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13th May 2020

Dear Parents / Carers,

As you are aware, on Sunday at 7:00pm the government have updated their guidance in relation to the current lockdown procedures. The new slogan of 'Stay Alert, Control the Virus, Save Lives' continues with many of the restrictions, but identifies some relaxation in the previous rules. The Prime Minister then briefly described a 'roadmap' for the next stage to tackle the Covid-19 situation.

On Monday, just after 2:00pm, we received further guidance in the form of a 50-page document that included a lot of general information and some specific information about schools. The Department for Education then shared their guidance at 7:13pm in the form of three further guidance documents, which can be read here:

[Actions for educational and childcare settings to prepare for wider opening from 1 June 2020](#)

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): implementing protective measures in education and childcare settings](#)

[What parents and carers need to know about schools and other education settings during the coronavirus outbreak](#)

This has created a monumental task for schools to plan for the safe return of some year groups from June 1st 2020 (and potentially the whole school for the final month of the academic year) whilst ensuring the school is a 'Covid-19 Secure' place to work for all of the adults at Highwood, in a really short space of time. The planning for this has already begun and when it is ready to be shared, it will be uploaded onto the school website for you to view.

In the guidance, the government inform us that the **actual decision** to open on June 1st could be made up to as little as 48 hours before that date, depending on whether the Covid-19 risk is reduced significantly to allow for this to happen.

Until that decision has been made, Highwood will continue to be open for **vulnerable and keyworker children only** to allow us to carefully plan and prepare for the school to be safe increasing capacity from June 1st onwards. To be clear, during the month of May, **we will not be making additional places available for parents who come under the 'unable to work from home' category.**

During the next few weeks, we will be planning the logistics for children to safely return as well as making the Highwood site as Covid-19 secure as we can. This will involve changes to many of our normal school procedures, such as drop and pick up; how the classrooms are set up; how lunchtimes work and how parents access the school site. These changes will be communicated with you in good time, so that you can help prepare the children for what to expect. We will use our social media and email platforms to provide pictures to help you with this request and hopefully reduce any anxieties that families may have.

We will also be creating a parent survey using the website Survey Monkey to ascertain how many parents will be taking up the offer of EYFS, Year 1 and Year 6 returning on June 1st. If you have children in these year groups, I would urge you to complete the survey to aid us with our planning.

I understand that there is a lot of information to take in and hopefully I have been clear in the way in which the school will be approaching the next stage of lockdown. Your support through this whole process has been much appreciated by myself and the whole staff.

Best Wishes,

Matt Hickey

Headteacher