

Friday, 22 May 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope that you and those around you are safe and well.

In the letter you received earlier in the week, I outlined our thinking about the Government's announcement of a possible widening of school provision and informed you about our plans for key workers, vulnerable children and Y6 pupils.

As yet, no final decision has been made about expanding the provision in schools by the Government and we will not have a decision, in all likelihood, until Thursday 28th May. Any adjustments made by the Government remain conditional and reversible. This will not give us a lot of time to react. In addition, there are still many unanswered questions relating to the widening of school provision at the national and local level. Therefore, you should be aware that our current risk assessments and plans may have to change quickly to respond to new information and everything below should be read under the caveat of – 'based on what we know at the moment.'

In this letter I aim to share some of the changes that we are making and the safety measures that we are putting in place to ensure school is as safe as it can be for all children, staff and parents, in order to minimise the risk of COVID-19.

As a school, we will perform weekly risk assessments and make any required adjustments to our approach as required. We believe the best place for our children is to be in school and learning but our primary concern is to ensure this can be done safely.

We are planning as though 1st June will be the date to expand provision for extra key workers and vulnerable learners (as outlined in the previous letter) and the 8th June for Y6 pupils. Both the school and the governing body feel it is important that we prioritise our vulnerable learners and children of key workers during the initial stages of expanding the provision; the following plan reflects this principle.

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Please see the list of measures and changes that will take place for anyone returning to school:

Children in school

- School is open from Tuesday 26th to Friday 29th May and Monday 1st June to Friday 5th June for vulnerable pupils and those with key worker parents. You should have already contacted school to book a place via enquiries@huntersbar-jun.sheffield.sch.uk
- If all government targets are met and we are satisfied we can adhere to our risk assessments, we will open for pupils in Year 6. Depending on the number of key worker and vulnerable children, we may not be able to open for all Y6 pupils and may need to operate a rota system.
- In order to comply with our risk assessment and following national and local guidance, we will organise the children in 'bubbles'. Because of the numbers, the need to maintain bubbles of less than 15 children and difficulties with staffing, along with the need to meet the needs of key worker and vulnerable children first, classes will probably have to be mixed. Most children will not be taught in their usual classroom or with their usual class teacher.
- Children will only be able to use entry and exit points to the building that are specific to their bubble and only specific toilets.
- Staffing will be pushed to its absolute limit. Any staff absence will mean that we will not be able to have all groups in school.
- It is our intention to close the school every Friday afternoon at 12:30, to allow teaching and support staff time to plan and prepare for the following week and allow the cleaning staff to undertake a deeper clean.

Dropping off and picking up

- We will have staggered starts and end times to reduce the number of people on the school site at any one time. The plan will be formulated alongside the infant school.
- There will be 2 metre distance markers around the site to support with social distancing.
- Signs will be displayed around the school site and staff will be on hand from a safe distance to ensure these strict measures are followed.

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- All children will need to be dropped off and collected by a parent/carer (from their own household) so that social distancing can be maintained on the journey to and from school.
- No parent or carer will be allowed into any school buildings, unless an appointment has been agreed through the school office.
- Parents will need to leave the site immediately after dropping their child off.

Classes

- Classrooms have been reorganised to support pupils in maintaining a safe distance of 2 metres when both seated and entering or exiting the room.
- Each child will have their own specified desk with their own pack of equipment.
- No bags or equipment from home will be allowed in to school, with the exception of a water bottle and lunchboxes which need to be a labelled container that has been thoroughly cleaned before it is brought to school.
- Classrooms have been cleared of all resources that could potentially aid the spread of COVID-19, for example, soft furnishings, shared resources, etc.
- Any displays or surfaces that cannot be effectively cleaned have been removed.
- Class sizes have been reduced to a maximum of 10 children in each room.
- All children will be expected to wash their hands on a regular basis throughout the day.
- Windows and doors will be left open to allow constant fresh air flow.
- It would be naive to think that the children will pick up where they left off on the day their school went into lock down. Many children will have suffered during this time, the potential anxiety and trauma it may have caused will significantly impact on their ability to learn effectively. Therefore children will follow a Recovery Curriculum to successfully transition children back to school. This will include aspects of the current curriculum we are providing for children at home.
- Whenever possible, learning will take place outside following the same social distancing measures.
- If a child displays symptoms of Covid 19, the member of staff dealing with them will wear full PPE.
- We have been told that track and trace will be in place for all confirmed cases of Covid 19 with testing available for all adults and children in school.

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Playtimes and lunchtime

- There will be systems in place to carefully manage the flow of children and adults around the school to help maintain social distancing.
- Playtimes and lunchtimes will be staggered and be managed in a way as to protect against the spread of COVID-19.
- School dinners for the w/b 1st June will be a grab bag packed lunch only (no hot meals), or you can provide your own packed lunch.
- All pupils will remain at their desks whilst they eat their lunch. For those pupils entitled to a free school lunch this will be delivered to the pupil's classroom.
- Hot dinners may resume on the 8th but it is dependent on the risk assessment.
- All children, who are **not** attending school, and are eligible for a free school meal, will continue to receive a voucher during term time that can be spent at a number of supermarkets, both in store or online. Please make sure your email address is up-to-date, so that we can organise these as quickly as possible. If you believe your situation has changed, or are having difficulties using the system, please give us a ring so we can help.

School uniform

- School uniform will not be expected.
- It is a requirement that all children attend in freshly washed clothes each day.
- No other clothes may be brought in to school.
- Sensible shoes must be worn; no open toe sandals will be allowed.

Other

- The DfE has been clear that parents will not be fined and schools will not be held to account for attendance figures during this period.
- Any office queries or questions will still be answered, the phone lines are still working and you can still contact us via enquiries@huntersbar-jun.sheffield.sch.uk.
- All teaching staff are available via the year group email addresses.

This is an ever-changing situation and we will continue to plan with the safety of pupils, staff and families remaining paramount throughout. We understand that everyone's circumstances are different and every household must do what is right for them.

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We hope the measures outlined help you to feel reassured and enable you to make an informed decision.

Finally, I would like to thank you all for your patience and understanding during this time. As a profession, teachers are trying their best to adapt and learn new skills. We know you and your children are doing the same. We have been so impressed with all the hard work and levels of independence that children have shown since lockdown. I would also like to thank the many parents, carers and children who have been in touch to thank school for the work we have provided and the provision we have put in place. Your positive thoughts are warmly appreciated by everyone at school.

Stay safe and well and I hope to see you all soon. We are really missing you!

Yours faithfully

Michael Watson

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