyworkers can continue with your schools but the week commencing 1st June will be needed for vital staff training. Dependent on whether any further guidance or changes are issued it may be that we need to stagger intakes but schools will make their own local decisions about how this will work once we have approved plans in place.

We have conducted an initial survey for parents of R, Y1 and Y6 to ascertain initial feedback about returning and receive parent views to inform planning. Thank you to all those parents who responded so quickly. We had over 170 responses across the schools with just under 50% responding that they don't intend to send their children back yet. Understandably some of you are unsure and at this point only 26 people across the schools responded with a firm yes. Updated guidance on attendance is that parents won't be penalised for non-attendance.

Whilst we incorporate your feedback into our plans just to share some early indications of our intentions as we move forward and as the government has indicated they would like us to encourage parents to send children in.

Therefore to be clear:

- We fully intend to take very small carefully considered steps for any return.
- Safety will be a significant priority and as such, children won't be in their usual classes but in smaller bubbles or groups with separate playtimes and not mixing with other groups as the guidance describes.
- We shall stagger arrival and departure times to limit numbers on site so the school days won't be the same and likely to be slightly shorter to allow for this.

- On Fridays we shall deep clean, review protocols , plan and support distance learning for those at home, so school is only available on Friday for keyworker arrangements.
- We shall not open to any further year-groups until protocols are being fully successful and systems for social distancing are clearly working.

We hope to get a fuller plan to everyone by the end of next week when our Board of Directors has reviewed our plans and approved our recovery strategy.

We hope to reassure parents that if they would like to see our safety protocols once finalised these can be shared with you so you can better understand the extent of our measures to consider safety.

We are sorry not to have been able to put plans into place any faster than we can manage, but we would rather prioritise children's safety and wellbeing above all else.

Our schools will send their plans to you as an outline with a further survey for feedback on it and these plans will then be finalised with you in the week beginning 1st June.

Once again I am drawn to thank you all enormously for your significant contributions in making our co-ordinated response to distance learning such a success in such challenging times. I write to you today having just watch the most amazing pupil video of a story with Woody and a picnic – the level of creativity out there in our communities is brilliant! We continue to celebrate the wonderful work at home on Twitter – we know through all of this difficulty children will have flourished from that quality time with their families. And do please continue to have a balanced approach to distance learning, wellbeing is a priority for all our families.

In case you missed it here is our [SWAY](#) newsletter of our approach to school closures and some celebrations of distance learning. We are very proud to have had the recognition and support from our local MP who I am in close contact with about our plans.

With all best wishes,



Donna Moulds
Chief Executive Officer