



Explore, Learn and Grow Together

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Thursday 14th May 2020

Dear Parents/Carers

I am writing to you all following the recent announcement by the government encouraging schools to look at the possibility of being able to open to some children from 1st June. The government have indicated children in the Early Years, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 are the first to be prioritised. At present we are still dealing with a pandemic and guidance remains clear:

- Stay at home wherever possible
- Wash hands regularly
- Cough/Sneeze - Catch It, Bin It, Kill It
- Social Distancing should continue (2 metre distance)
- Do not socialise with more than one person from outside your household and even then you should still social distance (2 metres)

If we want our children to return to school in the near future we all need to follow these rules. Any reopening of schools and wider business and services is entirely based on keeping the infection rate down. The best way to do this at present is for all of us to keep to the above.

Below I have copied the wording of the government guidance message regarding schools published this week:

As a result of the huge efforts everyone has made to adhere to strict social distancing measures, the transmission rate of coronavirus (COVID-19) has decreased. We therefore anticipate, with further progress, that we may be able, from the week commencing 1 June 2020 to welcome back more children to early years, school and further education settings. We will only do this provided that the five key tests set by government justify the changes at the time, including that the rate of infection is decreasing and the enabling programmes set out in the Roadmap are operating effectively. As a result we are asking schools, colleges and childcare providers to plan on this basis, ahead of confirmation that these tests are met.

As you will note there are many 'ifs' and 'maybes' in the message and the date given of 1st June is the earliest date that schools could possibly start to reopen. Schools and parents have been given some guidance on how this could work and more is expected over the coming days. I have included the key guidance documents on our school websites so that we can all read and understand how this might be achieved. These documents can be found in the **Government Guidance** section of the **Important information during COVID-19 outbreak** tab.

http://www.wooler.northumberland.sch.uk/website/government_guidance/481913

http://www.glendale.northumberland.sch.uk/website/government_guidance/481914

Please take some time to look at these documents as it will give you a better understanding of what schools are being asked to consider and the measures that we will need to take to minimise risk for children and staff in our schools. As you will see when reading the guidance it is clear that if we are able to reopen in few weeks' time school will not be the same as it was before the lockdown. Towards the end of this week we will be contacting parents and carers of children in our Early Years, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 cohorts to consult with you individually to see if you would send your child back to school if we were to reopen at some point after 1st June. At this time we are just seeking to gain an understanding of parental views and intentions to enable us to progress the planning required.

Later in the school term, if possible, we would like to open this up to older children, particularly Year 4, which is our transition year from First to Middle School and Year 8 which is our transition year from Middle to High School. We also intend to continue to provide remote learning support and to provision here on site for vulnerable children and children of key-workers, as we have been throughout the lockdown.

Attendance will not be compulsory and we respect your right to decide what is best for your child. Schools will not be penalised and parents will not be fined for non-attendance at this time. Please note that children who are shielding, or who live with someone who is shielding, should NOT attend. However, those who share a home with a person in the clinically vulnerable category may return to school.

Our arrangements will evolve depending on the demand for places, staff availability and future changes to national expectations. Once we have a clearer idea of the number of children who wish to attend we can then start to put more detailed plans in place to accommodate them and to think about how to increase numbers of children and add our other year groups. As always, we are working with other schools in the Berwick area to share ideas and ensure the best possible provision for our pupils.

On a more personal note it has been lovely to see the engagement with learning that children and families are doing and sharing with their teachers via seesaw – great work everyone, keep it up until we can be back together at school.

Yours sincerely

M.Deane-Hall

Executive Headteacher

