



## Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> June 2020 - School Update

Dear Parent/Carer,

Everyone will be aware of our re-evaluation of key worker provision as we plan to bring back more children from Reception, Year 1 and Year 6. Of course this is all dependent on when Lancashire County Council say we can. There are also other national announcements at the moment that are impacting on schools. As promised, I am writing to you today to update you on **three key issues** and hopefully give clarification which will support everyone as we work together moving forward.

### **1. Key worker provision and return to school.**

We have now evaluated all requests for key worker provision. This evaluation has been overseen by the Governing Body today. I hope everyone understands that if you have not sent in a request it may not be possible for us to now offer you provision at our school as we have had to organise capacity and staffing based on requests. We are now working on the basis there will be no more requests. After careful consideration we have been able to adjust our timetables to ensure we can accommodate key worker provision, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 over the next 5 weeks. We now await a Lancashire County Council announcement on Monday June 15<sup>th</sup> to see if we can put our plan into action on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2020. We are ready! We will liaise with all parents who have requested key worker provision before the weekend. I am continuing to liaise separately with the families of parents in Year 6 as they are at a very important milestone in their lives and are the only group of children in school who now only have 5 weeks left at primary school. This in itself is a very challenging aspect for school, the families and their children.

### **2. Return to school for Year 2, 3, 4 and 5**

Throughout the planning of a return to school we have always been told that the **big plan** was to invite all children back into school before the planned summer break. The Government would have had to change their guidance to do this but the staff and I were excited and committed to bringing back all our children before the summer within their plans. As they never announced how they wanted this to look, I waited to tell you how this might be for these year groups. I believe speculation is not helpful for anyone. This week, there is lots of information which says that the Government are now retracting this idea and rethinking this plan. This alongside Lancashire County Council's risk assessments and delay to more children coming back, means I am unable to tell families of these year groups how a return to school will look and when this may happen.

This is another challenging thing to accept and I believe the government are working on how they wish schools to respond and plan as I write to you. What I would like to say is that there is a desire on behalf of myself, The Governing Body and the staff of the school to get all of your children back into our building as soon as possible. Indeed, we have many creative ideas on how we can support their return to school. I hope everyone understands though, that as a Lancashire County Council school, we very much have to work within the Government and Lancashire guidelines. I am awaiting any plan from both of these bodies as regarding bringing back children from Year 2, 3, 4 or 5. What I would like to say, is once we have brought back Reception, Year 1 and 6, I will be working incredibly hard to ensure the other year groups have a plan and a timescale communicated to them as soon as this is possible.

Having said all of this it would be unfair to currently suggest a date or format of when these children can return to school and as of yet there is no guidance for how the Government want schools to look in September. I understand this brings huge uncertainty and having read the transcript from parliament on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> June the Education Secretary, Gavin Williamson, is coming under increased pressure to release information to everyone on how schools will be allowed to function moving forward. As Headteacher of our school it is incredibly frustrating to be bound by lack of information and I am awaiting daily updates like yourselves, to see a resolution put before us.

### 3. Home school Support

Since the start of school closure to most children we have been running a home school with your support for children not attending the building. We have used a daily emailing system to lead this. We always felt this was the best way to communicate and work with you all. Over the **9 weeks of term time** we have received much positivity about this system. I feel it is important to tell you that in developing this system, the staff and I evaluated and looked at several options of which there were many. Considering our school's capacity to function we felt and continue to feel, this is the best system for all of our children and staff.

However, as the situation continues to move forward without a date for most children to return to school, we have decided to add an extra support mechanism into our home schooling. I would like to highlight that two weeks ago we thought we would have had half of our children back in school. We also now thought we would be planning to bring all other children back. Our energy and time went into planning for this. It is now **due to this this delay**, that we are adding this additional support into our home school offer.

#### **What does this look like?**

We will continue to communicate with families by emailing work daily. However, as the time away from school increases I am very aware of the emotional impact on children and families who are not yet in school. It is impossible to replicate our school setting in a virtual world but to support the children we will be offering the opportunity to book a **1 to 1 pastoral slot** to have a chat with their class teacher. This initiative will be launched next week when you will receive full details of how this will look. It will only apply for children **not** attending the school building. Full details of this service will be announced next week once Lancashire County Council have advised on a return to school for more children.

What I would like all of our families to understand is that capacity at school is currently significantly stretched. As a school we have been open since the start of the pandemic. Staff are working with children daily and preparing work amongst other duties. Whilst in the first **9 term time weeks** of school closure we have kept in touch daily and offered the opportunity to call and discuss any concerns, I believe the delay to further openings now calls for a review and change of how we are working.

To support this change, all staff are sending short video messages to the children this week so that the children can hear a message of encouragement from teachers to support the amazing work you are doing with them and back up their daily emails.

As a school we feel are doing everything we can to support all children in this incredibly challenging time; often working within an ever changing framework. We always believed we would have most children back in school before the summer; as this is not yet happening, we are now choosing to direct some of our capacity to support all children in a different way if you feel this would be helpful. It will be voluntary whether you choose to access this service. I hope everyone understands that this is another incredible challenge for school and all the staff and I ask for continued support and patience as we set this system up over the coming week.

Finally I can only once gain reiterate my thanks to you all for your incredible support and understanding on many levels. I continue to be fully aware of the incredible challenges and emotions everyone faces. As we continue on our journey of getting school back to how we all want it, the staff and I will continue to work with you all as best we can for the good of all the children.

I'd like to take this opportunity to wish you and your families well and please email in any concerns so that I can contact you to discuss them.

Mr D Kennedy

Headteacher