

Frettenham Primary School
Hainford Primary School
Horsford Primary School
Old Catton Junior School
White Woman Lane School
St. Faiths' Primary School



Nebula
where stars are born

Ashley Best-White
Executive Headteacher

22 May 2020

Dear Parent/Carers

Thank you for all of your support by answering our surveys and completing forms etc. as we continue to prepare for the planned, phased re-opening of our schools. I have obviously continued to listen to the news, read yet more government guidance and correspondence from the teaching unions' and can only think what a worrying and confusing time it must be for you, seeing so much professional disagreement about what is safe or not.

My staff and I have spent significant time agonising over how to manage both increasing the critical worker provision and the return of the named year groups to our schools from June. As you know each of the schools in the Federation is quite individual in terms of size, accommodation and staff. We have ended up with a plan that we feel is as safe as we can make it. It is also a plan to ensure the children have a happy and purposeful return to their own school.

We have the results of the parent surveys. We are now requesting further information from parents applying for Critical Worker places. Once we know who is coming, to each school, each day, we will send you a more detailed plan for your child detailing which day/s they can attend, what time to arrive, leave, what to wear, which gate to use... etc.

We have organised for the return to our schools to be phased, and carefully managed with our pupils' well-being at the heart of what we do. We believe our plan is most appropriate and the best we can offer your children as well as being supportive to our staff.

The thinking behind our plan includes:

- Everything we do has been risk assessed thoroughly, using a format provided by the Local Authority Health and Safety team with Union consultation.
- Our plan and risk assessment has been scrutinised by our governors
- Staff have been consulted at all times and involved in what is being planned
- The well-being, safety and happiness of the children has been considered in preference to adherence to the models being given to us by the government, for example, we will have less than 15 children in a bubble.
- It is vital in the first few days and weeks of any return that we consider the fact that children have been away from school for such a long time, and how that will make them feel about returning and how they will cope with this. Many children have had limited experience of people beyond their household or of being out of their house. In some households, there have been pressures on families that have meant there has been some sadness.
- Children will know the school layout and be in rooms and outside spaces known to them
- They will know the staff they are with even if it is not their usual class teacher
- The teachers will be carefully planning what the children will do. This will initially involve some academic work but will prioritise emotional and social learning.

- We have been working in school with groups of children since lockdown began. We have learnt a lot from this.
- Managing cleaning is more important than ever. We have a wonderful cleaning team and have put plans in place to ensure cleaning within 'bubbles' continues during the day.
- The total number of children on each site needs to be kept to a minimum in the early stages and movement around the sites tightly controlled; this will not stop small groups of children using our outdoor spaces safely.
- Children (and staff) will need to be confident of the new routines before we can safely introduce larger numbers of children to the school.
- Parents must feel confident to send their children to a place that is safe, happy and has prioritised the children above everything else
- The need to continue to safeguard our children and know that they will need access to known and trusted adults, and never more so than during this worrying time.
- We will be keeping children in small groups (bubbles), without mixing with other small groups, to limit social interactions; this includes during lunchtimes and breaks as described in my previous letter.
- We want parents to feel confident in our offer.
- Staff will not be wearing PPE around children except if a child is ill, require first aid or is displaying symptoms of the virus.

Our offer is a planned, phased return to school as outlined below:

On the 1 June, children with existing critical worker places and vulnerable pupils with existing places will return to school. You will know if your child has one of these places, as they will have attended childcare at one of the three open school sites in our federation since 23 March 2020.

Either on the 1 June, or on a subsequent day, these children will be attending their own school site again. Heads of School will advise you of this.

After this, critical workers who have recently, successfully applied for places will be given details of when their child/ren can begin to attend school and all the other necessary information. This is not likely to be the same date for all children in all schools. Your child's school will contact you.

Then, we will begin to offer places to pupils in Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 whose parents have confirmed they would like a place at their school. For some schools this may take up to two weeks, to phase all pupils back into school. This will depend on the individual circumstances of each of the schools. Again, your child's school will contact you directly as soon as they can.

The Government guidance provided to us said, as so many teachers would be involved in the plan for the return to school, that home learning for Years 2, 3, 4 and 5 from their teachers would come to an end. We have decided that **home learning will continue for all year groups throughout this time**. We do not want to disadvantage our pupils who are not in the eligible year groups to return to school, or those pupils whose parents have decided it is not the right time for them to return. In order to ensure that staff can plan consistent provision for pupils in school and for home learning, the schools will close on a Friday afternoon for all pupils, **except** for those of critical workers. This will provide time for staff to plan appropriate activities to ensure ALL our pupils continue to learn and make progress.

Please note: There will be no home learning issued during the half term beginning 25 May 2020.

We want our Year 6 pupils to have emotional and social support at this time, including around their move to high school. We have things we want to revise with them and new learning we believe is important at this time. It is very unlikely that they will be able to have any transition visits to their high schools. Our plan also allows us to ensure that our staff can remain in contact with families that are not accessing school places and may need support and guidance during this difficult time.

I believe that our offer of a phased return to school will help our pupils feel like the school is as it was before they left due to lock down, but with new 'routines', to try and keep them and the adults as safe as possible. They will return to happy, confident adults being delighted to see the children, caring about them and their well-being.

I hope you understand the time and energy we have put into offering you something we believe is in the best interests of our whole school community. Most importantly however, these are **your** children. You must do what you believe is right for them and for your family. It will not help any child if, by sending them to school, you become very anxious. We have put FAQ onto our website for you to refer to.

Take care everyone. We miss you all and want to see you all as soon as it is safe to do so. Most importantly, keep taking care of each other.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "A. D. Best-White". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small dot above the 'i' in "White".

Ashley Best-White
Executive Headteacher
The Nebula Federation