

12/05/2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

**COVID-19 Update – letter 13**

Following the Prime Minister's address to the nation on Sunday night and the further information he provided in the House of Commons yesterday, schools will now be asked by the Government to 're-open in stages', from 1<sup>st</sup> June (subject to certain conditions).

This approach will begin with Primary school age students in Reception, Year 1 and Year 6. The Prime Minister further stated that it is the Government's ambition for all Primary age children to return to school before the summer holidays.

The Government went further to state its ambition was to see secondary age students, who would be facing examinations next year, provided with an opportunity to see their teachers for some time before the school holidays.

As you are aware, during the Covid-19 pandemic, we have remained open for children and young people of 'Critical workers' and other students who have needed to be in school. Please be assured that this approach will continue until the end of this term, Friday the 22<sup>nd</sup> May. During this period, we will also continue to support the students who have remained at home, providing updates of refreshed resources and making weekly contact via email or telephone.

Our school designation means that we also need to consider our students' understanding and their ability to comply with social distancing, rather than just a student's age-related expectation of that understanding. We have now received some communication from the government outlining how their plans will be implemented and some guidance about how we can ensure the safety of all our students, their families and the staff at school; including their transport to and from school.

At Nexus we need to consider developmental rather than age related differences in children's ability to understand and comply with social distancing; in reality at Nexus there is no such thing as social distancing, given the particular needs of our pupils.

We will therefore continue to:

- Work with the Local Authority, Social Services and parents to support appropriate cohorts of pupils who are safer attending school / remaining at home.
- Assess staff availability, staff requirements and staff support / wellbeing needs.
- Assess the capacity of our building(s) and make appropriate adjustments.

However, there is no doubt, that whatever measures are put in place, we cannot eliminate the risk that illnesses spread in a school due to the fact that we are all in close contact with each other. Pupil and staff safety will therefore steer our decision making. We are simply not going to rush into making decisions which we may later regret.

Wherever possible the decision to 'Stay Home and keep safe' will be the default approach that we will take. This will continue until a point at which we feel the conditions at school mean we can expand the numbers attending each day.

In undertaking this approach, we will first assess the capacity of our buildings, rooms, corridors and communal spaces; the school will then make appropriate adjustments in-line with social distancing rules and Public Health England guidance.

We will also consider the school staff availability, their Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) requirements and their wellbeing needs in relation to their self-isolation and shielding status.

Using this information, we will work with the Local Authority, Social Services and parents to identify students who we jointly consider are safer attending school and those who we consider would be better supported by remaining at home. Student and staff safety will always be of paramount importance and will guide all our decisions.

Please be assured that we will continue to follow all Government guidance and put in place the measures that are required to keep people safe. However, there is no doubt that whatever measures are put in place, we cannot eliminate the risk that the virus could spread in a school due to the fact that we work in close proximity to each other. As we increase the numbers of students coming into school, the risk of contracting the virus will increase. Therefore, we will only allow more students to attend - once we are sure that we are able to do all that we can to protect our school community.

Thank you for your continued support at this time.

Please stay home where possible, follow the Government's guidance and maintain social distancing protocols.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Scott Jarred', written in a cursive style.

Scott Jarred – Headteacher