15/05/2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

You will be aware that there have been a number of announcements about schools over the past few days regarding the possibility of the school reopening for some year groups (Year R, Year 1 and Year 6). A letter has been sent to the Yr R, 1 and 6 parents outlining the Trust’s approach to reopening. I wanted to write to you today to reassure you that we are planning for the different possibilities that might be in place from the 1st June, and for the remainder of the school year. There is still great uncertainty around what will actually happen, not least, because the ‘five tests’ that the government has determined, have to be met, in order for any limited reopening of schools. This means for example, that infection rates still have to be falling. If this is not the case school reopening to those specific year groups (YR/1/6) will be delayed on the 1st June. Please be aware that we find out information from the government at the same time as you do.

At Fairfield, we have been desperately sad to only welcome a very small number of vulnerable/essential worker children and this will need to continue until further government advice is given. We are fully aware of how much children are missing their friends and school. We want to get them back to some schooling as soon as we can. However, we can only do so when it is as safe as it can be for them, our staff, you and the family members in your home. Further work packs will be available for all years groups from the 1st June, and details around accessing these will be shared towards the end of half term.

The Senior management team are working on a variety of plans that mitigate the risk of transmission of the virus including producing updated protocols for staff, pupils and parents based on the most current advice from the government. However, it is concerning when the Dfe Chief scientific advisor, Osama Rahman, admits no modelling has been done on the impact on transmission rates of starting to reopen schools after the May half term. The evidence is mixed and there’s a low degree of confidence that children may transmit it less.

Our plans for YrR/1/6 and key worker/vulnerable group;
- Reduced class sizes to lower the chance of transmission.
- Significant changes to social time and the structure of the school day
- Changes to the start and finish times of the day.
- Changes to provision of school lunches.
- The days or week your child will attend and days/week children will continue with remote (home) learning.
When we have more definite answers to critical questions around social distancing requirements with children, then we will be able to explain what we will be offering in June. We are however reliant on central government and the Local Authority to provide these answers in a timely fashion.

For now, it is worth recognising that the vast majority of learning, for the remainder of the school year, will still have to be conducted from home. We are very aware of how difficult this is, and we want to continue to support you in every possible way we can. We will keep up our correspondence with you via the class emails, SchoolPing and our Twitter account.

For parents in Yr R, 1 and 6, thank you for your response to our initial consultation. We are seeing broadly a 50/50 split from the responses we have received so far. We are still over two weeks away from 1st June and things may change. However, to organise children and classrooms, as you will fully appreciate, is extremely difficult without precise numbers so we do need your support by knowing in advance of the 1st June whether your child is attending.

Can all parents in YrR/1/6 and keyworker parents/vulnerable children parents let us know by end of day on Thursday 28th May. We will be sending you out a simple booking form ‘yes/no’ on Wednesday 27th May with a closing date 28th May 9p.m. Thank you.

Can I reiterate, no parent will be fined if their child is not attending school until the end of the summer term.

I will write to everyone again before the end of next week to give you more detailed information and to share pupil and parent protocols.

Thank you for your ongoing support

Yours sincerely,

Mr Mark Tuckwell (Headteacher)