

18<sup>th</sup> May 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

I hope you are keeping well and managed to enjoy some sun again at the weekend. I wanted to update you as to where we are at the moment. It is a long letter, please read to the end. If you find this difficult please call the school and someone will support you with this.

Since the Government's announcement about the phased return of more pupils to school there have been numerous updates. It seems that once I have read the update sent via the DfE in the morning, things have been changed by the afternoon. There is also much hype and speculation in the mainstream media as well as on the Social Media outlets such as FaceBook and twitter to contend with.

We have naturally received queries from many of you regarding how a return to school will look for your child. Also, and understandably, many of you have expressed nervousness about sending your child back to school. I appreciate that this will be a difficult decision for you to make given the situation.

This letter tells you what we know so far and what we are doing to provide a safe environment for the children to return to school, as well as for the staff working with them.

The main questions that we have been asked so far include:

**When will school start to re-open for more than just pupils of key worker parents?**

The government's plan is for schools to start re-integrating more children from 1st June 2020 (after half term) although they have said that this date may be postponed if the infection rate starts to go up before then. If you are requiring a place for your child, please be aware that this may be later than the 1<sup>st</sup> June 2020 as we will be undertaking a phased approach based on risk assessments.

**Which year groups will be able to return to school?**

For special schools, we have not been advised which year groups should return to school first. The guidance states:

- For all children and young people with an EHC plan in special educational settings, such as special schools, special post-16 institutions and hospital schools, settings should encourage attendance based on the child's risk assessment and on the ability of the setting to provide for their needs, and not using the child's year group as a primary deciding factor, both because all children and young people in these settings are considered vulnerable and because year groups may not be indicative of key transition points.
- Consider a range of options to enable as many children as possible to benefit from attending their setting, such as creating part-time attendance rotas

**Will I be penalised if I choose to keep my child at home, even if they are allowed to return?**

The government guidance says that no parent will be penalised for keeping their children at home. It is very clear that the choice lies with you. During Term 6, we will aim to support those children who are in school in addition to providing home learning to those children still at home as has been the case since March 23<sup>rd</sup> 2020.

**If I choose to send my child back to school, will they be allocated transport?**

Transport providers will be working towards ensuring that your child is transported to school. However, there may be some changes to your child's transport in terms of routes, pick up and drop off times. Transport are implementing social distancing rules in taxis and fleet buses by limiting the number of pupils on each journey. This will potentially have an impact on which days will be offered to your child.

In addition to this, I have spoken with transport again today. If your child is usually transported to school and you choose to transport yourself, you will be entitled to claim for the mileage travelled. This will be dealt with by the Transport Team at OCC. The allocation is usually just over 40p per mile, for the journey whilst your child is in the car. eg. if you live 4 miles from Kingfisher, you will be reimbursed for 8 miles per day attended, not the 16 miles you have travelled back and forth returning home whilst your child is in school.

### **How safe will school be?**

Keeping children socially distanced is going to be very difficult to achieve. In the first instance class sizes will be reduced and part time places offered to limit the overall number of children and staff in the building at once. Children are likely to be asked to remain in their classrooms as much as possible, including to eat their lunch so that they come into contact with fewer children and adults throughout the school day. Our staff will, of course, be vigilant in hand washing etc, however social distancing is impossible in our setting. Our staff will not be wearing PPE throughout the entire day, just when the risk assessments deem it necessary.

### **What will the curriculum look like for my child?**

We are continuing to adjust the curriculum offer to make it appropriate for the situation – the key focus is going to be on ensuring the children are settled back into school, and that their mental health and well-being are looked after. There will also be a focus on communication, English and Maths. If the weather permits there may be outside learning opportunities, we will need to monitor this carefully. The teachers at Kingfisher are very creative and I am sure that the learning opportunities will have a large element of fun.

Unfortunately, there will be no capacity to run trips and visits for the foreseeable future. There will be also be limits to some aspects of the curriculum e.g. cookery. We will also have to limit some of the resources that children are using to ensure high standards of cleanliness and to stop the spread of any infection.

### **Will my child be taught and supported by the same staff team as previously?**

Taking into account the individual personal circumstances of staff including their health and well-being also feature high on our priorities. We will endeavour for your child to be supported by at least some staff who are familiar to them, but this may not always be possible.

### **Will my child receive therapy provision?**

Currently the therapists are providing emergency cover and will therefore not be in school. I am waiting for more clarity on the situation going forward.

### **What will be the situation for the start and end of the school day?**

Pick up and drop off times may have to be staggered to avoid too many adults and children mixing at the busiest of times.

### **What will happen if there is a suspected or confirmed case of COVID – 19 in school?**

As is the case now, we are being and will continue to be extra vigilant to anyone who has any symptoms of the virus whilst at school. If we are alerted to a case or a suspected case, we have no option but to close the school to all staff and pupils until we have the case confirmed as being positive or negative. The government has indicated that all pupils at school and all staff will be eligible for a test should they be showing symptoms. If results come back as negative, we will then return the school to be operational, if results are returned as positive we will have to keep the school closed while we take advice from Public Health England.

### **Other protective measures will need to include:**

- Frequent hand cleaning and good hygiene practices
- Not allowing children and adults who show signs of any illness on site and sending home anyone who displays any sign of illness during the school day
- Avoiding contact with anyone with symptoms
- Regular cleaning of the school and resources
- Minimising contact and mixing
- PPE will be worn by staff during support for personal hygiene and if a child displays behaviours that require it to be worn.

I appreciate that I will not have been able to answer all your questions, there will be many more to come I am sure. Taking all of these questions and updates into account, we have been planning in the background and the answers you gave in the last survey were most helpful.

There is a new survey for you to fill in and it is below. Unfortunately, I will need you to commit to say yes or no to requesting a place after half term so that I can finalise planning and help transport to organise getting your children into school.

**All of this planning is subject to change if the Government decides a further lockdown or restriction of movements is required.**

At present we plan to offer 2 days a week to any pupil whose parents have decided they want their child to attend school. This is so as many pupils as possible can access our provision. The days we plan to offer are Monday and Tuesday for one group and Thursday and Friday for another. This will allow smaller classes to enable some degree of social distancing and allow teachers to have their PPA time on a Wednesday. It will also allow staff to catch up with parents of those pupils who choose to keep their child at home. There will also be an opportunity to thoroughly clean the school and resources between the two groups of pupils.

The children of key workers currently attending, will be offered a place for all 4 days, whilst their parents are at work. Other pupils currently attending may have their days reduced in order to accommodate other pupils.

If there is a specific reason why the beginning or the end of the week is preferable for you, please indicate this on the survey, but please understand that your wishes may not be able to be fulfilled due to the complexities of the planning.

Please complete the survey here by Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> May 2020 by 1pm. If you do not reply, I will assume that you don't require a place for your child.

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/ParentSurveyFrom1stJune2020>

Once we have the information from you, we can continue with our planning and let you know which days your child can attend, if you wish them to, unless there are further implementation of additional rules from the Government.

Yours faithfully



Lorraine Wilson

Headteacher

### Our Kingfisher View

Kingfisher-a place where everyone is valued to develop independence through an enriching curriculum which is worthwhile



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