



Friday 15th May 2020

Re: possible reopening of school to more pupils in June

I am sure that after the Prime Minister's statement on Sunday regarding the opening of schools for reception, Year 1 & Year 6 pupils, there are lots of questions you will have. On Monday, the government released further guidance for parents and schools, but this new guidance has still left us as a school, and the local authority with lots of questions which need clarification too!

It's a very unsettling time for us all, but rest assured that we're going to be doing everything we can to make sure we're ready to receive these year groups if it's safe for our school to reopen in the coming weeks.

- **What is the current situation?**

At the moment, for us in school, there is no change to the current guidance. We will continue to provide care for children of those parents whose work is critical to the COVID-19 response and those that cannot be safely cared for at home. We know some employers will be encouraging you to return to work, but we're not in a position right now to extend places to other children until we receive further government guidance.

- **What is the school doing to prepare for June 1st?**

The senior leadership team have spent this week discussing what it will look like for Lowerplace and are continually reviewing based on new guidance that is coming out each day. We're creating an action plan which include the following precautions

- Limiting class sizes
- Staggering break times, and pick-up and drop-off times
- Increased cleaning
- Keeping pupils and staff with coronavirus symptoms at home

I do want to share our current thinking with you because we are a school family and I believe that you need all the facts about the direction which the government wants us to take.

- **Class groupings**

With the number of small groups that we will need to offer (a maximum of 15 children in a group but preferably smaller so that we can maintain 2 metre distance), not all children will be looked after by their own class teacher. Some groups will need to be looked after by teaching assistants (who are all suitably qualified) – there are simply not enough teachers to go around.

It is also very likely that children will not be in their usual classroom or with preferred friendship groups, or following the usual school timetable and structure. Their classrooms will also have been stripped bare of all soft furnishings and resources, thus ensuring we can present children with a limited number of resources that can be cleaned periodically.

- **School Lunchtimes**

Lunches will be brought to the classrooms and children will eat at their desks. They will have limited 'play time' in order to minimise the risks of breaking social distancing rules and to negate the risk of trips and falls which may require any kind of first aid.



- **Children who are classed as clinically vulnerable**

If your child is clinically extremely vulnerable, or living with someone who is in this group, they should not come back to school and should continue home learning. If your child is clinically vulnerable (but not clinically extremely vulnerable), you should follow medical advice to decide if they should come back to school. Please refer to government guidance for further details of these groups.

I want to reassure you that we're not going to be pressuring anyone to send their children to school. Parents will not be fined for keeping their children at home. We'll keep you updated with all our preparations for making sure the school is as safe as possible, so you can make an informed decision.

- **Home Learning**

We will continue to provide home learning for all year groups and we will be in a position to launch the digital learning platform from 1st June. Further details regarding this will be sent out next week.

- **Parent Questionnaire**

Bearing in mind the points above and the official guidance, I want you to know that we miss you and your children, and do want to welcome them back to school as soon as it is safe to do so! We remain committed to helping our school community feel safe and secure as we move forwards; if you as parents decide that the situation in school is too concerning, we would absolutely support you in the decision to keep your child/ren out of school. We will not fine for non-attendance or let it affect your child's attendance record.

To help us plan please can you complete the parent questionnaire by clicking on the link to the survey or via the website. This will give us some idea of the numbers we can expect to be catering for if schools do re-open on June 1st. If this can be done ASAP, this would be of great help to us.

Parent Survey

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

Parent Survey via the website

<http://lowerplace.net/covid-19-parent-survey/>

Any decisions we make will always first and foremost take into account the welfare and well-being of pupils, staff and parents in our school. Once the school have made any decisions (following all government and LA guidelines), we will let you know.

As always, if you need to contact us, please do so via the school office: office@lowerplace.rochdale.sch.uk

In the meantime, please stay safe.

Kind regards



Ms Karen Martin

Headteacher