



Highfields Academy

Together we inspire, always aiming higher

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Good morning everyone,

I hope you are all well. So, the plot thickens! I'm sure that many of you will have seen in the local news that Cheshire East yesterday released a letter confirming their position statement about the return of pupils to school. I have sent this to you today and also a letter from the Nantwich Education Partnership in response to this.

Last night we had a board meeting to consider our response to this. As you know, we have been working very hard to put plans into place to meet the Government's desire that pupils in Nursery, Year 1, and Year 6 return to school on the 1st June, subject to the Government's five key tests being achieved. At the moment the Government's view has not changed. However, many Local Authorities across the country are issuing statements similar to that of Cheshire East's, although there are differing views on the timescales. It would not come as a surprise if the Government review their position over the next few days.

From the school's point of view: We are prepared and ready to meet the Government's request that identified year groups return to school on 1st June, subject to Government confirmation.

Cheshire East are stating that pupils will now begin a phased return from the 15th June (nursery pupils), with Reception and Year 1 pupils returning on the 22nd, and Year 6 on the 29th. Cheshire East are not envisaging that pupils in other year groups will return before the summer.

This is a very difficult situation. We are accountable to the DfE, but there is also an expectation that we will adopt the local strategy too. We are also accountable to you as parents and to the local community. I know that there are many of you who will agree with the Cheshire East position and feel that the 1st June is too soon; I also know that for many of you this will cause great difficulties as you need to return to work. As a school we are striving to do whatever we can to support our families and to get our pupils back into full time education.

There will be one key change to our provision from 1st June. Since we 'closed' we have been open to children of key workers, pupils with EHC plans or those with social care involvement. However, it has always been stated that this should only be used when parents had no alternative. Therefore children have only been in school at times when no other childcare was possible. From 1st June this will change and in line with DfE guidance all children of key workers, those with an EHC plan or social care involvement will be able to return to school full time. This will include wraparound care from 7.30am – 6.00pm but we do still ask that wraparound care is only used if needed. **I would appreciate an email from all key worker parents, and those with EHC plans or social care involvement to let us know whether you intend to send your children in full time as this would help us to plan.**

I promised that I would publish our risk assessment to you by Friday (or Monday at the latest). This was ready to be sent to you but I will now need to revise certain sections of this. It will be sent to you as early as possible next week.

Throughout this time I have made it my first priority of the day to communicate with you all, and with your children. This will not change and over the next few days there is likely to be lots more information coming out.

I want it to be very clear to you all - we want your children back in school as soon as is possible. Please bear with us in these uncertain times, and please do contact me if you feel that there are ways in which we may be able to help.

Simon Dyson

Principal