

Ellwood Primary School

RE: Arrangements for school reopening

Dear Parents and Carers,

We hope you and your families are well and have had a good week.

As we are sure you are aware, the school has been open to keyworker/vulnerable children throughout the school closure. The Government has now asked schools to begin to start to increase the number of children attending school and work towards welcoming back pupils in Reception, Year One and Year 6 if possible.

When children return to school, they will need to be separated into smaller groups and the groups will need to remain separated into 'bubbles'. Taking this requirement into account, the Department of Education have advised that any setting that cannot achieve these increases either because:

- i. There are not classrooms or spaces available in the setting to accommodate 'bubbles' for all pupils; and / or
- ii. They do not have enough available teachers or staff to supervise the groups;

must first focus on continuing to provide places for priority groups (vulnerable children and the children of critical workers), followed by EYFS, year 1 and then year 6.

We have therefore taken into account the number of staff we have available, the zones available throughout the school for each 'bubble' and how to minimise any movement of adults from group to group as much as we are able.

After undertaking detailed planning in line with Government guidelines and following a robust risk assessment process, which has been reviewed by the Governing Board, from **8th June 2020**, we will commence a phased transition as set out below:

- We will be welcoming back the keyworker/vulnerable children and **Reception and Year 1 children only**.
- School will be open for four days a week: **Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday only**.
- On Friday the staff will have their statutory PPA (planning, preparation and assessment) and continue to provide home learning activities for those children not attending school. The school will also have an additional deep clean on this day.

- If required, keyworker/vulnerable children can still attend on a Friday, if parents are working.
- The plan will be reviewed again at the end of June and if numbers of current intake, staff and space allow, there is the possibility of us being able to welcome back year 6. However, this is not guaranteed at this stage.

The safety of children and staff is our utmost priority and as stated above, this transition will be reviewed continually and is subject to change. We have taken this phased approach so we are able to minimise risk to pupils and staff and so that we can grow our current provision in a controlled and considered way, maximising safety for children and staff.

We know that some Year 6 children and parents will be disappointed by this decision but our ability to meet the Government guidelines is constrained by the availability of space and staff, which has caused us to make the difficult decision to limit the children we will be welcoming back at this time. If Year 6 are unable to return before the end of the Summer, please be assured that we will make every effort to have the children back to school to say goodbye and wish them well, whether this year or in the Autumn Term.

We recognise that some of you may have some concerns about your child returning to school and that for some children another change will be unsettling for them. We also understand that the past weeks will have been challenging for many families. If you would like to talk to us about your child and any concerns you have about their return to school, please, in the first instance, contact your child's class teacher via email or by phone.

At this time, the government has said no parents will be prosecuted for not sending their child to school. The choice for your child to return to school is, quite simply, your choice. Every child is different, every family is different and therefore what you decide to do may well be different to someone else. We respect your decision. The government guidance says:

'We strongly encourage children and young people in the eligible year groups and priority groups (such as children of critical workers) to attend, as requested by their school or college, unless they are self-isolating or there are other reasons for absence (such as shielding due to health conditions).

You should notify your child's school or college as normal if your child is unable to attend so that staff are aware and can discuss with you.

Parents will not be fined for non-attendance at this time'

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers/reopening-schools-and-other-educational-settings-from-1-june#can-my-child-return-to-school>

Please be aware that the provision for Reception and Year 1 will not be 'normal school' i.e. staggered starts and pick up, split groups and different teaching staff. We will send out further information about this provision shortly to those eligible to attend. For children who will not be attending school we will continue to provide home learning activities for them to complete at home. We will continue to review the arrangements we have implemented at this stage and update you with any changes as and when we make them. Whilst this is our current plan this will be dependent on Government guidance and announcements.

We appreciate this is a difficult time for everyone and we value your support.

Kind Regards,

D. Milford

Mrs Milford