

29th May 2020

Plans for the return to school for Parayhouse students

Dear Parents and Guardians,

The last few months have brought unprecedented challenges for us all in every aspect of our lives. We want to offer our thanks to all of you, to our staff and of course to our wonderful students for your strength, your efforts and your positivity during this time.

Behind the scenes, we have been busy working out plans to re-open our school in a safe and measured way. In line with Government and DfE guidance, we believe we are able to offer a skeleton provision to a small number of students from 3rd June.

The school has identified these first students, and spaces will be offered directly to the families. We have based our decision on whom to invite back to school first, on a tiered system including considerations such as child protection, complexity of need and children of key workers critical to the COVID-19 frontline medical response.

Preparing for the re-opening has not been an easy task and has required a great amount of cautious planning and risk management. The safety of our students and staff is paramount, and so we wanted to share with you some background information to our current plans.

The school will undergo a rigorous deep clean during half term, and we are currently working with the college to confirm the depth of ongoing cleaning to ensure maximum hygiene is sufficient.

What is most significant is, that given the size of the school and also the complex needs of our students, we cannot guarantee that social distancing measures can be met on site. Hence key to our approach is alertness, response to symptoms and ensuring rigorous hygiene measures for our students.

We will provide staff with relevant PPE and ensure procedures are in place for managing symptoms of COVID-19 as they might arise in persons on site. If your child displays symptoms while attending school it is imperative that they will need to be collected as soon as possible and self-isolate at home in line with Government guidance.

We must also consider the health and safety of our staff, and for this reason will only be operating with a reduced work force.

A vital part of being able to re-open the school is to maintain significantly reduced numbers. Hence if you are offered one of the initial places and feel that your child does not require it, then please do let us know so we can offer the place to another student. Equally we will not be placing any pressure on parents to send their children back to school if they have concerns over their health, and we fully support individual decisions to continue shielding at home.

If your child has not been offered a space in the initial wave then please be reassured that we are doing everything we can to find a safe way to widen the provision as far as is possible in due course. We certainly hope to be in a position to increase spaces as time progresses. We will of course review this week on week and assess any risk or changes in Government guidance. It is likely that as we increase places we will need to offer part-time provision to most students in order to ensure numbers on site are manageable and safe. We will update parents as soon as we can.

In the meantime, our teachers and therapists are still very much available to support students at home, and we will continue to provide timetables, lesson plans and resources and any other help via Mrs Routley and the Co-Headteachers.

Again, we thank you all from the bottom of our hearts for your support during this time. The pace of change over these last few weeks has been extraordinary. The determination and positivity of our staff combined with the resilience and backing of our school community has meant we have been able to overcome every challenge and make the best of every situation. We know that we will continue to do just that as we move into this next period.

We hope you all continue to keep safe and look forward to seeing you all soon.

The Co-Headteachers and Chair of Governors

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